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Between cultures and languages: Ukrainian literature in Hungarian translation

1. Introduction

In contemporary Translation Studies, literary translation is increasingly regarded not merely as a linguistic transformation of a text, but as a significant mechanism of intercultural dialogue that facilitates mutual recognition and understanding between the literary traditions of different peoples. Through the translation of literary works, cultural codes, nationally marked images, historical memory, and value orientations are transmitted and recontextualized, as literature itself functions as a form of cultural self-reflection and collective meaning-making. From this perspective, translation emerges as a multidimensional process in which linguistic, aesthetic, and cultural factors intersect, and where interpretive decisions play a crucial role in shaping the reception of the text in another cultural environment.

Ukrainian–Hungarian literary contacts have a long-standing history and acquire particular significance in the context of borderland cultures, where translation operates as one of the key channels of intercultural communication. In this setting, translation functions as a complex communicative mechanism that integrates aesthetic, cultural, ideological, and educational dimensions. At the same time, it influences the formation of readers' literary awareness and cultural competence in a non-native linguistic environment, contributing to the mediation of cultural experience and to the circulation of literary values across cultural boundaries.

Despite the presence of individual studies devoted to Ukrainian–Hungarian literary translation, the problem of literary translation as a form of intercultural dialogue in a linguocultural dimension remains insufficiently systematized. In particular, further scholarly attention is required to address the role of the translator as a cultural mediator, the specificity of rendering nationally marked

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elements and symbolic imagery, as well as the impact of translation strategies on the reception of Ukrainian literature within Hungarian-language cultural space. These aspects remain central to understanding how translated literature functions as a site of cultural negotiation rather than as a mere linguistic reproduction of the source text.

The relevance of this problem is further reinforced by contemporary transformations in the literary process, including the expansion of translation corpora and the increasing role of translation in educational and cultural contexts. Under these conditions, there is a growing need for a comprehensive analysis of Ukrainian and Hungarian literary translation that would conceptualize translation not only as the outcome of linguistic activity, but also as a factor in shaping intercultural awareness and sustaining interaction between literary traditions. Such an approach allows literary translation to be viewed as an active participant in cultural exchange, contributing to the construction of intercultural knowledge and interpretive frameworks.

2. Review of previous research

The issue of literary translation as a cultural phenomenon occupies an important place in contemporary humanities and Translation Studies, where translation is conceptualized as an instrument of intercultural communication, a means of representing national and cultural specificity, and a mechanism of literary reception. In Ukrainian scholarship, these approaches are represented in the works of Lesia Mushketyk (2013), Evelina Balla (2019, 2020), Angelina Hediessh (1985), and other researchers who emphasize the cultural and interpretive potential of literary translation. In international Translation Studies, these ideas have been systematically developed in the works of André Lefevere (2016), Gideon Toury (2012) and Lawrence Venuti (2017), which confirms the interdisciplinary status of translation in modern academic discourse.

A substantial contribution to the development of functional-communicative and pragmatic approaches to translation has also been made by Hungarian-language scholars, notably Kinga Klaudy and Viktória Lebovics, whose research focuses on issues of translation equivalence, linguistic mediation, and intercultural interpretation. A key principle in Klaudy's framework is the notion of linguistic asymmetry, which necessitates compensatory strategies and translational transformations. In literary translation, this asymmetry manifests itself in changes in sentence structure, the redistribution of informational focus, or the explication of implicit meanings in order to achieve communicative equivalence within the target culture (Klaudy, 2007).

Particularly significant for the study of Ukrainian–Hungarian literary dialogue is Evelina Balla’s research on Hungarian translations of Yevhen Hutsalo’s prose. The author conceptualizes literary translation as a form of interpretation in which not only linguistic, but also cultural mediation between Ukrainian and Hungarian literary traditions takes place. The study emphasizes that translations of Hutsalo’s works – primarily those produced by Éva Grigási – demonstrate a high level of interpretive competence on the part of the translator and attest to the active reception of Ukrainian literature in Hungarian cultural space (Балла, 2020, p. 224). Balla underscores that the translator does not function as a passive transmitter of the source text, but rather as an active interpreter who adapts nationally marked imagery, symbolism, and poetics of the original to the expectations of the target readership, while preserving the artistic distinctiveness of the authorial style. Particular attention is paid to the rendering of lexical and stylistic devices, metaphorical language, and the figurative system of Hutsalo’s prose, demonstrating that translation becomes one of the key factors of interliterary communication and cultural rapprochement between Ukrainian and Hungarian literatures in the second half of the twentieth century.

An analysis of scholarly studies demonstrates that in contemporary Translation Studies literary translation is consistently conceptualized as an intercultural practice closely linked to processes of cultural transfer and interliterary dialogue. In particular, V. Prykhodko views literary translation as a key mechanism of cultural transfer that enables interaction between languages and literatures and contributes to a new quality of intercultural communication. The scholar emphasizes that cultural transfer makes it possible to interpret deviations from the source text not as translation errors, but as adaptations of a literary work to a new cultural context, thereby opening new functional possibilities for the translated text (Приходько, 2025, p. 78).

An important role in this process is played by the translator as a mediator who interprets culturally conditioned meanings and facilitates the integration of a foreign-language text into the receiving culture. As Prykhodko notes, the translator’s analysis of the “other” cultural system is a necessary condition for successful cultural transfer, and literary translation thus emerges as one of the most effective means of exploring intercultural interaction (Приходько, 2025, p. 79). From this perspective, the concept of cultural transfer provides a theoretical framework for understanding literary translation as a dynamic space of intercultural and interliterary dialogue, which is particularly relevant in the contemporary context of the digitalization of literary communication.

As E. Balla and V. Shtefutsa point out, literature functions as a powerful channel of international communication that goes beyond the mere transmission

of texts and involves the representation of cultural meanings, values, and narratives of another culture (Балла-Штефуца, 2025, p. 287).

A closely related perspective is offered by László Csordás and Aliz Mária Lévai (2025), who examine Ukrainian–Hungarian literary translation through István Kótyuk’s Hungarian translation of Lesia Ukrainka’s *The Forest Song* (*Erdei rege*). Their study is particularly relevant to the present research because it approaches literary translation as a form of cultural mediation and demonstrates, through concrete textual examples, how the translator negotiates between fidelity to the source text and adaptation to the expectations of Hungarian readers. The authors show that Kótyuk’s translational practice extends beyond the transfer of linguistic meaning to the mediation of culturally embedded elements, including folklore motifs, character names, stylistic registers, and the poetic atmosphere of the original. His translation thus exemplifies the translator’s role as an active cultural mediator who seeks to preserve the Ukrainian cultural specificity of the source text while creating a natural and aesthetically effective Hungarian literary text (Csordás–Lévai, 2025, p. 122).

Important insights into the understanding of literary translation as a form of intercultural dialogue are also found in the studies of Andrea Radetič, who conceptualizes literary translation as a form of intercultural transfer arising from the interaction of linguistic and cultural systems. The author emphasizes that contemporary literary translation performs not only an aesthetic function but also a cognitive one, providing readers with access to another culture and contributing to the formation of intercultural awareness (Radetič, 2019). Particular attention is paid to the role of the translator as an active mediator between cultures, who consciously chooses strategies of domestication or foreignization, thereby influencing the reception of the translated work in the target culture. It is also stressed that literary translation is not a mechanical transfer of meaning, but a complex process of cultural adaptation in which the translator takes into account the historical, social, and cultural contexts of the target audience.

Among recent studies addressing Ukrainian–Hungarian literary contacts, particular attention should be given to Evelina Balla’s work *The Poetry of Lina Kostenko in Hungarian Translations*. This research indicates a growing scholarly interest in the translation of Ukrainian poetry and its reception in the Hungarian-speaking cultural environment (Балла–Мухіна, 2025, p. 30).

Thus, literary translation emerges as one of the key forms of intercultural communication, capable not only of reproducing but also of reshaping perceptions of another culture. This function becomes especially significant in the context of today’s globalized and intercultural space.

The scholarly novelty of the article lies in its comprehensive examination of literary translation between Ukrainian and Hungarian literatures as a

multidimensional space of intercultural dialogue. The proposed approach is based on understanding literary translation not merely as a linguistic process, but as a cultural and communicative phenomenon in which different literary traditions, value systems, and national cultural codes interact.

3. Aim of the study

The study foregrounds the role of the translator as a mediator between cultures and as an interpreter of the literary text, capable of conveying not only the semantic content of the original, but also its cultural and symbolic meanings. The article substantiates the relevance of combining classical translation theories with a linguocultural approach in order to achieve a deeper analysis of the functioning of literary translation within the Ukrainian–Hungarian interliterary context.

The aim of the article is to investigate literary translation as a form of intercultural dialogue between Ukrainian and Hungarian literatures from a linguocultural perspective, taking into account transformations in translation practice under conditions of interliterary interaction.

To achieve this aim, the study focuses on the theoretical conceptualization of literary translation as an important instrument of intercultural communication, the analysis of the specific features of the Ukrainian–Hungarian literary dialogue through the lens of translation reception, and the identification of interpretative features of the literary text in the process of interlingual and intercultural transfer.

A separate aspect of the research concerns the analysis of the translator's role as a cultural mediator who ensures the reproduction of nationally and culturally marked elements of the literary work and contributes to preserving its semantic and aesthetic integrity in a foreign-language environment.

4. Methods

The methodological framework of the study is based on a combination of translation studies, linguocultural, and comparative approaches, which allows for a comprehensive understanding of literary translation as a phenomenon of interlingual and intercultural communication. This approach makes it possible to analyze translation not only as a result of linguistic transformation, but also as a process of cultural mediation and interpretation operating within interliterary interaction.

The research employs the method of textual analysis, focused on identifying semantic, stylistic, and symbolic dominants of literary texts as they are interpreted in translation studies scholarship and descriptions of translation practice. This makes it possible to trace how translation strategies for rendering

culturally marked elements and artistic specificity of Ukrainian literature in the Hungarian-language environment are conceptualized in academic discourse.

Elements of comparative analysis are used not for the direct comparison of individual source texts and translations, but rather to generalize and contrast approaches to literary translation presented in the works of Ukrainian and Hungarian scholars. This enables the identification of common and divergent tendencies in the theoretical understanding of translation, as well as in interpretations of the role of the translator and the translated text within intercultural literary dialogue.

To examine the functioning of translated literary texts in a foreign cultural space, the study also draws on elements of reception theory, which make it possible to account for the reader-oriented dimension of translation and its role in shaping literary reception in the Hungarian-speaking environment. Within this framework, translation is interpreted as a factor of cultural communication that influences the perception of Ukrainian literature within another national tradition.

The combination of these methods and approaches ensures a holistic analysis of literary translation as a multidimensional phenomenon in which textual, cultural, and receptive aspects interact, and substantiates the role of the translator as an active agent of intercultural dialogue between Ukrainian and Hungarian literatures.

5. Translation strategies in the Ukrainian–Hungarian interliterary dialogue

Literary translation within the framework of intercultural dialogue between Ukrainian and Hungarian literatures emerges as a significant mechanism of interaction between two cultural traditions, extending far beyond the limits of purely linguistic reproduction. It facilitates the integration of a literary work into another cultural space, enabling the transmission of aesthetic meanings, figurative systems, and nationally conditioned representations embodied in artistic discourse. In this respect, translation functions as a form of cultural mediation that fosters mutual understanding between literary traditions and contributes to the expansion of interliterary contacts.

In the process of translation, particular importance is attached to the interpretation of culturally marked elements – such as symbols, historical reminiscences, everyday realities, and worldview orientations – which require not mechanical transfer but thoughtful adaptation to the target literary tradition. Translational decisions directly influence how the text is perceived by the foreign-language reader, determining both its interpretative accessibility and its potential inclusion in intercultural and interliterary interaction.

Thus, literary translation operates as a space of encounter between different cultural codes, within which a productive tension is maintained between the source text and its translation, between the author's intention and the reader's reception. This tension should not be regarded as a deficiency but rather as a driving force of intercultural dialogue, shaping the dynamics of Ukrainian–Hungarian literary relations and enabling the emergence of new layers of cultural meaning within the receiving culture.

One of the most challenging aspects of translating Ukrainian literary texts into Hungarian lies in rendering culturally marked realia that reflect the specific historical experience, traditional way of life, and collective mentality of the Ukrainian people. Such elements include the names of traditional objects, social and historical phenomena, forms of address, as well as symbolic images deeply rooted in national culture and collective memory.

In literary translation practice, translators employ a variety of strategies, including explanatory translation, partial adaptation, or the preservation of the original nomination accompanied by contextual clarification. The choice of a particular strategy is determined by the genre of the work, its stylistic features, the intended readership, and the overall translation concept, within which a balance is sought between cultural otherness and receptive accessibility.

Within the Ukrainian–Hungarian interliterary dialogue, the relationship between the strategies of domestication and foreignization becomes particularly relevant. Domestication aims to align the text with the cultural expectations of the target audience, ensuring readability and communicative transparency, whereas foreignization preserves cultural distance and emphasizes the “*otherness*” of the source text, foregrounding its national specificity.

The analysis of Hungarian translations of Ukrainian literature makes it possible to identify a range of culturally marked elements that present increased difficulty in the process of intercultural transfer and require specialized translational solutions. These include everyday realia, historical and cultural allusions, symbolic imagery, forms of address, as well as religious and worldview-related concepts deeply embedded in national cultural experience.

Everyday realia associated with traditional lifestyles and material culture are most often rendered through domestication or explanatory translation. Such solutions are primarily intended to facilitate comprehension by the Hungarian-speaking reader and to ensure communicative clarity without substantial loss of semantic or figurative content.

By contrast, historical and cultural allusions and nationally marked concepts appealing to collective memory and historical experience are generally preserved in translation with minimal adaptation. In these cases, translators tend to apply foreignization strategies supplemented by contextual clarification, which allows

for the retention of national specificity while maintaining interpretative accessibility for the target reader.

The rendering of symbolic images and religious or worldview-related elements requires a particularly nuanced approach, as these units are characterized by multilayered meanings and a high degree of cultural connotation. In translating such elements, combined or interpretative strategies are most frequently employed, aiming to preserve the subtext, emotional intensity, and associative potential of the source text. This approach is essential for achieving adequate intercultural communication and for maintaining the aesthetic and symbolic integrity of the original literary work.

In this context, André Lefevere's observation is particularly significant, as he emphasizes that translation plays a decisive role in shaping an author's literary reputation within a foreign-language environment. Through the mechanisms of translation, selection, and textual adaptation, an image of national literature is constructed in the receiving culture, while translators and publishers function as active agents in this process rather than neutral intermediaries (Lefevere, 2016, p. 33). This theoretical perspective is especially relevant to the analysis of Ukrainian–Hungarian literary dialogue, in which translated anthologies and individual translated publications contribute to the formation of a canon of Ukrainian literature for the Hungarian-speaking readership, influencing both literary hierarchies and patterns of reception.

Forms of address and socially marked linguistic units, in turn, tend to undergo partial adaptation to the norms of the target culture, ensuring naturalness of expression and communicative adequacy in the translated text. The choice of a particular translation strategy in each case is determined by the genre of the literary work, its stylistic conventions, the intended readership, and the overarching translation concept, within which translation emerges as a result of balancing the preservation of cultural otherness with the need for effective reception.

These theoretical considerations become especially evident in the analysis of concrete translation practices. An examination of Hungarian translations of Ukrainian literary texts confirms that the greatest difficulties arise in rendering culturally marked realia closely connected with everyday life, historical memory, and the symbolic modes of thinking characteristic of Ukrainian society. As demonstrated in Evelina Balla's research on Hungarian translations of Mykola Vinhranovskyi's short stories, such elements as images of the rural home, domestic space, or everyday objects often lack direct equivalents in Hungarian culture and therefore require interpretative solutions. The researcher stresses that the translation of such realia is possible only if their emotional and symbolic charge is preserved, rather than through strict lexical correspondence, which leads translators to employ explanatory or contextually adapted strategies (Балла, 2019, p. 136).

In her analysis, Balla emphasizes that Hungarian translations of Vinhranovskyi's prose do not rely on literal reproduction of the source text but instead involve interpretative decisions aimed at maintaining the artistic integrity of the work and its emotional impact on the reader. This approach demonstrates that literary translation functions as an active mechanism of intercultural dialogue, within which the Ukrainian text acquires a new resonance while simultaneously remaining a carrier of national cultural memory (Балла, 2019, p. 138).

Particularly revealing is the scholar's conclusion that the success of intercultural reception largely depends on the translator's ability to combine the author's stylistic individuality with the expectations of the target audience without diminishing the cultural specificity of the original. In this sense, Hungarian translations of Vinhranovskyi's short prose may be regarded as an example of productive interliterary contact that fosters mutual cultural understanding and contributes to the expansion of the Ukrainian–Hungarian literary space (Балла, 2019).

Balla's study devoted specifically to the Hungarian translations of Vinhranovskyi's short stories *Our Father* and *The Chest* allows for a deeper understanding of literary translation as a space of interpretation and cultural adaptation. The author demonstrates that translating Vinhranovskyi's prose requires particular sensitivity to emotional tension, symbolic imagery, and implicit meanings, which are central to the writer's artistic manner (Балла, 2019, p. 137). These features pose significant challenges for the translator, as they are deeply embedded in the Ukrainian cultural and mental context and do not always have direct counterparts in Hungarian culture.

In their article *The Poetry of Lina Kostenko in Hungarian Translations*, Balla and Mukhina examine the specific challenges involved in rendering Ukrainian poetic language into Hungarian, which is essential for understanding how the translation of poetry functions as a form of intercultural dialogue. This research demonstrates that the translation of lyric poetry requires not only linguistic competence but also cultural and aesthetic adaptation, taking into account the genre-related and stylistic features of the original. Such an approach is crucial for the successful intercultural reception of Lina Kostenko's poetic works within the Hungarian cultural environment (Балла–Мухіна, 2025).

A similar approach can be observed in the works of Angelina Hediesh, who conceptualizes literary translation as a process of interpreting nationally marked meanings. Analyzing translated texts of Ukrainian literature, the researcher emphasizes that symbolic images rooted in traditional culture perform a culture-identifying function within the literary text and therefore cannot be reproduced through mechanical lexical substitution. In her view, excessive adaptation of such elements to the norms of the target culture leads to semantic simplification,

whereas combined translation strategies make it possible to preserve the cultural subtext and artistic depth of the original text (Гедеш, 1985, p. 129).

In her works, Lesia Mushketyk emphasizes the semantic and symbolic density of a range of lexemes and images rooted in traditional culture which, within the Ukrainian–Hungarian translation context, lack direct one-to-one equivalents. Such units include, in particular, names of everyday objects and elements of the sacral space (*хата, ніч, поріг*), which in Hungarian are rendered through functional or descriptive equivalents (*ház, kemence, küszöb*), as well as family-ritual symbols (*рушник, калина, вінок*) and worldview-related concepts (*доля, зріх, благословення*), whose meanings are shaped within a traditional cultural framework and therefore cannot be reduced to straightforward lexical transfer (Мушкетик, 2013, p. 58).

Special attention is also devoted by L. Mushketyk to ritual formulas and ceremonial expressions, particularly those used in wedding and funeral contexts. She stresses that their meaning is embedded in traditional culture and cannot be reduced to purely lexical content. In such cases, mechanical reproduction of linguistic form proves insufficient, as translation requires interpretation of the underlying worldview and symbolic foundations of the respective linguistic units (Мушкетик, 2013).

The researcher further highlights the importance of forms of address and socially marked linguistic units that reflect the hierarchy of family and community relations within a traditional cultural environment. Elements such as kinship appellatives, honorific forms of address to elders, or sacralized nominations require partial adaptation or contextual explanation in intercultural transfer, as they often lack full functional equivalents in the target language.

Thus, the synthesis of Lesia Mushketyk's observations allows symbolic images, forms of address, and ritual formulas to be regarded as culturally marked elements of heightened translational complexity, which in translation studies require interpretative and combined strategies. These considerations form the theoretical foundation for analyzing the translation of Ukrainian literature within the Hungarian-language cultural environment.

In her article devoted to the reception of Ukrainian literature in the Hungarian-language environment, Viktória Lebovics pays particular attention to the rendering of historical and cultural allusions, especially those related to the Cossack tradition and national liberation movements. The author notes that such realia as *Cossacks* or *Haidamaks* are usually retained in translation without lexical replacement, yet are accompanied by contextual clarification, which enables the Hungarian reader to correlate unfamiliar concepts with their own cultural experience (Lebovics, 2024, p. 83).

The theoretical interpretation of these translation decisions corresponds with Lawrence Venuti's concept, according to which the preservation of cultural otherness constitutes a fundamental condition of intercultural dialogue. The application of foreignization or domestication strategies in the case of culturally marked elements determines not only the formal characteristics of the translation, but also the nature of the text's reception in the target culture – a tendency that becomes particularly evident in the Ukrainian–Hungarian translation context (Venuti, 2017).

Within the functional approach proposed by Kinga Klaudy, communicative equivalence serves as the key criterion of translation quality, implying the achievement of a comparable artistic and pragmatic effect in the target culture. This approach proves especially relevant for the translation of culturally marked elements, where literal correspondence does not guarantee adequate perception of the text (Klaudy, 2007).

A generalization of translation strategies demonstrates that no single type of culturally marked element can be rendered according to a uniform model. The practice of Ukrainian–Hungarian literary translation – and translation more broadly – reveals the predominance of combined strategies that integrate adaptation with the preservation of cultural specificity.

An analysis of Hungarian translations of Ukrainian prose and poetry demonstrates that translators most often combine both strategies, seeking simultaneously to preserve the national distinctiveness of the text and to ensure its accessibility for the foreign-language reader.

An important aspect of intercultural relations is the assimilation of translated works within the target culture. The Hungarian-language reception of Ukrainian literature is shaped by both translation strategies and the broader cultural context in which the translated text functions. As a result, reception depends not only on textual decisions made by the translator but also on the institutional, educational, and cultural frameworks that mediate access to translated literature.

Anthologies, scholarly reviews, and educational publications play a decisive role in consolidating translated literary works within the cultural memory of the target audience, providing systematic and conceptually structured familiarization with the Ukrainian literary tradition. Translated editions of Ukrainian literature are characterized by a multi-level orientation toward different categories of readers-recipients: for a broad audience, they perform informative and culture-oriented functions by forming a coherent understanding of the historical literary process and the artistic specificity of Ukrainian writing; for upper-secondary school students and graduates of general secondary education institutions – particularly those preparing for standardized examinations such as the ZNO/NMT – anthological publications acquire special significance as structured

sources of canonical texts that facilitate the study of literary periods, genre and stylistic dominants, and key literary figures.

A significant factor in the development of intercultural communication between Ukrainian and Hungarian literatures is the emergence of systematic editions that bring together translations of Ukrainian literary texts into Hungarian. Such publications simultaneously perform representative and mediating functions, ensuring the full integration of Ukrainian literature into the Hungarian-language cultural and educational space. A representative example of this type of publication is the three-volume *Ukrán irodalmi antológia*, edited by Erzsébet Bárány, Béla Bárány, and Vilmos Gazdag (Bárány et al., 2023), which presents Hungarian translations of Ukrainian literary works ranging from the earliest monuments to the twentieth century. The value of this anthology lies in its comprehensive coverage of key literary periods and canonical texts presented in Hungarian, which significantly facilitates the reception of Ukrainian literary heritage by the Hungarian-speaking reader (Певце-Лібак, 2023, p. 240). In this sense, the anthology functions not only as a form of cultural representation but also as an effective educational tool that links literary tradition with pedagogical practice.

The reviewers of this publication emphasize that for Hungarian-speaking pupils and students in Transcarpathia, access to literary texts in their native language constitutes a necessary condition for effective comprehension of the content and thematic complexity of Ukrainian literary works, particularly given the linguistic difficulty, specialized terminology, and culturally specific realia of the original texts (Певце-Лібак, 2023, p. 241).

6. Concrete manifestations of linguocultural transfer in Hungarian translations of Ukrainian literature

The functioning of literary translation as a form of intercultural dialogue becomes particularly visible at the level of concrete textual solutions through which culturally marked meanings are transferred into another linguistic and cultural environment. In the Ukrainian–Hungarian translation context, translators are required to reproduce not only semantic content, but also the symbolic, emotional, and associative dimensions of the source text, which are often rooted in the historical experience and traditional worldview of Ukrainian culture.

A revealing example of such linguocultural transfer can be observed in the Hungarian translations of Mykola Vinhranovskyi's prose analyzed by Evelina Balla. In the short story *Our Father*, the image of the Ukrainian rural house (*xama*) functions not merely as a designation of dwelling space, but as a symbol of family continuity, emotional security, and national rootedness. In Hungarian translation, this lexeme is rendered through the equivalent *ház*, which formally

reproduces the denotative meaning but does not fully convey the ethnocultural associations embedded in the Ukrainian concept (Балла, 2019, p. 136). In order to compensate for this semantic asymmetry, the translator reinforces the emotional and descriptive context surrounding the image, thereby preserving the symbolic function of the original unit within the target text.

A similar translational problem emerges in the rendering of ritual and symbolic lexemes connected with traditional Ukrainian culture. Such culturally marked units as *рушник*, *калина*, or *вінок* possess multilayered semantic structures associated with family rituals, collective memory, and symbolic representations of femininity, homeland, or continuity of generations. Their Hungarian equivalents cannot fully reproduce these associative fields because the corresponding cultural symbols function differently within Hungarian tradition. Consequently, translators tend to preserve the original nomination or employ descriptive and interpretative translation strategies that allow the target reader to perceive the symbolic significance of the image rather than merely its lexical meaning (Мушкетик, 2013, p. 58).

The linguocultural complexity of translation becomes especially evident in the reproduction of historical and nationally marked concepts. In Hungarian translations of Ukrainian historical prose and poetry, notions such as *козак*, *зайдамака*, or references to Zaporizhian traditions are usually retained without lexical replacement. Translators intentionally preserve these nominations in transliterated or minimally adapted form in order to maintain the historical and cultural specificity of the source text. However, the preservation of such elements is frequently accompanied by contextual clarification, which enables Hungarian readers to integrate unfamiliar concepts into their interpretative framework (Lebovics, 2024, p. 83). This approach confirms Venuti's thesis that foreignization strategies contribute to preserving cultural otherness and enhance the intercultural dimension of literary translation (Venuti, 2017).

Particularly illustrative in this regard are Hungarian translations of Lina Kostenko's poetry, where translators are confronted with the necessity of reproducing metaphorical density, rhythmical organization, and nationally conditioned symbolic imagery. As Evelina Balla and Anastasiia Mukhina emphasize, Lina Kostenko's poetic discourse is characterized by a high concentration of implicit meanings, intertextual allusions, and culturally significant metaphors that require interpretative adaptation in translation (Балла–Мухіна, 2025, p. 31). In many cases, translators employ combined strategies in which semantic accuracy is partially subordinated to the preservation of emotional tonality and poetic expressiveness.

For example, symbolic images associated with Ukrainian historical memory or national suffering often undergo contextual transformation in Hungarian

translation in order to preserve their emotional impact on the target audience. Such transformations demonstrate that literary translation operates not at the level of direct lexical correspondence, but within the broader framework of intercultural interpretation, where the translator reconstructs the communicative and aesthetic effect of the original text under conditions of another linguistic and cultural system.

An equally important aspect of intercultural transfer concerns forms of address and socially marked linguistic units. Ukrainian literary discourse frequently reflects hierarchical family relations and culturally specific etiquette formulas that lack complete functional equivalents in Hungarian. In such cases, translators tend to apply partial adaptation strategies that preserve communicative naturalness while simultaneously retaining markers of cultural specificity. This tendency confirms Klaudy's observation that communicative equivalence in literary translation often requires compensatory transformations rather than formal lexical correspondence (Klaudy, 2007).

The analysis of these translation solutions demonstrates that Ukrainian–Hungarian literary translation cannot be reduced to the mechanical transfer of linguistic structures. Rather, it functions as a multidimensional interpretative process in which the translator negotiates between the preservation of cultural distinctiveness and the communicative expectations of the receiving audience. The translator therefore acts not only as a linguistic mediator, but also as an interpreter of collective memory, symbolic systems, and national cultural experience embodied in the literary text.

The examined examples confirm that the linguocultural dimension of translation becomes especially significant in the context of borderland cultures, where literary interaction contributes to the formation of stable mechanisms of intercultural communication. In this respect, literary translation between Ukrainian and Hungarian literatures performs not only an aesthetic or linguistic function, but also a broader cultural role connected with the transmission of historical memory, symbolic representations, and national worldviews across cultural boundaries.

In this context, translation appears not as an auxiliary instrument but as a full-fledged channel of intercultural communication that contributes to the formation of reading and cultural competence. Anthologies structured according to a historical-literary principle enable Hungarian-speaking readers to become systematically acquainted with the works of Taras Shevchenko, Ivan Franko, Lesia Ukrainka, Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi, Vasyl Stefanyk, and other Ukrainian classics in translated form.

The outlined role of translation and anthologies in shaping intercultural and reading competence calls for further specification at the level of individual literary texts and concrete translation decisions. It is precisely the analysis of

individual translation practices that makes it possible to trace how general principles of intercultural mediation are realized in work with literary language, and how translation emerges as a space of interpretation, adaptation, and reinterpretation of nationally conditioned meanings.

7. The translator as a cultural mediator in literary translation

Particular attention in the study of literary translation should be devoted to the analysis of the translator's role, as the translator emerges as a key figure in the process of interlingual and intercultural communication. Within the domain of literary discourse, translation activity is not confined to purely linguistic transformation; rather, it encompasses a complex set of interrelated functions connected with interpretation, cultural mediation, and the shaping of reader reception in a foreign-language environment.

A fundamental component of translation activity is the linguistic function, which involves the reproduction of grammatical, lexical, and syntactic structures of the source text and ensures the formal adequacy of the translation. In literary translation, however, this function cannot be realized in isolation, since linguistic choices are inseparably linked to the stylistic and cultural content of the work. Consequently, every linguistic decision simultaneously carries an interpretative dimension and contributes to the overall aesthetic effect of the translated text.

The cultural function of the translator involves engagement with nationally marked realia, symbolic imagery, and cultural codes rooted in historical experience and collective memory. At this level, the translator acts as a mediator between two cultural traditions, capable of preserving the national specificity of the source text while ensuring its intelligibility and receptive accessibility for the Hungarian-speaking reader. This mediating role requires sensitivity to cultural connotations and an awareness of the broader sociocultural context in which the translation will be received.

The interpretative function is realized through work with subtext, imagery, and symbolism inherent in the literary text. The translator does not merely transfer meaning but reconstructs the author's intention, selecting linguistic and stylistic means that allow the aesthetic and expressive effect of the original to be reproduced within a different linguistic and cultural system. In this sense, literary translation may be viewed as an act of creative interpretation that presupposes a deep understanding of the artistic structure, genre conventions, and stylistic organization of the source work.

The mediating function of translation manifests itself in the adaptation of the text to the norms and expectations of the target culture, ensuring communicative naturalness and functional adequacy of the translated work. Within this function,

the translator continually balances the preservation of cultural otherness with the need to integrate the text into a new literary and cultural space, selecting translation strategies in accordance with genre, intended audience, and the overall translation concept.

Finally, the receptive function of the translator is associated with shaping the reader's perception of the translated text in the receiving culture. Translational decisions determine not only the accessibility of the literary work for a foreign-language audience but also the mode of its interpretation, the degree of emotional engagement it evokes, and the manner in which it is incorporated into the literary process of the target culture. In this way, the translator directly influences the cultural resonance and interpretative potential of the translated work.

The theoretical conceptualization of the multifaceted role of the translator is thoroughly presented in Lesia Mushketyk's monograph, in which literary translation is interpreted as a form of cultural interpretation. The scholar emphasizes that the translator does not function as a neutral transmitter of the text, but rather as a bearer of personal cultural experience and an interpretative stance, who consciously selects and reinterprets culturally marked elements in accordance with the value orientations of the target culture (Мушкетик, 2013, p. 38).

Particularly illustrative in this regard are Mushketyk's reflections on the translation of folkloric and literary texts in which culturally significant concepts and images lack unambiguous lexical equivalents. The researcher draws attention to the fact that such elements as notions of fate, sacred prohibitions, ritual formulas, or symbolic imagery require an interpretative approach on the part of the translator, since their meaning is shaped within the framework of traditional culture rather than solely at the textual level. In such cases, the translator effectively engages in cultural interpretation, determining how to convey the meanings embedded in the text without losing their symbolic and worldview-related depth (Мушкетик, 2013, p. 53).

Lesia Mushketyk devotes special attention to the translator's interpretative responsibility in the case of literary and folkloric texts, emphasizing that translation involves not only the transfer of content but also the reconstruction of cultural context, symbolism, and subtext, which are not always explicitly articulated in the original. According to the scholar, it is the translator who decides which elements should be preserved unchanged and which require explanation or adaptation (Мушкетик, 2013, p. 55). In this sense, the translator emerges as an active participant in the process of intercultural communication, responsible for the manner in which a national cultural tradition is represented within a foreign-language literary space – an issue of particular relevance for the Ukrainian–Hungarian interliterary dialogue.

A similar understanding of the translator's role can be found in the theoretical works of Lawrence Venuti, who consistently emphasizes the active and visible position of the translator within the literary process. Venuti views translation not as a neutral act of meaning transfer, but as a form of cultural intervention, within which the translator consciously selects interpretative strategies in accordance with the dominant values of the target culture. From Venuti's perspective, the choice between domestication and foreignization determines not only the degree of proximity between the text and the reader, but also the manner in which another culture is represented in translation, thereby shaping specific models of intercultural perception.

The scholar pays particular attention to the ideological dimension of translation decisions, arguing that the pursuit of "*fluency*" or "*transparency*" in translation often leads to the effacement of cultural otherness and the marginalization of culturally specific elements of the source text. By contrast, foreignization, according to Venuti, allows for the preservation of cultural difference and foregrounds the translator's presence as an interpreter responsible for facilitating intercultural dialogue. In this sense, the translator appears not merely as a mediator, but as an active agent of the cultural process, whose position directly influences the reception of the translated work in the target culture (Venuti, 2017, p. 21).

At the level of translation practice, these theoretical assumptions are confirmed by the studies of Evelina Balla devoted to Hungarian translations of Ukrainian short prose. Analyzing translations of Mykola Vinhranovskyi's short stories, the researcher demonstrates that the translator functions as an interpreter of the emotional and symbolic structure of the text, and that the success of translation depends on the ability to reconcile the author's stylistic individuality with the expectations of the target audience without diminishing the national specificity of the original (Балла, 2019, p. 137).

Thus, in contemporary studies of literary translation, the translator emerges as a multifunctional figure who combines linguistic, interpretative, cultural, and receptive functions. It is precisely the translator's personal and interpretative stance that determines the nature of intercultural communication and the manner in which a literary text enters another literary space, ensuring the depth and quality of interaction between Ukrainian and Hungarian literary traditions.

8. Conclusions

The study of literary translation between Ukrainian and Hungarian literatures from a linguocultural perspective demonstrates that translation functions not merely as a means of interlingual mediation, but as a full-fledged form of intercultural dialogue

in which different literary traditions, cultural codes, and models of artistic thinking interact. Within this process, translation operates as a complex communicative mechanism that enables the transfer not only of textual meanings, but also of culturally conditioned senses, symbolic structures, and value orientations.

Ukrainian–Hungarian literary translation is shaped as a dynamic space of cultural transfer that creates the conditions for the incorporation of Ukrainian literary texts into the Hungarian-language cultural context, their subsequent reception, interpretation, and integration into a different literary process. Of particular importance in this context is the problem of rendering culturally marked elements, symbolic imagery, and nationally conditioned meanings that define the identity of the source text and at the same time pose the greatest challenge for the translator.

The analysis conducted makes it possible to conclude that Ukrainian–Hungarian translation practice is predominantly characterized by the use of combined translation strategies that integrate elements of domestication and foreignization, depending on the genre specificity of the work, the nature of culturally marked units, and the orientation toward the target audience. Such an approach facilitates the preservation of the national distinctiveness of the literary text without significantly complicating its perception for the foreign-language reader and ensures a balance between cultural otherness and the receptive accessibility of the translation.

Within this framework, the translator emerges as an active participant in intercultural communication and a cultural mediator whose activity extends far beyond the technical reproduction of linguistic form. The translator performs a set of interrelated functions – linguistic, interpretative, cultural, and receptive – making conscious choices of translation strategies and assuming responsibility for the manner in which the national cultural tradition is represented in a foreign-language literary space. It is precisely the translator’s interpretative position that largely determines the nature of the reception of the translated work and its cultural resonance within the receiving community.

Thus, literary translation within the Ukrainian–Hungarian interliterary dialogue functions as an effective instrument of cultural interaction that promotes mutual knowledge of literary traditions, the expansion of cultural space, and the formation of intercultural awareness. Prospects for further research are seen in an in-depth analysis of specific translation corpora, models of reception, and the educational potential of translated publications in the context of intercultural communication. In particular, the inclusion of a broader corpus of translated texts appears relevant, as it would allow tracing the evolution of translation strategies in both diachronic and synchronic dimensions,

as well as identifying the influence of sociocultural and literary factors on the formation of translation practices in different historical periods.

Further scholarly attention is also required for the issue of the reception of translated Ukrainian literature in the Hungarian-language environment, especially in relation to the functioning of translated texts within educational settings, academic discourse, and the cultural memory of the target audience. A promising direction for future research is the interdisciplinary approach to the study of literary translation, combining translation studies, linguocultural analysis, and reception studies. Such an approach makes it possible to consider translation not merely as the result of linguistic transformation, but as a complex sociocultural process in which the text, the translator, the institutional framework, and the readership interact.

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Between cultures and languages: Ukrainian literature in Hungarian translation

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The article conceptualizes literary translation between Ukrainian and Hungarian literatures as a multidimensional form of intercultural communication and cultural

transfer that extends beyond purely linguistic transformation. Translation is interpreted as a space of interaction between cultural codes, aesthetic systems, and nationally conditioned models of artistic thinking, through which interliterary dialogue is formed and sustained. Particular attention is paid to the Ukrainian–Hungarian context, in which translation contributes to the circulation of literary values and facilitates the reception of Ukrainian literature within a Hungarian-speaking cultural environment.

The study focuses on the rendering of culturally marked elements, including historical and cultural allusions, symbolic imagery, forms of address, everyday realia, and worldview-related concepts that shape the national specificity of literary texts. It demonstrates that such elements cannot always be adequately reproduced through literal equivalence, since their meanings are deeply rooted in linguistic, historical, social, and cultural contexts. Their transfer into another language therefore requires careful interpretation and the selection of strategies capable of balancing accessibility for the target reader with the preservation of the cultural specificity of the source text. Effective literary translation consequently involves interpretative adaptation, communicative adequacy, contextual clarification, and the preservation of culturally significant meanings.

The article also examines the translator's role as an active cultural mediator whose linguistic and interpretative choices influence the reception and understanding of Ukrainian literature in the Hungarian-language environment. Special emphasis is placed on the interaction between domestication and foreignization strategies and their role in negotiating cultural distance between the source and target texts. The study further considers the importance of Hungarian translations, literary anthologies, and educational translation projects in strengthening the presence of Ukrainian literature in Hungarian cultural space. It is argued that such publications contribute not only to literary reception but also to intercultural awareness, the transmission of cultural memory, and the development of sustained dialogue between Ukrainian and Hungarian literary traditions.

Keywords: *literary translation, intercultural dialogue, cultural transfer, Ukrainian–Hungarian literary relations, reception.*

Між культурами та мовами: українська література в угорських перекладах

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Статтю присвячено художньому перекладу української літератури угорською мовою як багатовимірній формі міжкультурної комунікації та культурного трансферу, що виходить за межі суто мовного відтворення тексту. Переклад розглянуто як простір взаємодії культурних кодів, естетичних систем і національно зумовлених особливостей художнього мислення, завдяки якому формується та підтримується міжлітературний діалог. Особливу увагу приділено українсько-угорському контексту, в якому переклад сприяє поширенню літературних цінностей та ознайомленню угорськомовного читача з українською літературою.

Основну увагу зосереджено на особливостях відтворення культурно маркованих елементів, зокрема історико-культурних алюзій, символічних образів, форм звертання, побутових реалій і світоглядних понять, що відображають національну специфіку художніх текстів. Встановлено, що такі елементи не завжди можна адекватно передати за допомогою буквального перекладу, оскільки їхнє значення тісно пов'язане з мовним, історичним, соціальним і культурним контекстами. Їх відтворення іншою мовою потребує відповідних перекладацьких стратегій, які дають змогу забезпечити зрозумілість тексту для цільового читача й водночас зберегти культурну своєрідність оригіналу. Тому художній переклад передбачає інтерпретацію, адаптацію, контекстуальне пояснення та збереження культурно значущих смислів.

У статті також розглянуто роль перекладача як активного культурного посередника, чий мовні та інтерпретаційні рішення впливають на сприйняття й розуміння української літератури в угорськомовному середовищі. Особливу увагу приділено взаємодії стратегій доместикації та форенізації, а також їхній ролі у збереженні культурної специфіки оригіналу та забезпеченні доступності перекладу для читача. Окремо висвітлено значення угорських перекладів, літературних антологій та освітніх перекладацьких проєктів для представлення української літератури в угорському культурному просторі. Зроблено висновок, що такі видання сприяють не лише популяризації та рецепції української літератури, а й поглибленню міжкультурного взаєморозуміння, збереженню й передачі культурної пам'яті та розвитку діалогу між українською й угорською літературними традиціями.

Ключові слова: художній переклад, міжкультурний діалог, культурний трансфер, українсько-угорські літературні зв'язки, рецепція.

Kultúrák és nyelvek között: az ukrán irodalom magyar fordításban

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A tanulmány az ukrán irodalmi művek magyar nyelvre történő műfordítását a kultúrák közötti kommunikáció és a kulturális transzfer többdimenziós formájaként vizsgálja, amely túlmutat a szöveg pusztán nyelvi átültetésén. A fordítást olyan tévként értelmezi, amelyben kulturális kódok, esztétikai rendszerek és a művészi gondolkodás nemzeti sajátosságai lépnek kölcsönhatásba, ezáltal elősegítve az irodalmak közötti párbeszéd kialakulását és fennmaradását. Kiemelt figyelmet kap az ukrán–magyar kontextus, amelyben a műfordítás hozzájárul az irodalmi értékek közvetítéséhez és ahhoz, hogy a magyar nyelvű olvasóközönség megismerhesse az ukrán irodalmat.

A kutatás középpontjában a kulturálisan meghatározott elemek átadásának sajátosságai állnak, különös tekintettel a történelmi és kulturális utalásokra, a szimbolikus képekre, a megszólítási formákra, a mindennapi élet reáliáira, valamint

azokra a világszemléleti fogalmakra, amelyek az irodalmi szövegek nemzeti sajátosságait tükrözik. A vizsgálat rámutat arra, hogy ezek az elemek nem minden esetben adhatók vissza megfelelően szó szerinti fordítással, mivel jelentésük szorosan kapcsolódik a nyelvi, történelmi, társadalmi és kulturális kontextushoz. Más nyelven történő közvetítésük ezért olyan fordítási stratégiák alkalmazását igényli, amelyek egyszerre teszik érthetővé a szöveget a célnyelvi olvasó számára, és őrzik meg az eredeti mű kulturális sajátosságait. A műfordítás ennek megfelelően értelmezést, adaptációt, kontextuális magyarázatot és a kulturálisan meghatározott jelentéstartalmak megőrzését egyaránt magában foglalja.

A tanulmány a fordító szerepét is vizsgálja, aki aktív kulturális közvetítőként nyelvi és értelmezői döntéseivel befolyásolja az ukrán irodalom befogadását és értelmezését a magyar nyelvű kulturális közegben. Különös figyelmet kap a honosítás és az idegenítés stratégiáinak kölcsönhatása, valamint ezek szerepe az eredeti mű kulturális sajátosságainak megőrzésében és a fordítás olvasó számára való befogadhatóságának biztosításában. A tanulmány külön kitér a magyar fordítások, irodalmi antológiák és oktatási célú fordítási projektek jelentőségére az ukrán irodalom magyar kulturális térben való megjelenítésében. A vizsgálat arra a következtetésre jut, hogy ezek a kiadványok nemcsak az ukrán irodalom népszerűsítéséhez és befogadásához járulnak hozzá, hanem elősegítik a kultúrák közötti kölcsönös megértés elmélyítését, a kulturális emlékezet megőrzését és továbbadását, valamint az ukrán és a magyar irodalmi hagyományok közötti párbeszéd fejlődését is.

Kulcsszavak: *műfordítás, kultúrák közötti párbeszéd, kulturális transzfer, ukrán–magyar irodalmi kapcsolatok, recepció.*