

Orthographic Variations of Ukrainian Surnames in Western Pennsylvania

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I

THIS ARTICLE EXAMINES ORTHOGRAPHIC VARIATIONS of Ukrainian surnames in Western Pennsylvania. The discussion is based upon 1,100 Ukrainian surnames and their various American English renditions, totaling 3,000 names.¹ The surnames, first recorded in American English at the beginning of this century, were gathered from Baptismal Record books, parish lists and other archival material made available in Ukrainian Orthodox churches and organizations.² Each surname is compared over a period of three generations (1907–1970). The current orthography of the Ukrainian and American English forms of the surnames has been cross checked with the ethnic press, tombstones, program booklets, Christmas cards and, whenever possible, through personal interviews. The examples cited illustrate a specific point, each surname appearing in three columns with the date of its recording in parentheses. Unless otherwise indicated, the original name in Ukrainian is in column one³ with the American English renditions in columns two and three.

II

The respective periods of Ukrainian immigration into the United States were 1870–1899, 1899–1914, 1914–1939 and post World War II. Today it is estimated that there are between 1,100,000 and 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 people of Ukrainian background in the United States.⁴ In general, Americans tend to view the American English form of a foreign surname as most important to the name bearer. However, analysis of each Ukrainian immigration has revealed that this form of the surname was affirmed

¹ Cf. Stephen P. Holutiak-Hallick, Jr., "East Slavic Surnames in Western Pennsylvania and Ohio," Appendix I (unpublished M. A. thesis, Department of Slavic Studies, University of Manitoba, 1969).

² The onomastic data was obtained in the larger Ukrainian settlements in Western Pennsylvania. It was gathered in Ambridge, Carnegie, Indiana, Lyndora, McKees Rocks, Monessen, New Castle, Pittsburgh and Sharon.

³ The transliteration system established by the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL) is employed.

⁴ Stephen P. Holutiak-Hallick, Jr., "Ukrainian Americans: 1870–1970," *Forum: A Ukrainian Review* (Scranton: The Ukrainian Workingman's Association, Winter 1969), p. 25.

after a linguistic dependency upon the ethnic language ceased (i.e., usually the grandchildren of the immigrant) or if ties with the ethnic community were severed.

As with other immigrant nationalities, the pre-1939 immigrant from the Ukrainian lands desired a chance to better his way of life. The majority intended to earn and save money in the United States in order to return to their homes in Western Ukraine to pay the debts they had incurred there.⁵ Many desired to purchase land or to establish themselves in business in the old country. However, World War I, the collapse of Austro-Hungary, and the national and social revolutions within the Russian Empire halted the return of Ukrainians to their homeland. Simultaneously, East Slavic immigration into the United States increased. The Ukrainian American immigrant of this period generally knew little English, and consequently in daily usage the spelling of his name underwent many orthographic changes. The changes constituted a transcription, or an approximate rendition of the name, as opposed to a transliteration or exact recording. In contrast, the post-World War II immigrant was literate, easily gaining familiarity with the host language. He preferred the transliterated rendition of his surname, stressing Ukrainian orthography and correcting mispronunciation.

The Ukrainian surnames first recorded in American English at the beginning of this century have been retained phonetically, although orthographic variations in American English have occurred. The material suggests three categories of surname retention: (1) a direct orthographic transfer of short, mainly two-syllable surnames into American English; (2) orthographic adjustments in American English to keep the Ukrainian phonology of the surname, and (3) the retention of Ukrainian orthography in light of linguistic interference.

Direct Orthographic Transfer

The first category of surname retention suggests the direct orthographic transfer of short, mainly two-syllable surnames.⁶ This, for the most part, is due to the phonetic character of the Ukrainian alphabet. The following examples illustrate this point:

⁵ Paul Dubas, "Počatky ukrajins'koji imigraciji do Ameryky" [The Beginnings of the Ukrainian Emigration to America], *Sixty Years of the Ukrainian Community in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Published in Commemoration of the 35th Anniversary of the Ukrainian American Citizens' Association, 1944). Mr. Dubas states that 15,000 people returned to Ukraine before 1908. He also mentions the calculations of Wasyl Halich. According to Halich 29,305 people returned to the old country during the years 1908–1938. The importance is that many individuals born in the United States were reared in Ukraine. Prior to World War II many of these American born re-emigrated to America, often at the request of the Polish government.

Andoga (1911)	Andoga (1950)	Andoga (1970)
Barna (1912)	Barna (1950)	Barna (1970)
Bodnar (1908)	Bodnar (1950)	Bodnar (1968)
Balandjat (1908)	Balandiat (1950)	Balandiat (1968)
Husak (1909)	Husak (1950)	Husak (1968)
Kosjak (1914)	Kosiak (1950)	Kosiak (1970)
Kuzemka (1910)	Kuzemka (1950)	Kuzemka (1968)
Porada (1907)	Porada (1950)	Porada (1968)
Sekula (1907)	Sekula (1950)	Sekula (1968)
Stanko (1909)	Stanko (1950)	Stanko (1968)

American English Orthographic Adjustments: Popular Usage

Patterns of stress and misinterpretation of pronunciation often led to a number of variations of the same surname in American English. Eventually, however, American English orthography was adjusted to keep the "Ukrainian sound" of the surname. The primary adjustments observed are (1) the loss of the soft sign; (2) the double letter equivalent; (3) the adjustment of vowels and diphthongs, and (4) the simplification of consonant clusters.

The tendency in Ukrainian to slur various consonant combinations naturally resulted in an American English transcription that disregarded the Ukrainian soft sign in medial and final positions. Although the immigrants adhere to the pronunciation of the letter softened in the medial position, the American English pronunciation has terminated its practical usage [Kljeban'skij (1907) Kleban'sky (1937) Klebansky (1970); Šusyn'skyj (1907) Suszyn'sky (1937) Suszynski (1970); Zavin'skyj (1912) Zawin'ski (1937) Zawinski (1937)]. The same is true of the final soft sign [Zavalen' (1910) Zawalen (1950) Zawalen (1968); Koval' (1907) Kowal' (1950) Kowal (1970); Kremin' (1912) Kremin (1944) Kremin (1968)]. In rare instances the phonological quality of the medial soft sign was rendered American English *i*. However, in contrast to the Ukrainian pronunciation, the American English equivalent has resulted in the stressing of the phonemes *i* and *o* [Dan'o (1917) Danio (1950) Danio (1968); Fed'o (1937) Fedio (1970); Kuz'o (1907) Kuzio (1950) Kuzio (1968); Pys'o (no date) Pysio (1950); Zel'o (no date) Zelio (1950)].

Certain consonants were rendered soft in American English as a result of a Ukrainian dialect.⁷ Coupled to this was the increased dependency of

⁶ J. B. Rudnyčkyj, "Anthroponymic Changes in Canada and the United States," *VI International Congress of Onomastic Sciences* (1961), pp. 663–671. From the standpoint of structural linguistics the data of this study support Rudnyčkyj's general statement on Slavic surname retentions. However, categorization can be expanded to include multi-syllabic surnames.

⁷ Cf. J. B. Rudnyčkyj, "Phonological Innovations in Canadian-Ukrainian," *Proceedings of the IV International Congress of Phonetic Sciences: Helsinki 1961* (The Hague: Mouton

the Ukrainian immigrant on the spoken language of the Americans. The desire to maintain what was considered the correct sound resulted in names as *Jevusjak* (1909) *Evushak* (1960); *Kos* (1913) *Kos* (1950) *Kosh* (1968); *Gres'ko* (1907) *Greshko* (1968); *Mis'ko* (1913) *Mishko* (1968), and *Onys'ko* (1913) *Onyshko* (1950).

Ukrainian consonants frequently received double letter equivalents. The over-emphasis of the phoneme resulted in its perception as a long consonant in American English. When the surname was first recorded in Western Pennsylvania by the "Irish" school teacher, the voter registrar, the foreman at work or by the grocery clerk the sound was interpreted and split into two parts.⁸ This was especially likely to happen where the immigrant repeated his surname until it was recorded. Thus, the Ukrainian letters *d*, *l*, *m*, *p*, *s*, and *t* often received double consonant equivalents [*Dil* (1910) *Dill* (1937) *Dill* (1969); *Kril'* (1909) *Kril* (1950) *Krill* (1968); *Fal'* (1907) *Fal* (1950) *Fall* (1970); *Bilyj* (1908) *Bille* (1937) *Billy* (1970); *Bylek* (no date) *Billek* (1968); *Serdula* (1924) *Serdulla* (1968); *Jema* (1959) *Jemma* (1959); *Strus* (1907) *Stroos* (1937) *Struce* (1937) *Struss* (1937–1955) *Strus* (1968); *Kit* (1912) *Kit* (1950) *Kitt* (1970)].

Baptismal record books and parish lists showing the individual's own preferred spelling of his surname support E. H. Sturtevant's statement that a spoken language is primary and writing is only an imperfect reflection of it.⁹ Accordingly, the Ukrainian vowels *y*, *e*, and *i* in closed syllables received no differentiation in their pronunciation, but were frequently interchanged with the American English phonemes *y* or *i* [*Syvij* (1907) *Syvy* (1950) *Sivy* (1968) *Sivey* (1968) *Sywy* (1968); *Prystas* (1913) *Prystash* (1950) *Pristash* (1968); *Kyselyk* (1913) *Kyselyk* (1950) *Kiselik* (1968); *Kocyрка* (1914) *Koczyrka* (1950) *Kochirka* (1968); *Kovalyk* (1914) *Kowalyk* (1937) *Kowalik* (1968); *Tymyn'skyj* (1908) *Timinsky* (1937) *Tyminsky* (1950) *Timinski* (1968)]. This also explains the Ukrainian suffix *-yk* which received equivalents of *yk*, *ik*, *ick*, and *ek* [*Sekelyk* (1913) *Sekelyk* (1950) *Sekelik* (1968); *Muzyk* (1914) *Muzyk* (1950) *Muzik* (1968); *Nalesnyk* (1908) *Nalesnyk* (1950) *Nalesnik* (1968); *Kityk* (1910) *Kityk* (1937) *Kitik* (1968); *Kyselyk* (1913) *Kyselyk* (1950) *Kiselik* (1968); *Koval'cyk* (1907) *Kowalchyk* (1950) *Kowalchick* (1969); *Kulyk* (1910) *Kulyk* (1950) *Kulick* (1968); *Kotyky* (1907) *Kotyky* (1937) *Kotek* (1968)].

and Co., 1962). Rudnyčkyj states that as a result of the South Carpathian dialect Canadian-Ukrainians often identify the coronally palatalized spirants *s'-z'* with the dorsal *ś-ź* further developing them into palatal *š-ž* types (p. 753). Also see M. F. Nakonečnyj, "Pro kul'turu vymovy" [About Cultured Pronunciation], *Ukrajins'ka mova i literatura v školi*, 5 (Kijev: 1967) pp. 20–24.

⁸ Cf. E. H. Sturtevant, *Linguistic Change: An Introduction to the Historical Study of Language*, 3rd Impression (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 21.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

The simplification of diphthongs further illustrates phonetic spelling [*Jurysta* (1911) *Jurysta* (1950) *Urista* (1967); *Kljuka* (1913) *Kluka* (1950); *Judyc* (1959) *Udics* (1959); *Jurčak* (1924) *Urczak* (1968); *Jurkas* (1927) *Urkas* (1968); *Mixnjuk* (1968) *Michniuk* (1968); *Tymcju* (1910) *Timcio* (1970); *Gljuz* (1913) *Glioz* (1950); *Bencju* (1907) *Bencio* (1968); *Lenju* (1909) *Lenio* (1950); *Janic'kyj* (1909) *Janicky* (1950) *Yanicki* (1968); *Burjak* (1907) *Burjak* (1950) *Buriak* (1968); *Jarosh* (1907) *Jarosh* (1912) *Yarosh* (1968); *Jaryj* (1915) *Jaryj* (1950) *Yary* (1968); *Demaj* (1956) *Demay* (1956); *Olijnyk* (1911) *Olijnik* (1950) *Olenik* (1970); *Hojsan* (1910) *Hojsan* (1950) *Hoysan* (1970)].

Robert B. Klymasz discusses the simplification of Ukrainian consonant clusters, in particular the sibilants and gutturals.¹⁰ Added to his observations is the fact that the immigrant in Western Pennsylvania consciously sought to free his surname from Polonisms.¹¹ In part this explains the preference for phonetic spelling. The guttural *x* is an example. In initial position Ukrainian *x* was rendered *ch*; however, it was usually pronounced as the sibilant *č* by non Ukrainians. The phoneme was then changed to *kh* in an attempt to keep the "Ukrainian" sound. However, as a result of diasporation, American English *h* eventually became an accepted equivalent [*Xomits'skyj* (1937) *Homitski* (1937); *Xomjak* (1937) *Chomiak* (1937); *Xomyč* (1909) *Homycz* (1950) *Homych* (1968); *Xojnjak* (1925) *Hoyniak* (1925); *Xalupa* (1909) *Chalupa* (1937–1955) *Halupa* (1970); *Xaryton* (no date) *Chariton* (1958) *Harriton* (1970)]. Yet, *ch* in medial or final position often kept the original Ukrainian pronunciation [*Sux* (1912) *Such* (1950); *Stryxar* (1915) *Strychar* (1937–1950); *Pozna* (1907) *Pochna* (1950); *Pelex* (1910) *Pelech* (1950); *Pitux* (1920) *Pituch* (1970)].

Linguistic Interference

Retention of a surname through acclimatization is common. However, the modifications within the acclimatized name do not constitute a surname change unless there is interference with the orthography of the ethnic language. In Western Pennsylvania, father, son and brother often

¹⁰ Robert B. Klymasz, "The Canadianization of Slavic Surnames: A Study in Language Contact," *Names*: 11:2 (June, 1963), pp. 81–105; 11:3 (September, 1963), pp. 182–195; 11:4 (December, 1963), pp. 229–253.

¹¹ The majority of the Ukrainian immigrants in Western Pennsylvania were from the Western Ukrainian lands. At the time of their emigration these lands were governed by Austro-Hungary and Poland. The document form of the surname, or the name as it appeared on passports, citizenship papers etc., was in transliteration commonly from the Polish transliteration system. Ukrainians in America were often identified as Poles. A conscious effort was therefore made to show Americans that Ukrainians were a separate nationality. For Ukrainians *sh* replaced Polish *sz*; *szcz* became *shch* or *sch*; *cz* was altered to *ch*; *w* became *v*; and the suffix *-ski* was changed to *-sky*.

have different American English spellings of the same surname. In these cases, as stated earlier, transliteration was abandoned for transcription; however, Ukrainian orthography was retained as long as the name bearer was familiar with the Ukrainian language. Two-hundred seventy surnames, or 24 percent, reveal retention of the surname in Ukrainian orthography by the grandchildren of the immigrant. The largest area of variation in American English is a result of unstressed vowels and letters in Ukrainian.¹² Accordingly, these equivalents have been noted: Ukrainian *o* in the unstressed position rendered as American English *u*, *i*, or *a*; Ukrainian *e* as American English *a*; and Ukrainian *i* appearing as the phonemes *o* or *e*. In the following examples the original Ukrainian surname is the first entry, the American English variations second, and the present Ukrainian spelling last.

Samogela (1910)	Samogela (1950) Samogala (1968)	Samogela (1968)
Derkač (1907)	Derkacz (1950) Darkoch (1970)	Derkač (1970)
Segalavyč (1937)	Sagalevich (1937–1955) Segalavich (1968)	Segalavyč (1968)
Šaljuga (1915)	Shaluga (1937–1955) Sheluga (1968)	Šaljuga (1968)
Sydovar (1953)	Sedovar (1953) Sydavar (1968)	Sydovar (1968)
Viznyčak (1909)	Wozniczak (1950) Woznichak (1968)	Viznyčak (1968)
Vijtyk (1907)	Wijtyk (1950) Wetyk (1937) Wijtyk (1937–1955) Wityk (1950) Wityk (1968)	Vijtyk (1968)
Bahnij (1910)	Bahnij (1950) Bahney (1937–1955) Bahny (1968)	Bahnij (1968)
Šahaj (1909)	Shahaj (1950) Shahay (1966)	Šahaj (1966)
Majkovyč (1911)	Majkowycz (1950) Mikovitz (1968)	Majkovyč (1968)
Sopinka (1907)	Sopinka (1950) Supinka (1968)	Sopinka (1968)
Doroš (1908)	Dorosh (1950) Dorish (1968)	Doroš (1968)
Strus (1907)	Strus (1950) Struce (1937) Struss (1937–1954) Stroos (1937–1955) Strus (1968)	Strus (1968)
Zel'onka (1907)	Zielonka (1950) Zelonka (1964–1968)	Zel'onka (1964)

It was not uncommon for the immigrant's son or daughter to produce by re-transliteration a Ukrainian form of the surname for the records of the church, Ukrainian school, religious brotherhoods and community welfare associations. In some instances the surname changed as witnessed in the metamorphosis of Ukrainian *x* into Ukrainian *k*, *h*, *č*, and *š* [Xomiščak (1908): Komiczak (1937–1954) Komichak (1970): Komičak (1970); Muza (1907): Muha (1937–1954) Muha (1968): Muha (1968); Pizota (1910): Pichota (1950) Pihota (1968): Pihota (1968); Kyxton (1930): Kishton (1968): Kyšton (1968); Xomenek (1927): Homenek (1927): Homenek (1968); Xolodjuk (1932): Kolodiuk (1932): Kolodjuk (1968)]. Also, Ukrainian *c* was replaced with *s* or *k*; and *š* became *s* [Stecko (1924): Stecko (1968): Steko (1968); Lukac (1929): Lucas (1929): Lukas (1968); Patroš (1937): Patrosh (1937–1955) Patross (1968): Patros (1968)]. The Ukrainian vowels and diphthongs were altered frequently, *a* taking most variation becoming *o*, *e*, *y* and *u* [Batjuk (1937): Batiuk (1937) Botiuk (1937): Botjuk (1968); Dragajlo (1937): Dragilo (1937) Dregallo (1965): Dregajlo (1968); Savanyc (no date); Savanich (no date) Sevanich (no date); Sevanyc (1968); Katjuk (1937): Katiuk (1950) Kutiuk (1962): Kutjuk (1968); Šahajlo (1937): Shahaylo (1937) Shuhilo (1968): Šuhajlo (1968)].

III

Linguistic theory of recent decades has rarely touched on the rubrics of association and analogy.¹³ The orthographic variations of Ukrainian surnames in Western Pennsylvania grew out of faulty linguistic analogy, illiteracy and abrasions of common speech. This analysis has coordinated linguistic data with non-linguistic, structural, background. Three categories of surname retention have been presented. The difficulty in classification is that each individual did as he pleased to his name. In regard to the first Ukrainian immigrations it is evident that the phonology of the original Ukrainian surname was more important to the immigrant than the American English orthographic variations. These modifications were accepted naturally. In many instances the children, being bilingual, confused the linguistic systems, resulting at times in an orthographic change in Ukrainian. As the ties with the ethnic community lessened and the dependency upon the ethnic tongue diminished, the American English form of the surname became affixed.

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¹² In Ukrainian, unstressed vowels receive different phonetic value. For example, unstressed *o* is pronounced *u* ("kožux": "kužux"); or initial *e* is pronounced *y* ("zelenyj": "zylenyj").

¹³ Sturtevant, *op. cit.*, p. ix.