

# WAYS OF RENDERING THE MEANING OF NATIONALLY BIASED UNITS OF LEXICON

---

The choice of the way of approach to expressing the denotative meanings of the units of specifically national lexicon is strictly predetermined by some definite factors to which belong first of all the semantic and structural complexity (or similarity) of the units of the culturally biased specific lexicon of the source language. The choice of the method of translating may partly be influenced by the sphere of circulation of the specific notion in the source language. The meaning of specifically national units of lexicon can be conveyed by the following methods:

**1. By transcription or Transliteration Exclusively.** The units of the nationally specific lexicon, whose meanings are rendered at the phonological level, usually belong to genuine internationalisms and comprise social and political units of lexicon in the main (cf. *lord, lady, mister, shilling, kozak, hryvnia*, etc.):

*New classified rates per word for ads in **hryvnias** in the Kyiv Post. – Нові тарифи на рекламу в **гривнях** за слово в газеті “Київ Пост”.*

*You’re a supercilious half-baked **snob**. – Ти насправді зарозумілий і обмежений **сноб**.*

**2. By Transcription or Transliteration and Explication of Their Genuine Nationally Specific Meaning.** An additional explication of genuine nationally specific meaning becomes necessary when the unit/notion of the culturally biased lexicon is introduced in the target language for the first time or when it is not yet known to the broad public of the target language readers/listeners. The explanation may be given either in the translated passage/speech flow, where the culturally biased unit is used, or in a footnote - when a lengthy explication becomes necessary:

***Downing Street** is guarded outside by a single policeman. – Резиденцію прем’єр-міністра Великої Британії охороняє один полісмен.*

Footnotes or lengthy explications should always be used when the culturally biased notions are not yet well-known in the target language. For example, *surfing* when only transliterated/transcribed as *серфінг* will not express its denotative meaning which it in reality is – “the sport of riding waves into shore on a surfboard”. Hence, a combined translation must be resorted to: *серфінг (ковзання на широкій овальній дощці по високій морській хвилі до берега).*

**3. By Descriptive Explaining/Explication Only.** The orthographic form of a considerable number of sense units belonging to the nationally specific lexicon of the source language can not be always rendered into the target language. That happens mostly when the transcription/transliteration can not be helpful in expressing the sense of the culturally biased national unit, or when it might bring about an unnecessary ambiguity in the target language narration/text cf.: *matron* – завгосп у навчальному закладі (суміщає економку і медсестру)/

Such lengthy explanations of specifically national notions are always required in the text of the translation/interpretation. And far from all culturally biased/specific units of national lexicon are so ‘heavily’ loaded with information that they have necessarily to be explicated in a footnote. Quite often an explanation within the target language may be sufficient too:

*I've got some shepherd's pie for lunch today – that you used to like so much.* – *Я приготувала картопляну запіканку з м'ясом і цибулею, яку ти колись так любив.*

*Usi bачили, як ми у церкві на рушник стали.* – *Everybody saw me and you being married in the church.*

**4. By Translation of Componental Parts and Additional Explication of Units of the Nationally Biased Lexicon.** The proper meaning of some specific units of the national lexicon can be faithfully rendered by way of regular translation of all or some of their componental parts and explication of the denotative meaning pertaining to the source language unit. The way of rendering the meanings of the culturally biased lexical units involves two simultaneous performances. The first is a regular translation of the main, if not all, componental parts and the next, which follows it, is a more or less exhaustive explanation of the essence pertained to the specific national element of the source language.

When translating at language level (out of context) the explanation may be practically unrestricted: *Battle of Britain* – *Битва за Англію (повітряні бої англійської авіації з гітлерівськими бомбардувальниками над територією Великої Британії, особливо в районі Лондона і Південної Англії 1940-1941 рр.)*; *inner Cabinet* – “внутрішній кабінет” (кабінет у вузькому складі), до якого входять керівники найважливіших міністерств на чолі з прем'єр-міністром.

Such and the like explanations can not be made in the text of a translation, hence they are given usually in the footnotes:

*Well, I can tell you anything that is in an English bluebook.* – *Ну, я тобі можу розповісти все, що написано в англійській “Синій книзі”<sup>1</sup>.*

---

<sup>1</sup> “Синя книга” – збірник документів, що видається з санкції парламенту Великої Британії в синіх палітурках.

When the lexical meaning of the unit of specific national lexicon is not complex it is usually explained in the target language text:

*Keep your fingers crossed for me! – Щоб мені була вдача, склади навхрест пальці!*

**5. By Ways of Word-for-Word or Loan Translation.** When the componental parts making up the units of the nationally specific lexicon are at the same time the main transparent bearers of their proper sense, expressed through their meaning, a faithful translation of such sense units may be achieved either by way of word-for-word translation or by way of loan translation.

Translated word-for-word are the specific national units of lexicon as *first (second, third) reading – перше (друге, третє) читання (офіційне внесення законопроекту в англійський парламент); стінгазета – wall newspaper; щоденник (учнівський) – student’s everyday record book.*

The denotative meaning of many units of the specific national lexicon may be rendered by way of loan translating as well: *Salvation Army (USA, Great Britain) – Армія порятунку; the Order of St. Michael and St. George – орден св. Михайла і св. Георгія; орден Ярослава Мудрого – the Order of Yaroslav the Wise/Yaroslav the Wise Order; орден св. княгині Ольги Київської – the Order of St. Olga Princess of Kyivan Rus’.*

A faithful translation of the kind of units of lexicon is predetermined by the correct choice of equivalent units for the semes bearing the national peculiarity. The latter may be expressed both verbally or word-for-word and by means of translation loans, which should be resorted to when verbal translating ruins the national peculiarity of the source language culturally biased units. The number of English genuine translation loans in Ukrainian, as well as Ukrainian in English, is considerable: *cornflakes – кукурудзяні пластівці; skyscraper – хмарочос; brain washing – промивання мізків (ідеологічна обробка); гривня – hryvnia; заслужений діяч мистецтв України – the Merited Worker of Arts/Ukraine’s merited Worker of Arts; медаль за трудову доблесть – the Medal for Labour Distinction, etc.*

**6. Translating by Means of Semantic Analogies.** Some peculiar notions in both the languages may be identical or similar/analogous in their meaning and functioning. It happens due to the existence of common routine or habitual actions, common occupations, social services, food, etc., in the contrasted language communities.

Yet, the connotative divergences and sometimes the spheres of use may not always fully coincide in the target language. **English:** *the City/Town Board of Education – міський відділ освіти; pop corn – кукурудзяні баранці; stewed fruit – узвар/компот; Welldone! Well done! (sports) –*

*Мо-лод-ці! Мо-лод-ці!. Ukrainian: залік – preliminary/qualifying test/examination; дипломна робота – graduation essay/project; курсова робота – term/yearly essay/project; доцент – principal lecturer/reader, associate professor; підвищення кваліфікації – in-service training course; кватирка – hinged window pane/pilot window; консультація – tutorial.*

## EXERCISES

**Ex.1. Pick up the units of the English specifically national lexicon in the sentences below. Define their sphere of usage and translate the sentences into Ukrainian.**

1. Some ignorant jackass on Fleet Street has got together a list of cures by Stillman. 2. Sir Robert was surprised and said that this Argentine scheme (Canal Company Scheme) was known to be a commonplace Stock Exchange swindle. 3. At this point of the story enters the Great Detective, specially sent by or through Scotland Yard. 4. You must certainly send it (the painting) next year to Grosvenor. 5. He himself had a job in Whitehall “of national importance”. 6. The serious part of the dinner comprised roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, being served as sweet course before the meal. 7. Carrie established a little portable gas stove for the preparation of small lunches, oysters, Welsh rarebits, and the like... 8. I can't tell one tune from another. I don't know “Home Sweet Home” from “God save the King”. 9. And potbellied little coloured children fought hunger and sleepness while Lanny tried to teach them the three R's. 10. Down Whitehall, under the grey easterly sky, the towers of Westminster came for a second in view. 11. And, removing their hats, they passed the Cenotaph. 12. She was busy loading the table with high tea. 13. He was afraid that as K.C. he would get no work. 14. Mr. Huges was on the Bench.

**Ex. 2. Give Ukrainian equivalents for the following traditional folk rites, customs, and religious feasts of our people:**

1. commemoration of ancestors; 2. Whitsuntide/Whitsunday, Pentacost; 3. the feast of Presentation; 4. to bless water; 5. stuffed cabbage (leaf); 6. Holy supper; 7. pious and righteous; 8. Epiphany; 9. the feast of the Annunciation; 10. Warm Alexis; 11. miracle-workers; 12. Willow Sunday/Palm Sunday; 13. Passion Friday; 14. Holy Shroud; 15. the Easter Matins; 16. the High mess; 17. unleavened bread; 18. Seeing off Sunday; 19. Forty Martyrs; 20. water nymphs; 21. Maccabees' Day; 22. the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord; 23. the Feast of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin; 24. Twelfth-day; 25. the pre-Christmas fast; 26. The Birthday of

the most Holy Mother of God; 27. The Elevation of the Holy Cross; 28. The Feast of Intercession of the Most Holy Mother of God; 29. The Archangel Michael's Day; 30. St. John the Baptist.

***Ex. 3. Translate into Ukrainian the sentences containing some American/British nationally peculiar notions.***

USAir has gone to 'sporks', a combination of fork and spoon to cut down on the number of utensils used. The USA Today asked some Road Warriors who are best described as 'grumpy gourmands' because they probably eat more meals on jets than at home. Here's what they say: 1. "The scrambled eggs were OK, moist with decent flavour. The waffles were almost soggy. The coffee was good, but they always serve it in a Styrofoam cup, which drives me crazy." 2. "Breakfast was a Cheddar cheese omelette, it not only appeared to be stable - as compared to some that swim in unidentifiable liquid - but it also tasted like cheddar cheese and eggs. It was enough cholesterol to have caused a block in my arteries, but it was good." 3. "I had the grilled chicken, it was a good portion, but it was dry with a fake, smoked flavour. The salad was fresh and crisp. But it was served in a bowl, not on a plate. The wheat roll was moist and served with real butter. For dessert, I had chocolate cake. But, it was too sweet, which was good." 4. "I had two choices for breakfast: cold cereal or an omelet. I had Quaker Oat Square, a small carton of 2 milk, low-fat peach yoghurt, orange juice and a banana." 5. "This time, the plate had an ample amount of grapes, pineapple and orange slices, but only one strawberry. I didn't eat the yoghurt or the dry cereal, but I did have a warm blueberry muffin." 6. "They served a health-food concoction that tasted like the cardboard box it came in. It was a sort of corn-flavored, crispy, chiplike thing, it had no flavour at all. We also had fruit. I like that they serve milk, but I hate that low-fat stuff, it insipid – all airline food is insipid."

***Ex. 4. Translate the list of meals of a common American restaurant.***

1. Traditional barbeque foods: smoked brisket and ham, or turkey; pig picking pork, smoked chicken wings, baby back ribs (half-slab, full slab), spare ribs (short ends, long ends); grilled chicken and greens; Texas chicken, a boneless breast grilled with spicy Texas sauce, topped with thinly sliced smoked brisket and melted cheddar cheese; burnt ends, smoked apple sausage or brisket. Smoked ribs... tender meaty ribs basket with maple - mustard, glaze, slow roasted and then lightly grilled; hickory chicken... 1/2 chicken smoked and basted with the original BBQ (barbecue) sauce; burnt ends... tender chunks of twice-smoked brisket drenched in our famous sauce; Texas-size beef ribs marinated, slow-smoked and flame-grilled.

2. Garnishes: BBQ baked beans, cole slaw and potato salad, whole wheat, white bread or buns, pickled and barbecue sauce.

3. Appetizers: cheese and assorted crackers, French onion soup, onion straws, corn fritters (hot and fresh long ends), a hickory-grinned chicken breast sliced and served atop, fresh veggies and greens, with our honey-mustard dressing; assorted relishes; vegetable tray with dip.

4. Accompaniments: dirty rice, tossed salads.

5. Desserts: creamy cheesecake, chocolate peanut butter, ice-cream pie; old fashioned cheesecake, apple fritters served hot with powdered sugar and sweet honey butter.

***Ex. 5. Suggest appropriate English variants for the following units of Ukrainian specific national lexicon:***

голова колгоспу/сільради, дружинник, суботник, січовик, січові стрільці, запорожець, герої Крутів, тризуб, універсали (Центр. Ради); залік, залікова книжка, відкритий урок, педрада, табель успішності, похвальна грамота/лист, курсова/дипломна робота; кобза, кобзар, бандурист, гопак, повзунець (танець), веснянки, коломийки, боярин, дружка, весільний батько, бублик, вареники, галушки, голубці, бабка, коржі з маком/шулики, борщ, куліш, ряжанка, узвар, грубка, лежанка, піч (у хаті), скриня, свитка, кожух, кептар, вишиванка, плахта, чобітки, льох, хата, гривня, карбованець, десятина, “бігунець”, профорг студентської групи, крашанка, писанка, думи, “Ще не вмерла Україна”.

***Ex. 6. Explain the proper meaning of the particular English national notions below and translate them into Ukrainian.***

№ 10. Downing Street, Whitehall, the Upper House, the Commons, the woolsack, speaker, teller, whip (Parliament), division of Parliament, the White paper, the Stock Exchange; John Bull, the British Lion; lobby; ladyship, lordship, peerage, coroner, proctor, bacon, Yorkshire pudding, frankfurters, hot dogs; ale, gin; crown, farthing, guinea, sixpence, private/independent school, comprehensive (grammar, modern) school, the 6th form; jeans, jersey, pullover, leggings, stretches, tweed; calumet, wigwam; bushel, foot, inch, pint, sheriff.

***Ex. 7. Suggest possible ways for faithful conveying the meaning of peculiarly American government offices and their principal officials in the passage below. Identify the ways of translation which you employ for the purpose.***

The United States, unlike most other countries of Europe, Asia and America has no ‘government’ but only an ‘administration’ or to be more

precise, a ‘president’s administration’. The latter in its turn has no ministries and consequently no ‘ministers’ but departments and secretaries performing the functions of ministries and ministers. Traditionally established in the USA are the following thirteen departments: Agricultural Department, Commerce Department, Defence Department, Educational Department, Energy Department, Health and Human Services Department, Housing and Urban Development Department, Interior Department, Justice Department, Treasury Department, and Veterans Affairs Department. Each of these government institutions is headed respectively by an appointed leader, as announced by the presidential secretary. The only exception is the Justice Department which is headed not by a secretary but by the Attorney General. Almost all Secretaries have their Assistant Secretaries performing the functions of deputy ministers in other European and American governments. Exceptions from the list include only four departments which have Deputy Secretaries instead. These are Commerce Department, Housing and Urban Development Department, Educational Department and Treasury Department. Still other departments in the U.S. administration government have Under Secretaries performing the duties of assistant secretaries which correspond to the government positions occupied by deputy ministers in other countries. To these departments belong the Commerce Department and Veterans Affairs Department. Secretary of the Interior Department, contrary to all others, has an Inspector General for the first assistant. But certainly the most peculiar are the duties of the Interior Department which include building roads, and overseeing the national park system, and not keeping law and order and fighting criminals, which the ministries of the interior are responsible for in other countries. These functions are performed in the U.S.A. by the F.B.I. (Federal Bureau of Investigation).

***Ex. 8. Read through the text on the British Parliament below and translate it point by point in writing or in viva voce into Ukrainian.***

THE GLIMPSE OF GREAT BRITAIN  
AND ITS PARLIAMENT LIFE

Great Britain or the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland as the country is officially called ranks among the oldest constitutional monarchies in Europe. The country’s first constitution, the Magna Charta, was signed under the pressure of her Parliament by the despotic King John Lackland, son of King Richard the Lion Hearted, as far back as June 10, 1215. The Magna Charta had a great influence on the country’s parliamentary life and traditions which have remained unchanged for centuries. Thus, the Palace of Westminster where Parliament is held and which was built anew and rebuilt for several times is in the same place for more than 1,000 years.

Besides the Parliament consists of two Chambers or Houses - the Upper Chamber or the House of Lords and the lower Chamber or the House of Commons.

The Upper House consists of over 1,100 Members belonging to one of the three unequally represented groups of peers: 1. Hereditary Peers, Marquises, Earls, Viscounts, Barons (almost half of all peers), and Peeresses in their own right (ab 20); 2. Life Peers and Life Peeresses; 3. Archbishops (2) and Senior Bishops (20).

The House of Lords is headed by the Lord Chancellor who is also the minister of Justice and Head of the High Court.

The House of Commons consists of 659 elected MPs (1997 elections). The House is headed by the Speaker. The number of seats in the House, however, covers the need of only two-thirds of the elected MPs, the rest using the 'front benches', the 'cross benches' and the 'back benches'.

There are nine Royal British orders of Knighthood. The highest of them is the order of the Garter, which was founded by King Edward III in 1348. It consists of two parts – a collar gold chain worn around the neck with St. George killing the Dragon, and an eight-pointed star with the words *Honi soit qui mal y pense* (in French) meaning: *Shame on them who think badly*. The order is conferred to the members of the Royal family and 25 knights. The only commoner to have received the order was Sir Winston Churchill in 1957. This order gives the bearer the right to be buried in Westminster Abbey.

The next important order is that of the Bath established during the reign of Henry IV (1399-1413). The name of the order comes from the ceremony of bathing (the symbol of purity) before being given it. There are three different degrees of the order, the highest being the first: 1) G.C.B. (Grand Cross of the Bath); 2) K.C.B. (Knight Commander of the Bath), 3) C.B. (Commander of the Bath). The highest military award in Great Britain is the Victoria Cross instituted by Queen Victoria in 1856 to mark the victory in the Crimean War. It is a bronze Maltese Cross with a Lion in its centre and the inscription "For Valour" under it. The cross is made from the metal of the Russian guns captured in Sevastopol during the Crimean War in 1855.

Several traditional ceremonies are held in the capital of Great Britain attracting the attention of many Londoners and their numerous domestic and foreign guests. One of them observed every day is the changing of the Household Guards quartered in the Chelsea and Wellington Barracks near the Buckingham Palace. The Brigade of Guards of the Queen (and the Royal family body-guards) consists of two regiments representing the nationalities of the United Kingdom. The English Grenadiers wear the bear skin caps



twenty inches high. The Scots Guards wear a wide black ribbon on the back of their uniform colour 15 cm wide and 25 cm long.

All the Guards wear scarlet or red tunics and black trousers except the Scots Guards wearing their traditional regimental cloth. The Irish Guards wear a triple row of brass buttons and distinctive plumes. The second ceremonial event which can be seen at 11 a.m. every weekday and at 10 a.m. on Sundays is Mounting the Guard. In this ceremony the Household Cavalry (the Royal and Life Guards) take part. They wear breast and back shiny plates made of steel armour. The third ceremony is observed only once a year on the second Saturday in June at ab. 11.15 a.m. and is called Trooping the Colour. The ceremony marks the ‘official’ birthday of the Queen and presents an inspection parade of the Queen’s own troops. This spectacular ceremony with the Queen riding side-saddle on a highly trained horse ahead of the Guards is watched by many hundreds of people.

Among other old traditions the most prominent are the ceremony of the Keys which is over 700 years old (since 1215 when King John was forced to sign the Magna Charta) and Lord Mayor’s Show. The latter goes back to the mayoralty of Richard (Dick) Whittington, who was mayor four times (1396, 1397, 1406 and 1419). The Lord Mayor rides from the City in a splendid six horses-spanned coach through the streets of London and stops at Law Courts where he is presented to the Lord Chief of Justice, who hands him his sword of office after receiving a solemn promise to carry out his duties faithfully. The procession then continues to Westminster, and then returns to the Mansion House, the official residence of the Lord Mayor.