








## The lexical content of the description of Ukrainian Cultural realities in the awesome Ukraine book series

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### APA Citation:

Biletska, I.A., Paladieva, A.F., Laukhina, I.S., Kryshko, A.Yu., & Hurskiy, I.Yu. (2021). The lexical content of the description of Ukrainian Cultural realities in the awesome Ukraine book series. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 17(Special Issue 2), 1220-1229.

Submission Date: 03/01/2021

Acceptance Date: 14/03/2021

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### Abstract

Intense globalization and consequent expansion of intercultural contacts have led to the foundation for interlinguoculturology, a new sub-field in linguistics. It is focused on the study of English as a language of intercultural communication, which makes the article extremely relevant. This research aims to study lexical features of the English-language description of Ukrainian culture based on the Awesome Ukraine Book Series. In article was distinguished thematic groups of exotisms and determinate their role in demonstrating foreign-language cultural realities based on a lexico-semantic analysis of exotic vocabulary, presented in the description of foreign-language cultures. Also, the thematic groups of urbanonyms of the book series "Amazing Ukraine" were identified and their functions were indicated. As a result, it was found out that one of the most common types of texts, which describe a foreign-language culture, is a tourist guide. In general, tourist guides belong to intercultural communication and tourism discourse. They contain up-to-date information about the described tourist objects, their history and cultural features, as well as a wide range of traditions and customs. Urbanonyms, as a separate group of lexical units, are intended to nominate intraurban objects. They embody the semantic image of a city and shape its urban space.

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*Keywords:* interlinguoculturology; intercultural communication; lexical features; urbanonyms; exotisms

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## 1. Introduction

Recent linguistic studies show a growing interest in the problem of describing a foreign-language culture. It must be noted that many scholars pay considerable attention to linguistic features when describing foreign-language cultural realities, conceptually comprehend features and functions of exotic vocabulary, which is a contribution to the theoretical foundations of lexicology, functional

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stylistics, intercultural communication and cultural linguistics (Holovach, 2016a; Shigapova et al., 2016).

This research aims to study lexical features of the English-language description of Ukrainian culture based on the Awesome Ukraine Book Series. In article was distinguished thematic groups of exotisms and determinate their role in demonstrating foreign-language cultural realities based on a lexico-semantic analysis of exotic vocabulary, presented in the description of foreign-language cultures. The authors of this article have identified 115 exotisms, each of which belongs to a specific thematic group, which makes it possible to create a holistic picture of the described cultural characteristics. Based on the summary of different views on the interpretation of an exotic vocabulary, the author of this research considers it as a class of non-equivalent lexical units, which denote unique cultural realities of the source language that narrows the field of their use and explains the low level of word-formation productivity (Prasol, 2014).

### *1.1. Literature review*

As evidenced by modern research, the means of expressing foreign-language cultures include travel texts of guidebooks and local lore research papers from print media. The specifics of descriptive papers and texts implies a carefully considered structure and selection of specific lexical units and correspondents from their wide range, which are needed to create a holistic picture of the described city for readers, that is, carriers of another culture. In this regard, the linguistic features of texts in English-language guidebooks serve as a starting point for a full understanding of foreign-language cultural realities (Speake, 2003; Sadovnikova and Kolomiets, 2013; Novikova, 2014; Petryshyn, 2014; Marsheva et al., 2017; Yıldırım; 2020). Modern linguistics shows a growing interest in an exotic vocabulary. Despite the fact, that this particular problem has been discussed in many scientific works, there is still no unified approach to understanding the concept of exotism (Lefter, 2018; Bal-Gezegin, 2019; Wellgraf, 2020).

In his textbook “Introduction to Linguistics”, M. Kocherhan (2002) interprets exotisms as “some words native to other peoples or countries” and denote the realities of only another’s reality. However, there is no agreement on what the country of origin is, that is, the so-called “native home” of a borrowed exotic lexical unit. O. Selivanova (2010) regards the term “exotisms” as “words or expressions borrowed from other, mostly, little-known languages”.

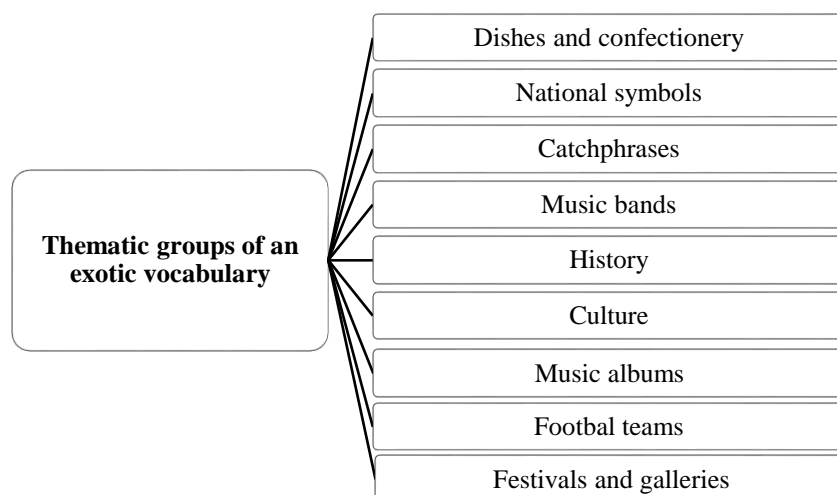
### *1.2. Research questions*

The research objectives are the following:

- 1) to distinguish thematic groups of exotisms and determine their role in demonstrating foreign-language cultural realities based on a lexico-semantic analysis of exotic vocabulary, presented in the description of foreign-language cultures;
- 2) to distinguish thematic groups of urbanonyms in the Awesome Ukraine Book Series and outline their functions.

## **2. Methods**

Within the framework of this research, 115 exotisms have been identified in the Awesome Ukraine Book Series (Figure 1). Each of them belongs to a specific thematic group, which makes it possible to create a holistic picture of the described cultural features.



**Figure 1.** Thematic groups of an exotic vocabulary

The research finds that history is the largest thematic group (26% of exotisms), which include lexical units creating a particular authentic atmosphere of the described tourist sites.

The historical exotism “Orange Revolution” (Krawchenko, 2016) makes it possible for readers to know about the events in Ukrainian history that took place between November 2004 and January 2005. Explaining the meaning of this exotism, the authors of the Awesome Ukraine Book Series also refer to other exotisms, such as “Razom nas bahato! Nas ne podolaty!” (All together we are one! All together we are strong!) (Krawchenko, 2016), “Tak!” (Yes!), which belong to catchphrases. The author of this research considers a combination of these exotisms with “Orange Revolution” (Krawchenko, 2016) rather appropriate since it somehow unites them.

The history group also includes “banderivtsi” (mostly, Ukrainian nationalists) (Kopylova, 2016a), which is used to denote Ukrainian patriots who fought for the independence of Ukrainian lands. The use of this exotism in the Awesome Ukraine Book Series (Kopylova, 2016a) is closely intertwined with the name of Hero of Ukraine Stepan Bandera; “Ruska Pravda” (Rus’ Justice or Rus’ Law) (Kopylova, 2016b) is a collection of laws of the times of Yaroslav the Wise; “Oblyvaniy Ponedilok” (Wet Monday) (Kopylova, 2016a) means the day after Easter on which people splash each other with water as a mark of purification. The authors of the Awesome Ukraine Book Series (Kopylova, 2016a) also mention about a firmly established tradition in Lviv which can cause many troubles to the foreigners who have just come to Lviv and are unfamiliar with local traditions: “If you are not ready for a cold shower in Lviv’s center, you should avoid crowded places on this day” (Kopylova, 2016a).

The football team group is one of the two smallest groups. It is represented by such exotisms as “Karpaty Lviv” (Kopylova, 2016a) and “Lokomotyv” (Kopylova, 2016a). In the Awesome Ukraine Book Series, the description of Lviv’s football life includes the colourful exotism “Vivtsi! Vivtsi!” (Sheep! Sheep!) (Kopylova, 2016a), which Lviv football fans shout when football players fail. According to the authors of the Awesome Ukraine Book Series, “this pejorative is a unique term used by Lviv fans which you won’t hear anywhere else in Ukraine” (Kopylova, 2016a). Such an exotism must arouse interest in foreign tourists, who also enjoy using such expressions during football matches. The exotisms denoting music albums belong to the music albums group: “Tam, de nas nema” (Wherever we aren’t) (Kopylova, 2016a), which is the debut studio album of the Ukrainian music band “Okean Elzy”; “Vnochi” (At night) (Kopylova, 2016a) is a solo jazz-rock project by the Ukrainian musician Sviatoslav Vakarchuk.

Besides, it is essential to highlight the following exotisms from the music bands group: “Okean Elzy” (Elza’s Ocean) (Kopylova, 2016a), “Braty Hadyukiny” (Hadyukin Brothers) (Kopylova, 2016a), “Boombbox” (Kopylova, 2016a), “Dakha Brakha” (the group’s name derives from Ukrainian verbs “davaty” (give) and “braty” (take), while also playing around with the art centre’s name “Dakh” (roof)). The functions of these exotisms boil down to capturing the image of Ukraine through the prism of these music bands, as a country with dynamic musical trends, which “keeps pace with the times”. The stimulated interest will be reflected in widening the readers’ visions (Piault, 2018) and will surely motivate them to listen to these music bands and albums to hear the dynamic Ukrainian music. The musical instruments group is also characterized by particular music-related content. It involves such exotisms as “trembita” (an alpine horn made of wood) (Krawchenko, 2016), “tsymbaly” (the Ukrainian version of the hammer dulcimer) (Krawchenko, 2016) and “bandura” (a Ukrainian, plucked string, folk instrument) (Krawchenko, 2016). It must be noted that the authors of the Awesome Ukraine Book Series have managed to draw a parallel between “trembita” and a mobile phone since this musical instrument used to embody the role of a powerful means of communication in the Ukrainian Carpathians in the far past (Krawchenko, 2016). They indicate, “the entire life of a Carpathian village could be voiced with this pipe: from one mountain to another, shepherds shared important news, warned about danger, informed of new births, sent out wedding invitations and accompanied the departed on their final journey with sorrowful melodies” (Krawchenko, 2016). In the context of the English-language description of Ukrainian culture, the following exotisms of the national symbols group are no less important: “vyshyvanka” (an embroidered shirt in Ukrainian national costumes) (Krawchenko, 2016), “rushnyk” (a ritual cloth embroidered with symbols) (Krawchenko, 2016), “hryvnia” (the national currency of Ukraine) (Krawchenko, 2016), “kopiyyka” (a monetary subunit of the hryvnia) (Krawchenko, 2016), “bulava” (a type of mace 50–80 cm in length consisting of a handle and head in the shape of a sphere or octahedron) (Krawchenko, 2016), “tryzub” (a trident) (Krawchenko, 2016), “oseledets” (an element of a traditional Ukrainian Cossack haircut) (Krawchenko, 2016).

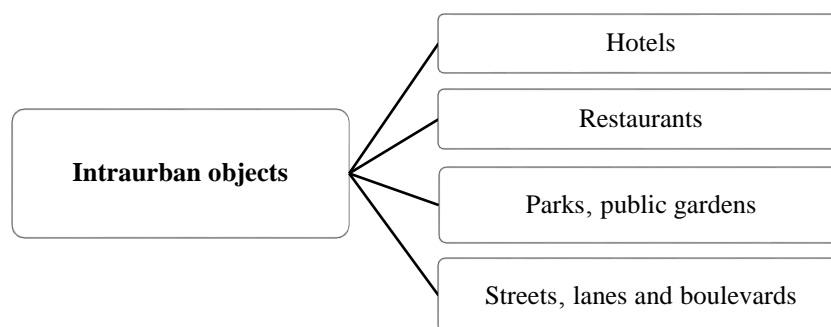
Vyshyvanka (Krawchenko, 2016) is viewed as a holy thing and a talisman passed down from generation to generation. The authors of the Awesome Ukraine Book Series (Krawchenko, 2016) emphasize that modern designers consider it as a trending item, which foreign tourists can buy in Ukrainian markets or clothes stores. It must be noted that the semantization of this exotism aims to inspire respect for the Ukrainian tradition of wearing vyshyvanka and, at the same time, encourage to come to Ukraine to purchase it for oneself as an exquisite souvenir or a gift for friends and relatives.

Tryzub (Krawchenko, 2016) is semantized through presenting historical facts, as well as through a well-chosen image that illustrates the direct use of the tryzub logo in modern brand names.

### 3. Results and Discussion

The culture group is the richest one in the thematic aspect. Its striking example is the exotism “*Ivana Kupala*” (Krawchenko, 2016), which serves to mark the Ukrainian holiday, which has a religious basis and is celebrated on the night of July 6th. An important component of its semantization is the historical background, which informs foreign tourists about the rich traditions associated with this holiday that may seem strange and unusual to “the discoverers” of a foreign-language culture. After analyzing the thematic diversity of an exotic vocabulary, the author of this research can conclude that these lexical units perform the three main functions: 1) they present specific and unique realities for which there is no analogy in the native language of the reader (a potential tourist); 2) the authors of the Awesome Ukraine Book Series use them to describe an authentic experience more “colourfully”; 3) they can intrigue the reader since they inspire his or her interest in the described realities and impress him or her with their extraordinariness and mysteriousness.

Thus, exotisms not only successfully complement the laconic descriptions but also attract the reader's (tourist's) attention to the mysterious secrets of a particular national dish, for whom Ukrainian culture and the image of a typical Ukrainian are riddled with mysteries. The analysis of the thematic groups of an exotic vocabulary and their functions proves that exotisms serve as a kind of "language paint" in the Awesome Ukraine Book Series as they intend to describe cultural realities with the national or regional colours. The description of a foreign-language city is a complex system that includes a carefully selected range of lexical units that will be key to understanding a foreign-language culture. An urban vocabulary is given a prominent place in such a description since it involves the names of all intraurban objects that foreign tourists might encounter during their journey.

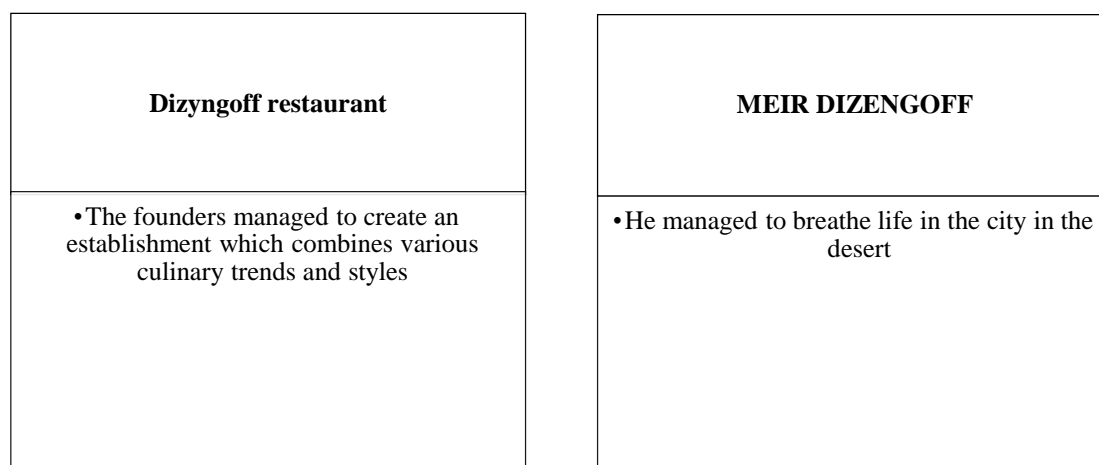


**Figure 2.** Types of intraurban objects

As seen in Figure 2, the range of intraurban objects is rather wide since it covers all urban infrastructure and addresses included in tourist guides as the indicators of the practicality of the given information. Thus, urbanonims are understood as lexical units used to express a wide range of intraurban objects. A lexico-semantic analysis of an urban vocabulary shows that one of the largest groups of urbanonims includes lexical units denoting street names. In the Awesome Ukraine Book Series, they are as follows: "*Deribasivska Street*" (De Ribas Street) (Kopylova, 2017) is the main street in Odesa named after the Spanish nobleman and the founder of the city José de Ribas. The authors of the Awesome Ukraine Book Series familiarize readers with this lexical unit through the prism of information about the founder of Odesa; "*Staroportofrankivskyi Street*" (Kopylova, 2017; Lozoviuk, 2017) is a street that marks the port line in Odesa.

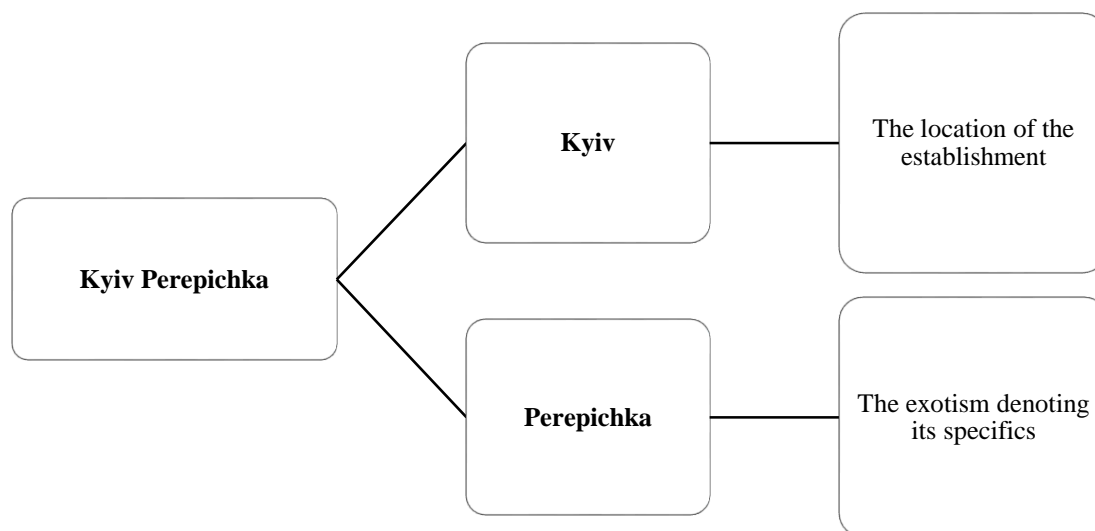
The urbanonims of the restaurant group (14%) are characterized by remarkableness and originality, which help them to be distinguished from several other names and be etched in the memory of tourists (Pryma, 2015).

"*Dizyngoff*" (Kopylova, 2017) denotes a food establishment where the intellectual elite of Odesa meets. According to the authors of the Awesome Ukraine Book Series, it was named after a charismatic leader and the first mayor of Tel Aviv: "*The name of the institution was chosen not by chance. Its main message is in the image of a charismatic person, the first mayor of Tel Aviv – Meir Dizengoff*" (Kopylova, 2017).



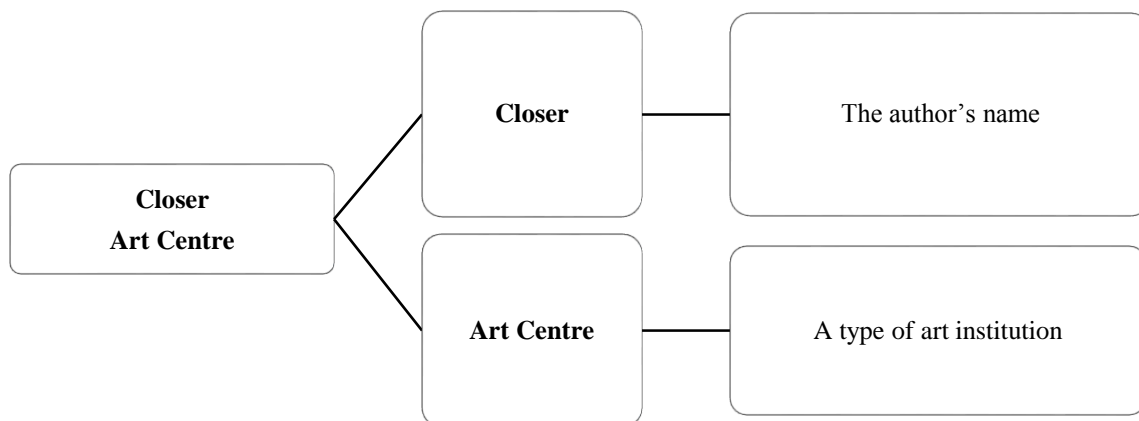
**Figure 3.** An analogy between a naming unit and a historical figure

As seen in Figure 3, the founders of the restaurant have attempted to draw a parallel between the charismatic leader, who put Tel Aviv on the world map, and the originality and courage of the restaurant's combination of cuisines and culinary styles. The author of this research believes that the very name can become a trademark of the restaurant and may, to some extent, shape its image. Besides, the authors of the Awesome Ukraine Book Series have also shown a bold image of a human-faced dove supplementing the restaurant's name since its owners view it as a symbol of a socially-active person who regularly visits such establishments (Kopylova, 2017).



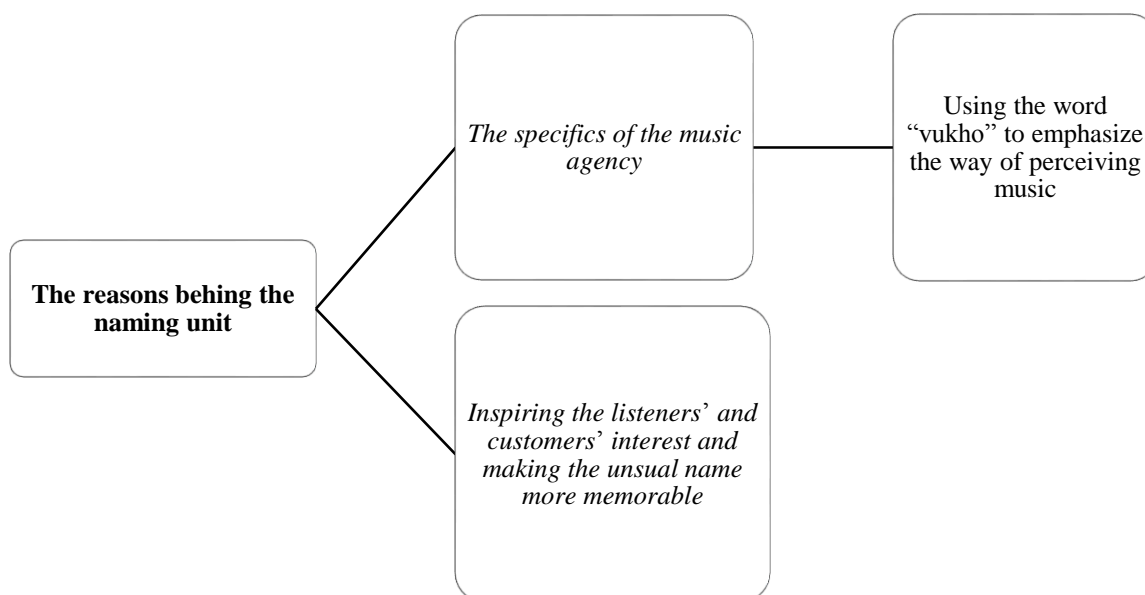
**Figure 4.** Structural components of the urbanonim “*Kyiv Perepichka*” (Kopylova, 2016b)

“*Kyiv Perepichka*” (Kopylova, 2016b) denotes an establishment that specializes in pastry. In the context of this research, the structure of this urbanonim is quite interesting. As seen in Figure 4, its structural components include the location of the establishment and the exotism “*Perepichka*”, which is key in understanding its specifics. The art institutions group (10%) also deserves particular attention. A striking example of this thematic group is “*Closer Art Centre*” (Kopylova, 2016b) (Figure 5). In the structural aspect, it consists of two components: the author's name and a type of art institution.



**Figure 5.** Structural components of the urbananim “*Closer Art Centre*” (Kopylova, 2016b)

Taking into account the names of music agencies, they can also be rather exotic, like for example, “*Ukho*” (Kopylova, 2016b), which is the name of a music agency in Kyiv. The authors of the Awesome Ukraine Book Series indicate, “*Ukho*”, translated as “ear”, is Kyiv’s coolest music agency” (Kopylova, 2016b). The owners of the agency have decided to use an unconventional approach, transliterating the Ukrainian word “vukho”. Figure 6 shows that the reason behind it is not only the specifics of this music agency but also a memorization technique.



**Figure 6.** The reasons behind the nomination of the urbananim “*Ukho*” (Kopylova, 2016b)

The author of this research concludes that urbanonyms, as a special lexical layer, are intended to nominate intraurban objects. Much of these lexical units are contained in tourist guides. They do not only nominate but also provoke a lively interest in the described tourist object (Holovach, 2016).

#### 4. Conclusions

The following conclusions have been drawn. One of the most common types of texts, which describe a foreign-language culture, is a tourist guide. In general, tourist guides belong to intercultural communication and tourism discourse. They contain up-to-date information about the described tourist objects, their history and cultural features, as well as a wide range of traditions and customs. The offered information, combined with certain tips and recommendations, not only lays the groundwork for a full immersion in the cultural space of another country but also provides the opportunity to paint an imaginary portrait of a resident and properly formulate strategies and tactics for one's behaviour.

A lexico-semantic analysis of 115 exotisms shows that the history group is the largest one among the identified thematic groups. It describes specific realities of a foreign-language culture ("Orange Revolution"; "Euromaidan"). The smallest thematic groups are music albums and football teams. The reason behind it should be the author's intention to focus tourists' attention on historical exotisms, which enable them to make an imaginary journey to the past and come across the mysteries of that time. Urbanonims, as a separate group of lexical units, are intended to nominate intraurban objects. They embody the semantic image of a city and shape its urban space. The sights group is the largest one among the thematic group of urbanonims (42% out of a total of 100 urbanonims analyzed). The restaurants group is the smallest one among them (14% out of a total of 100 urbanonims analyzed).

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## Kitap serisinde Ukrayna kültürel gerçekliklerinin açıklamasının sözcüksel içeriği Awesome Ukraine

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### Özet

Yoğun küreselleşme ve daha sonra kültürlerarası kontakların daha sonra genişletilmesi, dilbilimdeki yeni bir bölüm olan interlingvokültürolojinin başlangıcına işaret etti. Bir makaleyi son derece alakalı kılan kültürlerarası iletişimin bir dili olarak İngilizce öğrenmeye odaklanmıştır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, "Awesome Ukrayna" kitabına göre Ukrayna kültürünün İngilizce dil açıklığının sözlüksel özelliklerini incelemektir. Makale, tematik egzotizm gruplarını vurguladı ve yabancı dil kültürlerinin açıklamasında sunulan egzotik kelime bilgisinin sözcük-anlamsal analizi temelinde yabancı dil kültürel gerçeklerinin gösterilmesinde rollerini belirledi. "Awesome Ukrayna" kitabının Tematik Kentselleri grupları da tespit edildi ve onların işlevleri belirtildi. Sonuç olarak, yabancı dil kültürünü tanımlayan en yaygın metin türlerinden birinin turist rehberi olduğu ortaya çıktı. Genel olarak, rehberler kültürlerarası iletişim ve turizm söylemiyle ilgilidir. Açıklanan turistik nesnelere, tarihi ve kültürel özelliklerinin yanı sıra çok çeşitli gelenekler ve gümrük hakkında konuya ilişkin konuları içerir. Kentsellikler, ayrı bir sözcüksel birim grubu olarak, şehir içi nesnelere için tasarlanmıştır. Şehrin anlamsal görüntüyü somutlaştırırlar ve kentsel alanını oluştururlar.

*Anahtar sözcükler:* diller arası kültüroloji; kültürlerarası iletişim; sözlüksel özellikler; kentsellikler; egzotizmler.

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