

Ethnocultural Elements in Indirect Translation: From Vovchok's *Ukrainian Folk Stories* to Cadot's French via Turgenev's Mediating Text

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Abstract. This article examines the reproduction of culturally marked elements, including realia, phraseological expressions, and diminutive suffixes, in the indirect translation of Marko Vovchok's *Folk Stories* from Ukrainian into French via Ivan Turgenev's Russian translation. The aim of the study is to assess how the use of an intermediary language affects the rendering of cultural and stylistic aspects of the source text. The data were collected through the excerption of culture-specific units and analysed using comparative and contrastive methods. The findings show that the mediating text influences the conveyance of cultural elements in the target translation. Turgenev's translation partially neutralises ethnocultural realia, reduces emotional expressiveness, and simplifies the folk-colloquial tone. Cadot's French translation, based on a Russian intermediary, conveys these concepts through transliteration with explication, cultural equivalents, and descriptive adaptation, sometimes compensating for losses to ensure intelligibility for the target audience. Overall, these changes can be classified as preservation, partial adaptation, loss/neutralisation, or amplification/explanation. The analysis reveals that the translation outcomes ultimately depend on the translator's creativity and cultural awareness. Further research on indirect translation could provide deeper insights into the reception of Ukrainian literature within the French-speaking cultural space.

Keywords: Indirect translation, culture-specific elements, literary translation, mediating text, Ukrainian Folk Stories.

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Introduction

The literary heritage of Marko Vovchok (real name Maria Oleksandrivna Vilinska, 1833-1907) played a crucial role in the formation of Ukrainian literature of the 19th century, in particular in the development of social realist prose. Her collection *Folk Stories* (Narodni opovidannia, 1857) became a landmark in Ukrainian literary history and attracted wide attention beyond Ukraine, in the Russian Empire as well as in Eastern and Western Europe (Pavlyshyn 2013: 65–66). During the writer's lifetime, the stories of this cycle were translated into many European languages, including Russian, Polish, Czech, Bulgarian, Slovak, Serbian, Slovenian, Croatian, German, French, Italian and English (Cundy 1984: 5–7). They served as the main gateway through which readers became acquainted with Ukrainian culture.

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A significant place in the history of translations of *Folk Stories* belongs to the Russian translation, performed by Ivan Turgenev (1818–1883). In 1859, he adapted the stories, which, on the one hand, contributed to their broader dissemination, but on the other hand, led to a certain textual and cultural transformation caused by the transfer of the Ukrainian original to the Russian linguistic and cultural space (Dewey, 2023). This Russian-language version subsequently became the source text for a number of later translations into other European languages.

In the 20th century, the French scholar, Slavist and translator Michel Cadot (1926–2022) turned to Vovchok's texts. In 1999, he published a French translation of *Contes populaires ukrainiens* (Ukrainian Folk Stories), which was based not on the Ukrainian original but on Turgenev's translation. Thus, this translation represents a case of indirect translation, a linguistic and cultural phenomenon that has attracted increasing scholarly attention in contemporary translation studies (Dollerup 2000; Pięta 2019; Ivaska et al. 2020). In a broad sense, indirect translation is the translation of a text through a mediating version, which may potentially affect the language and also the semantic and stylistic features of the target text.

The aim of this article is to examine the peculiarities of the double transformation of Vovchok's text from the Ukrainian original through Turgenev's Russian translation to Cadot's French version. Particular attention is paid to the rendering of culture-bound concepts, including realia, phraseological units, diminutive suffixes, as well as domestic and ritual elements that reflect the national specificity of the source text.

In order to achieve this purpose, the following objectives were set: 1) to compare the Ukrainian originals, Turgenev's Russian version, and Cadot's French translation, identifying the key cultural notions and the tactics and strategies employed to render them. 2) to highlight the distinguishing differences in the conveyance of realia, phraseological units and diminutive suffixes in direct and indirect translation. 3) to analyse the peculiarities of reproducing culture-specific features in Cadot's French translation, taking into account the influence of the Russian mediating text.

The research questions for this paper are as follows:

1. What differences can be observed in the rendering of culturally marked elements between Vovchok's Ukrainian original, Turgenev's Russian translation and Cadot's indirect French translation?
2. How did the use of the Russian intermediary influence the transformation of cultural aspects in Cadot's French translation?

1. A brief overview of Russian and French renderings of Ukrainian Folk Stories

A collection of Vovchok's early works, written during the Nemyriv period of his life, was published at Kulish's printing house in St. Petersburg under the title of *Narodni opovidannia* in 1857. Its success was immediate and far-reaching. Regarded as a milestone in the development of Ukrainian literature (Vovchok 1983: 19), the stories attracted the attention of readers and critics beyond Ukraine. Among those deeply impressed by Vovchok's stories was the Russian writer Turgenev, who translated them into Russian. In 1859, his translation titled *Ukrainskie narodnye rasskazy* was published, accompanied by a preface in which he noted that Vovchok's works had already become beloved by the Ukrainian reading public. At the same time, there was a demand in Russian literary circles for high-quality translation, as the previous Vovchok's self-translations preserved an excessive number of features of the Ukrainian language, making them difficult for the Russian reader to understand. Turgenev set himself the challenge: "<...> on the one hand, to maintain the purity and correctness of the Russian language and, on the other hand, to preserve the distinctive poetic style, naive charm and grace (trans. ours) <...>" that characterised Vovchok's writings. Turgenev noted that the most difficult part of this work was preserving the unique atmosphere of the original texts, ultimately leaving the final assessment of his work to the readers' discretion (Turgenev 1859: 1–2).

One of the most notable examples of such indirect rendition is the French translation by Cadot. In 1999, Cadot published *Récits populaires ukrainiens* with the publishing house *Hachette Littératures*. His

translation, as he explicitly acknowledges in the preface, was based not on the Ukrainian original but on Turgenev's Russian translation. Cadot contextualises the publication in a historical and cultural context, tracing the origins of Vovchok's Stories to the Ukrainian oral folklore that she collected with her husband, the ethnographer Opanas Markovych (1822–1867). The translation also includes a glossary that contains explanations of culture-specific terms and realia. He also emphasises the profound social dimension of these stories, focusing on the fate of women such as peasants, servants, and Cossack wives who become victims of social and economic injustice.

A significant part of Cadot's introduction is devoted to the reception of Vovchok's texts in France, especially the reaction of Prosper Mérimée, who, upon reading Turgenev's translation, praised the stories for their social engagement. In his correspondence with Turgenev, Mérimée interpreted these stories as a kind of "call to rebellion", emphasising the political resonance of *The Folk Stories* in a Western European context. However, Mérimée also expressed caution about the difficulties of translating Ukrainian poetics into French, recognising the inherent limitations of such an attempt (Cadot 1999: 14–17).

Thus, this paratextual information helps to understand the translated text more deeply, guides the reader's perception and influences the interpretation of the original in a new cultural context, creating a kind of "threshold" between the work and the reader" (Genette 1997: 1). Consequently, Cadot's paratextual commentary ensures that readers are aware of the translation's indirect nature, highlighting its interpretative and historical dimensions.

2. Theoretical Background

Despite significant attention to translation as a means of interlingual and cross-cultural communication, the phenomenon of indirect translation remains relatively insufficiently theoretically studied in contemporary translation studies. In general terms, indirect translation is carried out not from the original text but from its translation into another language, which acts as an intermediate link in the chain of message transmission (Kittel et al. 1991; Gambier 2003). In particular, Gambier (2003: 57) defines it as "indirect translation of literary works based on a translated version of the original text", while Kittel & Frank (1991: 3) describe it as "any translation based on a source (or sources) which is itself a translation into a language other than the language of the original, or the target language".

Although indirect translation has a long history and is widely practised, it is often caused by asymmetry in languages' status, limited access to sources or specialists, and political or cultural circumstances (Washbourne 2013; Pięta 2019). The attitude towards this phenomenon in scientific discourse is controversial. For instance, Ringmar (2012) notes the negative connotations of indirect translation, comparing it to a "copy of a copy" that inevitably loses accuracy with each new translation. At the same time, several researchers (Shuttleworth et al. 1997; Landers 2001; Pięta 2014; Pięta et al. 2015; Pięta et al. 2022) emphasize its positive aspects: translation via an intermediary often provided access to literary works from peripheral cultures in languages of limited circulation and was frequently the only way to include such texts in international cultural exchange. In addition, indirect translation may offer economic benefits, including reducing translation costs and minimising the risk of market rejection, especially if the translation is done through a high-prestige language.

Even though scholarly discourse on indirect translation focuses mainly on its structural and pragmatic dimensions, it is equally important to consider how this process affects the conveyance of cultural distinctiveness inherent in the original text. In literary translation, culture-specific elements play a crucial role in shaping the ethnolinguistic identity of the source culture and the author's idiosyncrasy (Bassnett 1992; Newmark 1998; Lambert 1998; Venuti 2008). In the stories of Vovchok, such features often occur within a single sentence and include realia, phraseological units and diminutive-affectionate suffixes. Realia are words or lexical units denoting specific objects, phenomena, events, or facts characteristic of the SL culture which either have no direct equivalents in the TL or are referred to differently. Consequently, they lack exact counterparts in translation and require special ways for adequate reproduction in the target text (Newmark 1988; Zorivchak 1989; Vlachov et al. 1990; Baker 1992; Aixelà 1996).

Phraseological units are idiomatic constructions that function as separate semantic entities, often carrying figurative meanings, whose sense cannot be deduced from the individual words they are composed of. According to Baker, phraseological units are “frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation in form and often carry meanings which cannot be deduced from their individual components” (Baker 1992: 63). Being culturally bound and reflecting the worldview and traditions of a linguistic community, phraseological units pose significant challenges in translation, as they often lack direct correspondences and require culturally sensitive strategies to preserve their meaning and stylistic effect (Baker 1992; O’Mara 2007; Poshi et al. 2016).

Diminutives are morphological formations, typically formed by suffixation, that convey smallness, affection, emotional assessment, qualification and intimacy. In the Ukrainian language, nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, numerals, and pronouns can all take diminutive forms. The particularities of diminutives lie in their subjective evaluative nature, complex semantics, and multifunctionality, which makes their translation particularly challenging, especially between synthetic and analytic languages (Ivanina 2010; Leonavičienė 2015; Karaban 2016; Biały 2017).

In the case of Vovchok's stories, which belong to the genre of social realist narratives, cultural elements vividly portray peasant life, the position of women, and the customs and traditions of the 19th-century Ukrainian village. The use of realia, phraseological units, and diminutive-affectionate suffixes creates a unique ethnocultural context that the translator should convey in the target language, balancing between foreignisation and domestication to allow readers to fully perceive both the cultural depth and the emotional colouring of the narration (Venuti 2008). The study of indirect translation of Vovchok's works will enable an analysis of how cultural elements are transformed when the text is rendered through the mediating language. This approach will allow to assess the impact of indirect translation on the conveyance of the cultural background and emotional-pragmatic nuances of the original and will also contribute to a deeper understanding of indirect translation as a distinct phenomenon within translation studies.

3. Data and methodology

Several methods were used to conduct the analysis and achieve the objectives of this study. The methodology is based on a combination of comparative and contrastive approaches, supported by cultural and linguistic analysis, to examine the transformation of culture-bound concepts in the process of indirect translation. The study examines how Ukrainian source texts are mediated through Turgenev's translation before reaching their final form in Cadot's French translation.

The material for analysis consists of eighty fragments illustrating the diversity of Vovchok's narrative style. These excerpts, selected from the stories *Kozachka* and *Sestra*, are rich in ethnographic details, phraseological expressions, diminutive suffixes and folk stylistic units, making them well-suited for examining their rendering in translation. Such elements are central to the emotional tone and cultural identity of the original texts and may present challenges for translators.

The research unfolds in four stages:

1. Identification of culture-specific elements in the Ukrainian source texts.
2. Comparison of their equivalents in the Russian and French translations.
3. Classification of translation ways and strategies used to convey these items.
4. Interpretation of semantic shifts, stylistic transformations and cultural adaptations in the relay process.

To support the analysis, the research draws on established typologies of translation strategies, including those proposed by Newmark (1988), Vlachov and Florin (1990), Baker (1992), Aixela (1996), Vinay and Darbelnet (1995). The strategies studied include transference, cultural equivalent, descriptive translation, modulation, transposition, adaptation and omission. They are regarded as analytical tools within a comparative and contrastive framework.

In addition, paratextual elements such as glossaries, prefaces, and translator's notes are examined to assess how cultural gaps are addressed and to what extent the indirectness of translation is represented. This aspect of the study is based on Genette's (1997) concept of paratext as the threshold between text and its perception. By combining textual comparison, cultural interpretation, and classification of translation strategies, the methodology enables a nuanced understanding of how Ukrainian culture-bound concepts are transformed through the multi-level process of mediated translation.

4. Analysis and Discussion

The discussion draws upon the findings of a contrastive analysis of three versions of the text: the Ukrainian original (Source Text, ST), the Russian translation by Turgenev as an intermediary (Mediating Text, MT), and the French rendition by Cadot as a target text (Target Text, TT). The selected examples demonstrate various tactics and transformations employed to reproduce realia, phraseological units, diminutive suffixes, and stylistic features of the original.

The rendering of realia in the original and translations of Vovchok's *Kozachka* reveals certain discrepancies largely influenced by the intermediary nature of French translation.

ST	Живъ у насъ у селі козакъ Хмара; багатиръ бувъ! (Vovchok 1857: 37)
MT	Жиль у насъ въ селѣ козакъ Хмара, богатѣйшій человекъ! (Turgenev 1859: 43)
TT	Il y avait dans notre village un cosaque nommé Khmara, un homme d'une très grande richesse . (Cadot 1999: 144)

In this case, a semantic shift typical of indirect translation can be observed. The Ukrainian word *багатиръ* (*bahatyr*), defined in explanatory dictionaries as "a person of great strength, a brave, courageous warrior" (ESUM 1982 (1): 220), is rendered in Turgenev's translation as *богатейшій человек* (*a very wealthy man*), thereby shifting the meaning towards material affluence. This nuance is further reinforced in Cadot's French version, *un homme d'une très grande richesse* (*a man of great wealth*). As a result, the epic-heroic connotation of the word '*bahatyr*' gives way to a more neutral socio-economic interpretation. Regarding the image of the Cossack Khmara, it should be noted that the cultural word is conveyed by the method of transcription (transference according to Newmark), a common technique for reproducing such culture-loaded terms. This approach allows preserving the cultural and historical authenticity of the character.

The following example shows the specific features of rendering realia in indirect translation, which involves both direct transference of terms and their cultural adaptation and explanation.

ST	Уже шістнадцятий годокъ минає Олесі, вже й свати почали въ хату наvertатись (Vovchok 1857: 37). Свати й не переводятця въ Олесиній хаті : одні за двері, другі на порігъ. (Vovchok 1857: 38). Ажъ ось шле свати Иванъ Золотаренко. Олеся пошанувала любихъ гостей и рушники подавала (Vovchok 1857: 40).
MT	Сталь шестнадцатый годокъ исходить Олесѣ; стали сваты въ хату навѣдываться (Turgenev 1859: 43). Сваты не переводятся въ Олесинной хатѣ : одні за дверь, другіе на порогъ. (Turgenev 1859: 44). А тутъ присылаетъ сватовъ Иванъ Золотаренко. Олеся приняла дорогихъ гостей и рушники [Полотенца. Обычай, скрепляющий сватовство] имъ подала (Turgenev 1859: 46).
TT	Olessia atteinait ses seize ans; les prétendants commencèrent à se manifester à la maison . (Cadot 1999: 144).

Les prétendants ne diminuèrent pas dans **la chaumière** d'Olessia : les uns derrière la porte, les autres sur le seuil. (Cadot 1999: 145)
Un jour, Ivan Zolotarenko envoya ses **marieurs**. Olessia les accueillit et leur **remit des serviettes**. (Cadot 1999: 147)

In Ukrainian tradition, *рушник* (*rushnyk*, *ritual embroidered towels*) carry symbolic significance, particularly in wedding ceremonies. In the Russian translation, *рушник* is reproduced through transliteration, accompanied by an explanatory note in brackets “Полотенца. Обычай, скрепляющий сватовство” (*Towels. A ritual confirming the betrothal*) to help the Russian-speaking reader understand the cultural meaning of this word. This corresponds to Newmark’s strategy of explication, which involves clarifying cultural meanings to ensure comprehension. In the French translation, the Ukrainian word ‘*rushnyky*’ is rendered as *serviettes*, a term that literally means ‘*towels*’ but does not fully convey the cultural context. However, Cadot’s glossary provides the following explanation: “*Serviette. Lorsqu’un jeune homme, accompagné par le marieur, était agréé par les parents de la jeune fille, on lui remettait une serviette joliment brodée par celle-ci*”¹ (Cadot 1999 : 286). This represents an instance of cultural adaptation (cultural equivalent) combined with explication, where a glossary is used to convey the original meaning of the realia.

In the translations, the realia *свату* (*matchmakers*) and *хата* (*traditional Ukrainian rural house*; SUM 1980 (11): 29) undergo certain changes. In the Russian translation, both realia are preserved through the method of transference, as Russian culture contains similar elements. However, in the French translation, these realia are neutralised and replaced with more general concepts: *pretenders* and *maison*. This is an example of neutralisation (functional equivalent) which, according to Newmark, involves substituting a specific term with a more general one, accessible to the target audience. Such a strategy results in the loss of some of the cultural specificity present in the original and may deprive the foreign reader of a deeper understanding of Ukrainian life and traditions. The term *хата* is rendered as *maison*, which does not convey the unique flavour of the Ukrainian village. The use of the word *chaumière* in the French translation is an attempt at cultural adaptation (cultural equivalent), providing the reader with a proximate cultural analogue. In French, *chaumière* refers to a peasant house with a thatched roof, associated with rural life and traditional values (Robert 2025).

The further illustration shows how, in the process of indirect translation, not only the semantics but also the figurative and symbolic level of the text undergo transformation, in particular in the rendering of socio-cultural realia and metaphorical comparisons.

ST	Догадались тогді вже всі, кого Олеся дожидала, та такъ и забурчало по селу, мовъ у джерелі : "Якъ то можна! та де се видано! та хто таке чувъ, щобъ вільна козачка за крепака оддавалась!" (Vovchok 1857: 40).
MT	Тогда ужъ всѣ догадались, кого поджидала Олеся. По селу такъ и заклокотало, словно въ котлѣ . "Какъ это можно? Да гдѣ это видано, гдѣ слыхано, чтобъ вольная козачка шла за крѣпака ?" (Turgenev 1859: 46-47).
TT	Et déjà tous avaient deviné qui Olessia attendait. Dans le village tout bouillonnait comme dans un chaudron . « Comment est-ce possible ? Où a-t-on vu, a-t-on entendu qu’une cosaque libre épouse un serf ? » (Cadot 1999: 147).

In this example, two important Ukrainian cultural and historical concepts are presented, *козачка* (*cossack girl*) and *кріпака* (*serf*), which reflect the social division of the society of that time: free representatives of

¹ Ritual towel. When a young man, accompanied by a matchmaker, received the approval of the girl's parents, she would present him with an embroidered towel that she had made herself (our translation).

the Cossack class and dependent peasants. In Turgenev's translation, the realia *козачка* is rendered through transliteration, which ensures the preservation of ethno-cultural colour and historical specificity. At the same time, the word *крепак* is reproduced through Ukrainianism *крепак*, thereby maintaining the Ukrainian form instead of the usual Russian word *креpostnoy*. In the French translation, the realia *козачка* is reproduced as *une cosaque libre*, where transliteration with grammatical adaptation (shift / transposition) is applied: the masculine noun *cosaque* is marked with the article *une*, which denotes the female gender of the character. This technique allows to preserve the cultural peculiarity of the culture-specific item while adhering to the norms of the target language. The realia *крепак* is rendered as *serf*, a term belonging to the general European historical lexicon. At the same time, the translator restores national specificity through a footnote, where he provides a brief historical and cultural explanation of the concept of serf in the Russian-Ukrainian context, in particular, noting the special status of Ukrainian Cossacks as free farmers with military obligations (Cadot 1999: 285–286).

The Ukrainian metaphor *моє у джерелі* is changed to *словно в котле*, which represents an example of modulation, where the natural image of a spring (a symbol of purity and flowing stream) is replaced by the image of boiling in a cauldron. It conveys the emotional content but loses the national colour. Cadot's French translation *tout bouillonnait comme dans un chaudron (was boiling like a cauldron)* reproduces this adapted metaphor, indicating the influence of indirect translation. The French translator relies on the already modified Russian text.

Phraseological units in the source text *Kozachka* constitute an important part of the story's emotional and cultural coloring.

ST	Женихівъ у тебе, хвалить Бога, якъ цвіту въ городі; хоч греблю гати. (Vovchok 1857: 38). Не йди за крепака, не йди! якъ такого ходу, то лучче зъ мосту та въ воду! (Vovchok 1857: 42).
MT	"Жениховъ у тебя, слава Богу, какъ цвѣту въ огородѣ; хотъ прудъ пруди. (Turgenev 1859: 44-45). "Не выходи за крѣпака, не выходи! Ты ужъ лучше прямо съ мосту да въ воду! " (Turgenev 1859: 48).
TT	Des prétendants, grâce à Dieu, tu en as autant que de fleurs au jardin ou d'eau dans l'étang. (Cadot 1999: 145). N'épouse pas un serf, ne fais pas ça ! Va plutôt sur le pont et jette-toi à l'eau ! » (Cadot 1999: 149).

In translations, the phraseological meaning is preserved through modulation, achieved by adapting the image. In the expression *якъ цвіту въ городі; хоч греблю гати* (as many as flowers in a garden, more than enough to build a dam / in plenty), the second component *хоч греблю гати* is a Ukrainian phraseological unit meaning "a lot, a large amount of someone or something; in abundance" (FSUM 1998: 37). Turgenev replaces the second part of the Ukrainian idiom with the Russian equivalent *хотъ прудъ пруди* (*a dime a dozen*), which conveys the same hyperbolic sense of quantity. Cadot, relying on the Russian text, employs a combination of two images, *autant que de fleurs au jardin ou d'eau dans l'étang* (*as many as the flowers in a garden or as much as the water in a pond*), merging elements of the two comparisons. This technique can be classified as cultural adaptation (cultural substitution). The idiomatic expression *лучче з мосту та в воду* (*better to leap into the river than to endure it*) is reproduced almost literally in both translations *с мосту да в воду; va plutôt sur le pont et jette-toi à l'eau*, which demonstrates calquing the structure (through-translation) with minor grammatical adaptation to the norms of the target languages.

Diminutive words are an important feature of the Ukrainian language, which adds emotionality and expressiveness to the text. They are used to express tenderness, love, sympathy, or simply to create a softer, friendlier tone. In Vovchok's story *Kozachka*, such occur frequently and contribute to the creation of a distinctive emotional flavour.

ST	Олеся дрібними сльезами: “діточки мої! квіти мої!” (Vovchok 1857: 51). Пригорнула Олеся синячко до серця, облили її дрібні сльези. “Сину мій! дитя моє кохане!” (Vovchok 1857: 50). – Тітко-сердечко! нехай я ще погуляю! (Vovchok 1857: 39).
MT	Олеся горючими сльезами: “Дѣточки мои! цвѣтики мои!” (Turgenev 1859: 59). Прижала Олеся къ сердцу сыночка и облилась горькими сльезами: “Сынокъ мой! дитя мое милое, дорогое!” (Turgenev 1859: 57). “Тетушка, голубушка! дайте мнѣ еще погулять”. (Turgenev 1859: 45).
TT	Olessia verse des larmes brûlantes : “Mes petits enfants ! Mes petites fleurs !” (Cadot 1999: 159). Olessia pressait le poupon contre son cœur et versait des larmes amères : – Mon petit bonhomme, mon fils chéri ! (Cadot 1999: 157). – Ma chère petite tante ! Laissez-moi m’amuser encore un peu ! (Cadot 1999: 146).

In the Russian translation, Turgenev preserves the emotional tone of the original by using a number of affectionate forms (diminutives) ‘*деточки, цветики, сыночек, голубушка*’ (*little ones, little flowers, sonny, darling*), thereby reproducing the stylistic distinctiveness of the Ukrainian text. In the French translation, these forms are conveyed using lexical compensation and the addition of adjectives *petit, chéri, ma chère* (*little, darling, my dear*), which compensates for the absence of the grammatical category of diminutiveness in the French language. Thus, the translator employs compensation, a technique that allows restoring the lost emotional nuance through other linguistic means. As a result, although the formal diminutiveness of Ukrainian words is lost, their affective and emotional function is preserved due to the use of lexemes with positive connotations.

The present excerpt illustrates how the translation combines the rendering of diminutive and affectionate forms of the Ukrainian original reflecting its cultural and historical realia.

ST	Розходьтєсь, панове козаченьки , ...Послухайтє моєї тітки , її старечої та розсудливої вмови! (Vovchok 1857: 44).
MT	Расходитєсь, панове козаки! ...Послушайтєсь моеї тетки-старухи , ея разумнаго слова!" (Turgenev 1859: 51).
TT	Allez-vous-en, messieurs les cosaques ! ...Ecoutez les paroles raisonnables de cette vieille femme , ma tante! (Cadot 1999: 151).

The phrase *панове козаченьки* (*gentlemen cossacks*) in the Ukrainian text functions as a form of address to young Cossacks, combining politeness with the diminutive and affectionate tone typical for folk speech. This realia appears as *панове козаки* in Turgenev’s translation, which retains the social and military context but loses the affectionate nuance, thus employing the method of neutralisation. The French expression *messieurs les cosaques* conveys a social and professional form of address but lacks the diminutive tone characteristic of the Ukrainian original. The word *панове* is reproduced by the cultural equivalent *messieurs*, which corresponds to the norms of polite address in French. The lexeme *тетка* (*aunt*) emphasizes the family and social relationships among the characters. In the Ukrainian text, the image of the elderly aunt is associated with her life experience and wisdom, while in the Russian translation it appears as *тетка-старуха*, where the epithet *старуха* (*old woman*) reinforces her age and moral authority. The realia is rendered as *cette vieille femme, ma tante* (*this old woman, my aunt*) in the French version, which conveys both the age-related characteristic and the family connection, adapting to French linguistic and stylistic norms, while also reflecting the influence of Turgenev’s translation as an intermediate stage of indirect translation. Thus, the diminutive suffixes of the Ukrainian text are mostly

neutralised in both translations, and the emotional-affective colouring is only partially reproduced through lexical or descriptive means.

Vovchok's story *Sestra* is part of a cycle of her *Ukrainian Folk Stories*, depicting peasants' lives, their sufferings, and moral values. One illustrative example of translation strategies is the rendering of cultural realia in a fragment of the short story, which highlights the particular approaches employed by Turgenev and Cadot.

ST	Скільки полотна було, хустокъ, плахотъ, юпокъ! (Vovchok 1857: 6). Я вже п'ять карбованцівъ грошима загорювала та ще скриньку : то хустку купила, то сорочокъ справила кілька. (Vovchok 1857: 29).
MT	Сколько было полотна, платковъ, плахтъ, юпокъ! (Turgenev 1859: 8). А я уже пять цѣлковыхъ деньгами заработала, да еще и сундучокъ, платокъ себѣ купила, сорочекъ нѣсколько пошила. (Turgenev 1859: 35).
TT	Combien de pièces d'étoffe, de fichus, de jupes ! (Cadot 1999: 115). J'avais déjà gagné cinq roubles argent, je m'étais acheté un petit coffre et un fichu , je m'étais cousu aussi quelques chemises . (Cadot 1999: 139).

Полотно refers to a traditional fabric used for making clothes, in particular shirts. The Russian translation keeps the authentic meaning of *полотно* through transliteration, which conveys the cultural significance. The French translation *pièce d'étoffe* (*piece of fabric*) uses a descriptive equivalent, which reproduces the general meaning but diminishing the text of its ethnocultural uniqueness. Similarly, *хустка*, an element of traditional clothing, is translated into Russian as *платки*, a direct equivalent that preserves the cultural reference and retains the same association with women's headscarves. In French, the term is rendered as *fichus*, a cultural equivalent that conveys the general notion but lacks the original cultural connotation due to the absence of an analogue in French tradition.

The Ukrainian currency unit *карбованець* (*karbovanets*) is rendered in the Russian translation as *целковый*, an archaic term meaning 'whole ruble' (*silver ruble*), which carries its own historical and cultural context within the Russian Empire (TSRY 1940 (4): 1208). This represents a cultural equivalent (Newmark). In the French translation *roubles argent*, an indirect translation is affected via the Russian text, which preserves the Russian currency unit but doesn't reproduce the Ukrainian cultural specificity. *Скринька* is a household item with cultural significance in the Ukrainian context. Its authenticity is maintained through the selection of a direct equivalent *сундучек* (*little chest*) in Russian, which conveys both the object and its cultural connotation. The French translation also uses a direct equivalent *un coffre*, adding the diminutive adjective *petit* to compensate for the affectionate tone present in the Ukrainian original.

The Ukrainian original of Vovchok's story *Sestra* contains figurative, colloquial language rich in emotional overtones.

ST	– Се, – каже, – якъ усі господарюватимуть, то й господарство мое рознесуть чисто! Такі й золоту гору розимчать! (Vovchok 1857: 5).
MT	“Стануть все хозяйничать у меня, – всё хозяйство начисто растащут! Эдакъ и отъ золотой горы ничего не останется! ” (Turgenev 1859: 8).
TT	– Tout le monde en prend à son aise avec moi, on met la propriété au pillage ! Même une montagne d'or n'y suffirait pas ! (Cadot 1999: 114).

The expression *рознесуть чисто* (*they'll strip it bare*) in Vovchok's text functions as a phraseological unit in the figurative meaning of *розкрадати, розтягувати частинами* (*to plunder and divide up piece by piece*), which reflects the colloquial and vivid language of the original. The Russian translation *все хозяйство начисто растащут* (*they will plunder the whole property clean*) preserves both the colloquial tone and stylistic expressiveness, corresponding to Newmark's strategy of through-translation. Cadot's French translation *mettre la propriété au pillage* (*to plunder the property*) conveys the meaning through the metaphor of cultural and stylistic adaptation, maintaining the expressiveness and figurative meaning of the original, while introducing a historical and cultural connotation through the word *pillage* (DAF 2025). The metaphor *Такі й золоту гору розумчать* (*they'd strip even a mountain of gold*) in the Russian translation *Эдак и от золотой горы ничего не останется!* (*At this rate, even the golden mountain will be reduced to nothing!*) retains the imagery and figurative meaning of the original, emphasising the scale of destruction or waste. The French version *Même une montagne d'or n'y suffirait pas!* (*Even a golden mountain wouldn't be enough!*) preserves the image of the *золотої гору* and demonstrates cultural and stylistic adaptation, ensuring the idiomatic and expressive tonality of the translation.

The following example demonstrates the use of diminutive-affectionate morphology and figurative language that enhance the emotional and stylistic expressiveness of the original.

ST	Джергочуть коло мене, а мені вже такъ жалко, що й словечка не скажу; за слізеньками світу божого не бачу! (Vovchok 1857: 6).
MT	Лепечуть онъ около меня, а мнѣ ихъ такъ жалко, что и словечка вымолвить не могу. За слезами свѣта Божія не вижу. (Turgenev 1859: 9).
TT	Elles gazouillent autour de moi, mais elles me font tant de peine que je ne parviens pas à dire un seul mot. Les larmes me brouillent la vue. (Cadot 1999: 115).

In the Ukrainian original, the passage is distinguished by the use of diminutive-affectionate suffixes in the words *словечка* (*kind words*) and *слізеньками* (*little tears*), which convey a sense of emotional tenderness, delicacy, and intimacy, emphasising the narrator's vulnerability and sensitivity. The suffix *-ечк* in *словечка* underscores the tininess and affectionate tone of the word, while *-оньк* in *слізеньками* softens the image of tears, giving it a domestic and compassionate tone. The expression *світу божого не бачу* (*I can't see the light of day*) exemplifies a phraseological unit that figuratively denotes a state of emotional confusion and inability to perceive the external world due to profound inner turmoil. In the Russian translation *За слезами света Божия не вижу* (*I cannot see God's light through my tears*), the diminutive-affectionate suffixes are only partially preserved, while the idiom is conveyed using a close analogue. The structural division of the phrase introduces greater logical coherence but reduces its emotional intensity. In the French version, *Les larmes me brouillent la vue* (*My eyes are dimmed with tears*), both the diminutive-affectionate morphology and idiomaticity are fully neutralised; only the semantic content of the emotional "inability to see the world" is preserved, reproduced in a descriptive way, in accordance with the syntactic pattern of the Russian translation.

Conclusions

A comparative analysis of the three translations reveals that employing the Russian version as a mediating text has substantially affected the rendering of the cultural and stylistic features of the Ukrainian original. This influence is the result of both the relay stage itself and the translators' individual strategies.

At the first stage, when the text was translated from Ukrainian into Russian, Turgenev adapted the text to the norms of the Russian literary tradition, which led to a partial neutralisation of ethnocultural realia, a reduction in emotional expressiveness, and a simplification of colloquial colouring. He mainly used transliteration to preserve the ethnocultural distinctiveness of Ukrainian elements, occasionally

supplementing it with brief explanations or contextual clarifications. His approach demonstrates a clear attempt to balance the preservation of local colour with the comprehensibility necessary for the Russian-speaking readers. At the second stage, when the text was translated from Russian into French, Cadot relied on the Russian mediating version, reproducing in many cases already adapted realia and phraseological units, which further increased the degree of detachment from the Ukrainian source text. However, he partially compensated for these losses by using transcriptions, cultural equivalents, descriptive adaptations, and occasional translation notes, aiming to make the Ukrainian cultural context more accessible to French readers.

In rendering phraseological units, Turgenev usually employed loan translation (through translation), preserving the syntactic and semantic structure of Ukrainian expressions. Cadot, on the contrary, alternated between literal translation and analogue-based substitutions, striving for idiomatic and stylistic balance within the target language. Regarding diminutive and affectionate morphology, Turgenev reproduced these forms either fully or partially, taking into account the existence of a parallel diminutive system in Russian; however, in several cases the emotional nuances were neutralised. Cadot, on the other hand, resorted to lexical compensation, using affective adjectives or paraphrased formulations to reproduce the emotional tone.

The analysis offers clear insights into the research questions. The identified discrepancies in the representation of realia, phraseological units, and stylistic markers between direct and indirect translation confirm that transformations in indirect translation are inevitable. However, such modifications do not necessarily distort the meaning or reduce the quality of the target text. Conversely, some adaptations enhance the comprehensibility and acceptability for the target audience, reflecting the translator's efforts to harmonise culture-bound phenomena with the conventions of the target culture. To sum up, the findings of the study suggest that the use of a mediating language in translation affects the preservation of culturally marked features and also generates new layers of meaning, shaped by the translators' mediating roles. Further research in this field may provide a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which indirect translation influences the perception of Ukrainian literature in the broader European cultural space.

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