

Gandzilevska G., Shyriaieva T. The Concept of National Identity and its Preservation in the Literary Works of Ukrainian Writers of Australian Diaspora. *Science and Education: a New Dimension. Pedagogy and Psychology*. 2015. III (37), iss. 75. P. 95–97.

Galyna Ganzilevska,
National University of Ostroh Academy, PhD, associate professor
E-mail: handzilevskahalyna@gmail.com

Tetiana Shyriaieva
National University of Ostroh Academy, PhD, associate professor
E-mail: tetiana.shyriaieva@oa.edu.ua

Preservation of National Identity in the Works of Ukrainian Writers of Australian Diaspora

In the light of transformation to European Union that Ukraine faces nowadays, the problem of national identity preservation appears to be of a great importance. It is worth mentioning that amid factors which influence national identity preservation in Ukrainian immigrants, researchers enlist family, church, education, social organizations, country of one's current living and the country of one's origin [8]. Sometimes, the list includes additional option that is cultural and artistic activity [2].

In our previous research devoted to the issue of artistic activity of the immigrants of the third wave, we followed the idea of A. Atamanenko [1], according to who, its representatives have peculiar national identity, and we came up with a conclusion that Ukrainian Diaspora in Australia was formed after World War II when compared to the one of Canada or the USA [7]. Moreover, despite all difficulties that Ukrainians came across in the first years of their staying in Australia, their cultural and artistic activity was being actively developed that positively influenced the preservation of national identity in Australian Ukrainians

[6]. While observing the influence of artistic activity of Ukrainian Diaspora in the context of its national identity preservation, the literary works of Ukrainian writers seem to be decisive. According to V. Maruniak, it is literary activity that can be viewed as the main area of artistic reflection of immigration activity [10, p.183].

The analysis of the role of literary works of Ukrainian immigrants is impossible without clear understanding of the period of immigration. Thus the first years of Australian immigration were remarkable because of the almanac “New Horizon”, which was edited by an activist Dmytro Nytchenko (Chub) “Lastivka” (Melbourne). Not only the works of outstanding Ukrainian writers who lived at the time in Australia could be found in it, but the information concerning various aspects of life of Ukrainians in Australia, especially the one about artistic units that popularized Ukrainian culture abroad, was widely described [4]. To analyze the tendency with which Ukrainian writers participated in active artistic life, we focused our attention on Issue 2 of the above mentioned almanac “New Horizon”, the editorial board of which was comprised of the widely known names of G. Chornobytska, P. Vakulenko, and D. Chub. The publishing of an issue was devoted to the 10th anniversary of Ukrainian immigrants’ living on the territory of Australia. The number of writers whose works were published in this issue doubled as compared to the one of the previous issue, which is an undeniable proof of active participation of immigrants in Ukrainian culture preservation. In the list of writers there were M. Deiko, O. Katran, L.Gaievska-Denes, Z. Kogut, P.Dubova, S. Radion, T. Voloshka etc. These writers spent 10 previous years on publishing their works in separate books. However, more frequently they popularized their works with a help of newspapers, such as “Iednist”, “Ukrainets v Avstralii” etc. Though, it should be mentioned that it was in 1951 that Ukrainian magazine “Nash Visnyk” edited by D.Chub saw the world [4, p.231].

Measuring the importance of works of Ukrainian Diaspora writers, Iu. Denysenko paid attention to the criterion of location, which was introduced by M. Soroka and related to the place where the development of writers’ artistic activity took place, and underlined the literary heritage of Dmytro Nytchenko’s

daughter L. Bohuslavets. In 1943 together with her family she immigrated to Germany. Later, in 1949 she moved to Australia. According to Iu. Denysenko, the representatives of the first wave of immigration were the real Diaspora members as their literary development took place not outside the territory of their Motherland [5].

L. Bohuslavets is the member of the National Writer's Union of Ukraine, the member of V. Symonenko literary and artistic club and the literature laureate of 'Triumph'. In the light of national identity preservation she emphasizes the role of such social institutions as choirs, dance and theater clubs, and groups of bandurists, Plast, SUM, sports organizations etc, about which she mentions in her private correspondence dated on December 3, 2013 and February 4, 2014. Having analyzed the works of L. Bohuslavets, Iu. Denysenko relates to the concept of 'national feminism'. According to the researcher, the problems of a woman are closely connected to those of the Ukrainian nation [5]. I. Kominiarska cited O. Veretiuk while saying that the identity of a writer as an organic unity occurs only when the national identity of a writer as an individual and the national identity of their literary work are of the same nature [9, p.51].

K. Tereshchenko understands national identity as the feeling of resemblance to the nation, its history, past and present, responsibility for Motherland and certainty about concrete deeds realization [12]. She has defined two blocks in the structure of the national identity: cognitive and affective and she understands national identity as a feeling of unity with the nation, its history, present and past, sharing the responsibility for Motherland and certainty about the necessity of active social participation. So far, cognitive block is comprised of such factors as one's awareness about national group existence, his/her own belonging to the group, knowledge about the national territory, emblems, symbols, institutions, traditions, history, outstanding figures, common origin and relation of an individual to the national group. Affective block is made of subjective actuality of national identity and the degree of affection to national identity: the ability to reject it or the membership in it, the feeling of belonging to national group, the level of

affection and feelings concerning national territory, social feelings such as being proud of your nation, ashamed, guilty or nationally self-respectful [11].

In the context of current history of Ukraine the fact of national identification preservation appears of a great interest for the researchers. Thus in this paper the main attention is paid to the factors of national identity that can be examined in the works of writers who immigrated from the territory of Ukraine while continuing writing about it.

In our previous research of the national identity of Australian Ukrainians in the work of L. Bohuslavets "Moia Avstraliiska kuma" (1990) [3] we used the method of content analysis to define the categories of national identity (national identifiers). The classification of identifiers was introduced by O. Udod who defined five factors of national identity, namely collective identification, common history, social life, geographical belonging and national character [13, p.34]. Having assessed the lexical material of the above mentioned text, we counted average validity or partial lexical distribution.

The statistics of content analysis showed that the process of national identity preservation in Australian Ukrainians occurs mainly due to their active participation in social meetings of various types (average variable 0.91%). Below, identifiers were placed according to their average variable figures from the highest to the lowest: national character, which is a set of traditions and cultural believes that are kept by Ukrainians (0.67%), collective identification (0.58%), common history (0.46%) and geographical belonging (0.39%). The general number of lexical units in the text amounts to 20,813 [7].

However, it appears reasonable to examine one more text of the same writer to measure national identity identifiers. Our attention was focused on the one of the latest texts of L. Bohuslavets "My thirteenth journey to Ukraine" (2014) in which she colorfully described her impressions and thoughts about Ukraine, the country she was born in. As far as two texts under analysis were written at different time periods, it can be assumed that statistical importance of categories of national identity preservation can be different. Content analysis of this text showed that

preservation of national identity in Australian Ukrainians is possible due to their active participation in social events (average variable 0.87%). The following figures were: common history (0.71%), national character (0,62%), geographical belonging (0.59%) and collective identification (0.32%). The general number of vocabulary units is 16,795.

As it becomes obvious, in both texts social life identifier is predominant. Active social life is a category that is comprised of cultural and educational meetings, professional and religious associations, activity in political groups. National character is a component represented by the system of individual's attitudes to the surrounding, which he/she demonstrates in various types of behaviour. However, in the first text mainly cultural public meetings were mentioned, while in the second the mentioning about religious institutions, such as churches, temples, monasteries etc prevail.

Common history is the factor that got lower variable but is still higher than the rest. We see this as a memory that unites and is kept as a system of individual attitudes to the surrounding world which is reflected in typical patterns of behaviour or mental stereotypes known as a national character. Moreover, geographical belonging goes next and partially summarises above mentioned factors. The preservation of religious and moral principles that Ukrainian is famous for appears to be more vivid than geographical but higher than historic belonging to one's own nation. It is widely known that Ukrainian nation is religious and family-oriented that explains the fact that language, religion and culture are embraced into the concept of their national identity.

To conclude, it should be mentioned that all the findings got in the research suggest that national identity is not a simple concept but a complex unity of integral elements, all of which influence the possibility of an individual to be and feel as the part of community that lives on a certain territory, keeps the rules and traditions that regulate their perception of the world, and identifies itself as with the majority of representatives of the same nation. Moreover, the research has proved that social life is an essential factor that helps to transmit information

between generations and to unite with those individuals who share similar system of attitudes and beliefs. It became clear from the works of L. Bohuslavets that one's belonging to a particular nation is not so much linked to the territory that the nation lives on but relates to the peculiarities of national culture, customs and traditions.

Such assumptions stress the importance of national identity preservation as a means to make Ukrainian nation survive, its cultural and moral values flourish, and religious devotion strengthen. Moreover, the indicators of national identity that are got from the works of Ukrainian immigrants to Australia are introduced and can be further measured in the literary works of other Ukrainian immigrants.

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