

МЕДІАСТИЛІСТИКА

Visn. Lviv. Univ., Ser. Zhurn. 2024: 54-55; 249–254 • DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.30970/vjo.2024.54-55.12166>

УДК 81'373.46:94(477)"1920/1930"

LINGUISTIC PRESENTATION AND TERMINOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE HOLODOMOR OF THE 1920s AND 1930s

Zoriana Velychko

*Ivan Franko National University of Lviv
Generala Chuprynky Str. 49, 79044, Lviv, Ukraine
e-mail: zavelychko@gmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9718-0068>*

Roman Sotnyk

*Ivan Franko National University of Lviv
Generala Chuprynky Str. 49, 79044, Lviv, Ukraine
e-mail: roman.sotnyk@lnu.edu.ua
<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-0122-3594>*

The article reveals and analyses a wide range of terms for the Holodomor of the 1920s and 1930s in Ukraine. The main objectives of the study are to find out the peculiarities of the linguistic presentation of the Holodomor phenomenon in scientific, popular science, and journalistic discourses, and to reveal semantic differences in the use of various terms for the Holodomor used in different languages. The main methodological bases of the study are linguistic analysis, socio-cultural method, qualitative content analysis, comparative method, etc. The method of retrospection must be used to substantiate the hypothesis. Thus, the reasons for the formation of the semantic contours of the terms “Holodomor”, “Famine”, “Great Famine”, “Terror by Famine”, “Big Hunger”, etc. were clarified. At the same time, the semantic nuances of word use are identified. As a conclusion, the authors substantiate the fundamental importance of using the term “Holodomor-genocide” in scientific circulation as the one that most accurately represents the essence of the historical phenomenon of the Holodomor. Based on the analysis of the documents, the content of the term “genocide” is formulated. It is explained that the Holodomor is genocide of the Ukrainian people, just as the Holocaust is genocide of the Jewish people. The authors prove the anti-Ukrainian orientation of the consistent and deliberate policy of Stalin and his followers against the Ukrainian nation, which culminated in the murder by starvation. These research findings are significant not only for the development of Ukrainian terminology or international terminology. They are also of great importance for modern politics, political science and historiography, and jurisprudence, especially in the context of a new genocide – the Russian Federation’s full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine.

Keywords: Holodomor; genocide; Ukraine; Stalin’s terror; terminology.

1. Problem statement.

The Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine as an event, as a historical fact of a global scale, is not limited to national borders; it attracts the attention of representatives of various scientific specialties – historians, political scientists, psychologists, historians of the press, etc. Linguistics is also involved, as it is also about the verbal definition of the Holodomor phenomenon, about its perception as a term that semantically means “genocide”.

The relevance of the study is determined not only by the importance of the Holodomor in Ukrainian history, the approaching anniversary of this global tragedy, but by the significance of the Holodomor’s consequences and their impact on post-genocidal generations of Ukrainians in the first place. This event provides sources and grounds for linguists (in particular, for researchers of terminology), who can study both the linguistic presentation of the phenomenon, its onomastological aspects, and the essence of the terminological difficulties of defining the Holodomor as genocide.

Undoubtedly, the recognition of the famine of 1932–1933 as the Holodomor and, accordingly, the recognition of the Holodomor as genocide is not a linguistic problem, since there is the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of December 9, 1948. Referring to the fact that it defines a narrow interpretation of criminal genocidal acts, not all researchers of the problem agree that the Holodomor is genocide. However, the parliaments of several dozen countries have already recognized the anti-Ukrainian Holodomor is a genocide. The task of linguists is simpler: to fix and legitimize the place of the “Holodomor” as a term in Ukrainian terminology. This is **the purpose of the publication**: in the context of the various linguistic presentations of the Holodomor, to substantiate the usage patterns of this particular term to describe the worst famine catastrophe of the twentieth century.

2. The researches on the topic.

Undoubtedly, the Holodomor as a phenomenon is not only a problem of Ukrainian national life, but no less an object of international politics. That is why it is primarily of interest to historians and political scientists. For a long time, studies and documents related to the Holodomor have been appearing in the West from time to time (starting with the Holodomor itself), interpreting the famine of 1932–1933 as an event in different ways. It is important to note that it was the Ukrainian diaspora that tried in the mid-1930s to publicly acknowledge the tragedy of Soviet Ukraine, to draw the attention of the world community, and to help starving Ukraine. This attempt was unsuccessful. However, the struggle for truth continued¹. On the eve of the 50th anniversary of the Holodomor, the Ukrainian diaspora began to fight for the creation of a US Congressional Committee to investigate the 1932–1933 famine. President Ronald Reagan signed the bill into law in October 1984. The results of the Commission’s work were a three-volume collection of eyewitness accounts of the Holodomor, published in 1990. Many researchers from the Ukrainian diaspora have written about the Holodomor. We are referring to Vasyl Hryshko, Dmytro Solovey, Semen Pidhainyi, Ivan Maistrenko, Oleksandr Shulhyn, and Ivan Bahrianyi. Thanks to the diaspora, Robert Conquest’s book “Harvest of Sorrow” was also published and translated to different languages. European and American scholars also paid attention to the famine of 1932–1933 in Ukraine. Stepan Kost’ pointed out the main false theses of the Western

¹ Kost’, S. (2012). *The Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine : a textbook* / ed. by S. Kost’, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Lviv, p. 9–19.

historiography of the Holodomor in his textbook “The Anti-Ukrainian Holodomor of 1932–1933: Causes and Consequences, Lessons and Media Discourse”². Over the past few years, interesting works by Timothy Snyder and Anne Applebaum have appeared in Ukrainian translation, although they contain some not entirely correct opinions about the Holodomor. Stalin forbade even the use of the word “famine” or even “hunger” in documents. The taboo lasted for more than a few decades. Neither Soviet nor modern Russian historians recognize the anti-Ukrainian nature of the famine of 1932–1933 and do not recognize this famine as genocide. The most famous Ukrainian historians who study the Holodomor of 1932–1933 are Stanislav Kulchytskyi, Oleksandra Veselova, Volodymyr Serhiichuk, Vasyl Marochko, Yurii Shapoval, Vladyslav Verstiuk, Myroslava Antonovych, Yaroslav Papuha, and others. James Mace, an American scholar who did a lot to tell the truth about the Holodomor (he came to Ukraine in 1993), should be mentioned separately.

3. Methodology.

For decades, the Ukrainian diaspora, and later the Ukrainian intellectuals (including dissidents and leaders of informal organizations in the second half of the 1980s), fought for the international community to learn the truth about the true extent of the famine, for the characterization and definition of the events of 1932–1933 to go beyond the word “famine” (or “Famine”, “Hunger”, “Big Hunger”, etc), and for those events to be designated by an adequate and strict term.

There is no doubt that the international legal assessment of the famine of 1932–1933, the opinion of historians who draw conclusions based on documents, is, at first glance, an area in which linguists do not play a major role. However, the enrichment of Ukrainian terminology and the development of Ukrainian terminological systems are the tasks of modern Ukrainian terminology, as Iryna Kochan points out³.

To trace the dynamics of the semantic contours of the term “Holodomor”, it is necessary to conduct a *general analytical and retrospective review* of not only scientific and popular science works on the topic, but also to cover the content of the media (Ukrainian and foreign), documents, journalism, etc. So, the *qualitative content analysis* is also one of the main research methods. The *socio-communicative method* is the general methodological basis of the study, as it is not only about the *linguistic aspects of term use*, but primarily about the content, features of functioning and the predicted effects of the use of the terms “Holodomor” and “genocide” in contemporary socio-political discourse. Also the *cultural and historical method* is used in the article as well as the *comparative method*. The *general scientific methods* used in the research are analysis and synthesis, deduction and induction, historicism, objectivity, etc.

4. The main research material.

The phenomenon of hunger and, accordingly, the word used to describe it, have always been human companions (of course, the phenomenon itself arose much earlier than the word). While there was no hunger in Plato’s ideal (but utopian) state (even the word “hunger” does not appear in the text of “The Republic”), this word is repeated quite often in the Bible.

² Kost', S. (2023). *The Anti-Ukrainian: Causes and Consequences, Lessons and Media / Antyukrajins'kyi Holodomor 1932–1933 rokiv: prychny i naslidky, uroky i mediynyi dyskurs*, Vydavnychiy tsentr LNU, Lviv, 426 p.

³ Kochan, I., Matsiuk, H., Pan'ko, T. (1994). *Ukrainian Terminology / Ukrajins'ke terminoznavstvo*, Svit, Lviv, 214 p.

The famine of 1932–1933 was not immediately called the Holodomor, just as it is obvious that the Holodomor was not immediately perceived as a term synonymous with “genocide”. The linguistic presentation of the Holodomor of 1932–1933 is different: it is, in fact, “famine,” “terror by famine,” “Great Famine,” and so on. “Harvest of Sorrow” by Robert Conquest is also a metaphorical definition of famine. Raphael Lemkin was the first Western scholar to call the anti-Ukrainian policy of the 1930s as genocide (he meant the famine of 1932–1933, the extermination of the Ukrainian peasantry, and repressions against the Ukrainian intellectuals and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church. For James Mace, it was also clear that the famine of 1932–1933 was genocide.

It is not only the etymology of the word “holodomor” that is instructive and interesting, but also its evolution, because it eventually became “Holodomor” and became a distinctive term. Awareness of this fact is important because the use of certain vocabulary, concepts, and terminology indicates not only the cultural level of the researcher, not only his/her linguistic personality, but also their scientific correctness, attitude toward national values, and even political and ideological orientations.

According to the “Słownik prasłowiański” (“Slavic Dictionary”), edited by the Polish linguist F. Slavinski, the word “Holodomor” is found in almost all Slavic languages, as they repeat the Czech word “hladomor” in various variants. For example, the Polish language has the word “głodomór”, but the collection of Polish documents and research on the Holodomor uses (transliterated) the Ukrainian word “holodomor” (sounds in Ukrainian] for their “Holodomór”.

The word “holodomor” can also be found in Ivan Franko’s writings, although he did not use it in the modern sense. In fiction, Vasyl Barka also used the word in his novel “The Yellow Prince”, to refer to the horrific murder by starvation. However, even earlier the word “Holodomor” was used in one of the publications of the Western-Ukrainian magazine “Dilo” (August, 1926). In the Czech magazine “Večerník Prava Lidu” (“Human Rights Evening Paper”) (August 17, 1933), this word was used to refer to the famine in Soviet Ukraine at that time.

Subsequently, the word “Holodomor” was used by Ivan Drach in his oral speech at the IX Congress of Writers of Ukraine in the summer of 1986. It also appeared in writing form in “Literary Ukraine”, which published a report by Oleksa Musienko at a party meeting of the Kyiv organization of the Writers’ Union of Ukraine on February 18, 1988. Even then, however, the word “Holodomor” was perceived not as a term but as a metaphor that adequately conveyed the meaning of this terrible and tragic page in Ukrainian history. The word “Holodomor” was used in the resolutions of the Ukrainian government of 1993 and 1998, which were dedicated to the anniversaries of the Holodomor.

The beginning of changes in attitudes toward the Holodomor as a phenomenon and the word “Holodomor” to describe this phenomenon can be observed later. We are talking about the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the tragedy. Semantically, the lexeme “Holodomor” in both the political and linguistic spheres began to become (or has become) synonymous with genocide. And in the political context, this word began to be perceived on a par with the Holocaust. In early November 2003, the word “Holodomor” was already used as a term in a Joint Statement by United Nation member states at the 58th General Assembly. After that the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the Law “On the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine” (2006), the word “holodomor” finally acquired the meaning of a term. In fact, it began to be associated with the interpretation of the Holodomor as genocide.

Of course, linguists can note the enrichment of Ukrainian terminology. However, the controversy (largely contrived) over the use of the term “Holodomor” as genocide is not only linguistic but also political, due to the author’s ideological position. Among Ukrainian historians, there are those who doubt that the Holodomor of 1932–1933 was genocide, or even deny it (either explicitly or implicitly). The most eloquent position is held by Heorhii Kasyanov. Thus, in his latest book, “The Open Grave: The Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Politics, Memory, and History (1980s–2000s)”⁴, he notes the simplification of the Holodomor discourse, which at the same time increases the power of its public representations. For Heorhii Kasyanov, the interpretation of the Holodomor as genocide is only one version. For him, the Holodomor is not synonymous with genocide. In his opinion, the Holodomor is a kind of “cultural” or “social” memory that obscures individual and “communicative” memory, even replaces them; the Holodomor is not the event itself, but it is just a reconstructed and even constructed image, its representations, an imaginary reality, a simulation. Kasyanov believes that the “genocidal version” of the Holodomor was incorporated from the West, and that the “hunger of 1932–1933” is the most neutral counterpart to the event itself. In addition, this researcher notes that “the Holodomor has acquired the features of sacredness, some public actions related to it have the features of a religious cult” [1; p.9], without understanding (or deliberately not taking into account) 1) that this is naturally due to the biblical nature and scale of the Holodomor as a phenomenon, 2) that the sacredness of public actions related to the Holodomor is due to religiosity, which is an organic feature of the Ukrainian mentality.

5. Results and Conclusions.

The linguistic presentation of the Holodomor of 1932–1933 using the words and phrases “famine”, “Great Famine”, even “terror by famine”, “Big Hunger” or “holodomor” does not adequately and fully convey the anti-Ukrainian orientation and historical essence of the Holodomor as an organized, man-made, systematic and controlled process. The linguistic search should end with the use of the word “Holodomor” (with the capital letter) as a term that is equivalent in meaning to “genocide”.

REFERENCES

1. Kasyanov, H. (2020). *An Open Grave: The Famine of 1932–1933 in Politics, Memory, and History (1980s–2000s) / Rozryta mohyla: Holod 1932–1933 rokiv u politytsi, pamjati ta istoriji (1980–2000-ni)*, Folio, Kharkiv, 298 p.
2. Kochan, I., Matsiuk, H., Pan’ko, T. (1994). *Ukrainian Terminology / Ukrajin’s’ke terminoznavstvo*, Svit, Lviv, 214 p.
3. Kost’, S. (2023). *The Anti-Ukrainian Holodomor of 1932–1933: Causes and Consequences, Lessons and Media / Antyukrajins’kyi Holodomor 1932–1933 rokiv: prychny i naslidky, uroky i mediynyi dyskurs*, Vydavnychiy tsentr LNU, Lviv, 426 p.
4. Kost’, S. (2012). *The Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine : a textbook* / ed. by S. Kost’, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Lviv, p. 9–19.

⁴ Kasyanov, H. (2020). *An Open Grave: The Famine of 1932–1933 in Politics, Memory, and History (1980s–2000s) / Rozryta mohyla: Holod 1932–1933 rokiv u politytsi, pamjati ta istoriji (1980–2000-ni)*, Folio, Kharkiv, 298 p.

ЛІНГВАЛЬНА ПРЕЗЕНТАЦІЯ Й ТЕРМІНОЛОГІЧНІ АСПЕКТИ ГОЛОДОМОРУ 1920-1930-х РОКІВ

Зоряна Величко

Львівський національний університет імені Івана Франка,

вул. Університетська, 1, 79000, Львів, Україна

e-mail: zavelychko@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9718-0068>

Роман Сотник

Львівський національний університет імені Івана Франка,

вул. Університетська, 1, 79000, Львів, Україна

e-mail: roman.sotnyk@lnu.edu.ua

<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-0122-3594>

У статті окреслено широкий спектр термінів на позначення явища Голодомору в різних мовах, зокрема українській. Мета дослідження – з'ясувати особливості мовної репрезентації феномену Голодомору в науковому, науково-популярному та публіцистичному дискурсах, а також окреслити семантичні контури термінів «Голодомор», «голодомор», «голод», «Великий Голод», «терор голодом», «убивство голодом» тощо та їхні еквіваленти в англійській, польській, чеській мовах. У статті обґрунтовано принципову важливість використання в науковому обігу універсального терміна «Голодомор» (як геноцид). Автори доводять антиукраїнську спрямованість послідовної та цілеспрямованої політики Сталіна та його послідовників супроти української нації. Результати дослідження важливі не лише для розвитку української термінології, а й для сучасної політики, політології та історіографії, юриспруденції тощо, особливо в контексті сучасного геноциду – повномасштабної агресивної війни Російської Федерації проти України.

Ключові слова: Голодомор; геноцид; Україна; Сталінський терор; термінологія.