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TRADITIONAL UKRAINIANS' FUNERAL RITES OF DIFFERENT REGIONS IN THE PLANE OF SEMIOTIC CODES*

Rezumat
Ritualurile funerare tradiționale la ucrainenii din diferite regiuni în termeni de coduri semiotice

Articolul prezintă rezultatele studiului codurilor agentive, acționale și rituale de realemă ale semiozei funeraliilor la ucraineni, care, datorită naturii lor tabu și caracterului mistic, păstrează mai pe deplin semantica arhetipală, reproducând astfel componențele profunde ale imaginii conceptuale naționale a lumii. Alegerea regiunilor Lviv, Luhansk, Sumy, Cherkasy și Herson din Ucraina pentru analiză a fost determinată ținând cont de locația lor geografică, precum și zonarea culturală și etnografică stabilită de mult timp – Vest, Est, Centru și Sud ale Ucrainei. În baza analizei reprezentării simbolice a elementelor rituale ale funeraliilor din diferite regiuni ucrainene, a fost depistat gradul de integritate a contextului cultural național și modul de gândire colectivă a ucrainenilor din diferite regiuni. Instrumentele științifice utilizate pentru atingerea scopului cercetării au fost metodele de analiză de conținut, analiză comparativă, sinteză și inducție. S-a dovedit că structura celui mai arhaic rit funerar din toate regiunile Ucrainei este omogenă din punct de vedere tipologic, integritatea predomină atât în conținut cât în formă – verbalizarea fenomenelor, realităților și persoanelor rituale, ceea ce face imposibilă asumarea unei „diferențe" dintre ucrainenii de est și de vest.

Cuvinte-cheie: ritualuri funerare tradiționale, ucraineni, cod agentiv, cod acțional, cod ritual de realemă.

Резюме
Традиционный похоронный обряд украинцев разных регионов в плоскости семиотических кодов

В статье представлены результаты исследования агентивного, акционерного, реалемного кодов семиозиса погребального обряда украинцев, который в силу своей табуированности и мистического характера наиболее полно сохраняет архетипную семантику и воспроизводит глубинные составляющие национальной концептуальной картины мира. Выбор для анализа Львовской, Луганской, Сумской, Черкасской, Херсонской областей Украины детерминирован их географическим расположением, а также установившимся культурно-этнографическим районированием – Западная, Восточная, Центральная, Южная Украина. На основании анализа знаковой репрезентации элементов погребального обряда в разных регионах Украины установлена степень целостности национального культурного контекста и способа коллективного мышления украинцев из разных регионов.

Научным инструментарием достижения цели исследования служили методы контент-анализа, компаративного анализа, синтеза, индукции. Доказано, что структура наиболее архаического погребального обряда во всех регионах Украины типологически однородна, интегральность превалирует как в плане содержания, так и в плане формы – вербализации обрядных явлений, реалий, лиц, что делает невозможными спекуляции в плоскости «различий» восточных и западных украинцев.

Ключевые слова: традиционный погребальный обряд, украинцы, агентивный код, акциональный код, реалемный код.

Summary
Traditional Ukrainians' funeral rites of different regions in the plane of semiotic codes

The article presents the results of research of the agentive, actional, and realemic codes of semiotics within the traditional Ukrainian funeral rites. Due to their taboo nature and mystical character, these rites most fully preserve archetypal semantics, which reflects the deep sources of the associated sector of the national conceptual worldview. The selection of the Lviv, Sumy, Cherkasy, Kherson, Luhansk regions for analysis was determined by their geographical location and established cultural and ethnographic zoning – Eastern, Central, Western, Southern Ukraine. On the basis of the analysis of the semiotic representation of the elements of funeral rites in different regions of Ukraine, the degree of integrity within the national cultural context and the collective thinking style of Ukrainians from different regions was clarified. The methods of content analysis, comparative analysis, synthesis, and induction served as scientific tools for achieving the defined goal. Based on the analysis of empirical material, it was concluded that the structure of the most archaic funeral rite in all regions of Ukraine is typologically homogeneous. Integrity prevails both in content and form – the verbalization of ritual phenomena, realities and persons, which excludes speculation regarding the "differences" between eastern and western Ukrainians.

Key words: traditional funeral rites, Ukrainians, agentive code, action code, realemic code.

1. Introduction

Analysis of ethnocultural contents through the prism of their semiotic coding is a tested and productive way of empirical penetration into the mental space of a mono-sociocultural community, or groups

united by the researcher based on the commonality or opposition of their characteristics. In this case, linguistic signs as carriers of meanings and the culture within which they operate come into semiotics focus.

The foundational ideas of semiotics as a field of scientific research on sign systems were formulated in the XIX century by the American philosopher and logician C. Peirce and the Swiss philologist and anthropologist F. de Saussure. The basic principles of semiotics, including the typology of signs proposed by C. Peirce, were further developed in C. Morris's work *Foundations of the Theory of Signs* (Morris 1938). W. Humboldt, O. Potebnia, and E. Sapir addressed the theory of the sign system in their research. The structural-semiotic method was applied to the analysis of culture and literature by the French researcher R. Barthes. E. Benveniste gave the ideas of linguistic semiotics and structuralism a new anthropological direction for his time and combined them with the comparative-historical method in the study of Indo-European languages in their connection with the spiritual culture of their speakers.

In linguistics of the XIX – the first half of the XX centuries the understanding of language as unique and universal in its possibilities of a sign system, which objectifies an unlimited amount of knowledge in the most diverse planes of socio-culture of both a separate ethnic group and humanity as a whole, crystallized. Culture appears in the system of signs through which society accumulates, preserves, and transmits socially significant information across space and time.

In contemporary linguistics, studies dedicated to understanding the phenomenon of linguistic code and the uniqueness of national linguacultural semiosis are of particular relevance.

The spectrum of research in the field of semiotics is revealed in the works of X. Montoro, B. Moreno – semiotic approach to the study of geo-cultural (collective) identities, M. Chervinskyi – reconsideration of the semiotic theory of culture through the analysis of symbols of historical and cultural memory of the people, P. Torop – interpretation of cultural history in the context of cultural semiotics, P. Lepik – specifics of mythological and magical semiosis, N. Andreichuk – semiotic manifestations of the linguacultural space, O. Yakovliev – semiotics as a methodology for studying the cultural space of Ukraine.

Corpus and methodology

Our research focuses on the semiosis of the traditional funeral culture of Ukrainians. Among the phenomena of traditional folk culture, the funeral rite holds perhaps the greatest value as material for ethnolinguistic studies. This is primarily due to the conservatism of the rite: death still conceals many mysteries, and the unknown has always frightened people.

The Slavic funeral rite has long attracted the attention of ethnographers. As for written accounts of the Ukrainian funeral rite, most date to the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Конобродська 2007: 17-23; Кузеля 1912). Systematic studies of funeral rites from various ethnographic regions of Ukraine have been provided in Polissia (M. and S. Tolstyie, V. Konobrodska, O. Sedakova), Volhynia (L. Lenchevskyi), the Hutsul region (V. Hnatiuk, M. Zelenchuk, M. Bihusiak), Boikivshchyna (Yu. Kmit), Slobozhanshchyna (V. Drobotenko), and Podillia (I. Horofianiuk). However, no comparative studies of the funeral rites of different Ukrainian ethnographic groups have been conducted. This gap underscores the scientific novelty of our research.

Recognizing that the life of society is largely regulated by sign systems, the authors aimed to determine the degree of the national cultural context integrity and the mode of collective thinking within it through the analysis of the sign representation of funeral rites elements in different regions of Ukraine. This exploration is aimed at finding integral characteristics of the Ukrainian socio-cultural discourse in its most sacralized sector, which has most fully preserved the archetypal semantics, which reproduces the conceptual picture of the world.

In the scientific research toolkit, there are the method of content analysis, which made it possible to single out the component of traditionality in the general object; the method of comparative analysis, which was necessary to compare the ritual semiotic codes living in different territories of Ukraine; the synthesis method was applied to form a semiotic code of traditional family rites of Ukrainians from different regions of the country; the method of induction, which made it possible to identify common socio-cultural features in the national dimension based on an understanding of their regional features.

The research material was the records of field reconnaissance from Lviv, Sumy, Cherkasy, Kherson, and Luhansk regions (Fig. 1), represented in the book *Ethnographic Image of Modern Ukraine. Corpus of Expeditionary Folklore and Ethnographic Materials. Vol. 5. Funeral and memorial customs and rites* (ЕОСУ). The material was collected using the expeditionary method by researchers of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine over the past decades in all historical and ethnographic regions of Ukraine.

The choice for analysis of these regions of Ukraine is determined by their geographical loca-

tion, as well as established cultural and ethnographic zoning – Eastern, Central, Western, Southern Ukraine. Our research is aimed at convincing a reader that the traditional spiritual culture of Ukrainians of all regions is one, and labels such as "Western Ukrainians" / "Eastern Ukrainians" are rather an attempt by politicians unfriendly to Ukraine to divide the Ukrainian nation.

Fig. 1. Map of Ukraine.
Source: Edited by the authors

The key concept of this research is the "semiotic code", which embodies the correspondence of the ideal (content) and material (expression) plans of a linguistic sign.

Culturology uses the term "cultural code", which, according to F. Batsevych's definition, correlate with ancient archetypal representations of man and form a coordinate system that contains and reproduces standards of culture (Бацевич 2004: 74).

In the linguistic paradigm, the "code" is considered to be connected to the problem of the relationship between language and thought. As a result of prolonged research, a theory of language emerged as a universal code that ensures the semiotic representation of a person's ideas about objects in the extra-linguistic environment within their thinking.

Building on the understanding that linguistic meaning is a semiotic essence and the language system is a code (Бацевич 2004: 119), we focus on the positions of anthropocultural linguistics, which identifies its primary task as identifying and analyzing linguistic codes that embody the semantic dominants of national cultures. Such analysis involves interpreting linguistic units through the lens of traditional ethnoculture, that is revealing the cultural information encoded within them. The world of cultural meanings unites people into national-cultural communities, and semantic dominants serve as their mental grid of coordinates.

A condition for the successful implementation of social communication is the necessity for an individual to assimilate a certain cultural text in which moral, spiritual, and value traditions are fixed and to transmit it to others.

One of the priorities of modern linguosemiotics is the study of the ethnocultural semantics of linguistic signs. The linguosemiotic system of national culture synthesizes meanings into a linguistic picture of the world, which has emerged as a fusion of the intellectual work of many generations. The integrity of the national linguistic picture of the world is determined by its basic component – verbalization of the traditional worldview. The semiosis of the family ritual text in the traditional culture of Ukrainians can be considered as a complex system of codes.

In the article, we analyze the agentive, actional and realemic codes, which form the semiotic core of the traditional funeral rituals of Ukrainians. The agentive code of a ritual text is a system of nominations for a person in their role-based manifestations. The actional code consists of the names of ritual actions. The realemic code is represented by the nominations of material objects endowed with symbolic functions in ritual actions.

Data analysis
Agentive Code
The burial of the deceased is a drama clearly regulated by folk tradition, involving many individuals, each fulfilling a specific role: *One person never does anything. Here, there are people specifically for that – some prepare, some dress the deceased, some sing, and some read. Almost everyone has their own profession. And it cannot be done without this (ЕОСУ: 202).*

The system of units representing the agentive code in the funeral ritual is quite extensive: the deceased, members of their family, grave diggers, people dressing the deceased, participants in the night vigil, mourners, the funeral procession.

The corpus of names for the deceased person includes derivatives from various roots, formed according to different word-formation models in various phonetic variants, covering all studied Ukrainian regions. The most common are noun, adjective, and participle nominations derived from the verb покоїтися 'to be at rest; to lie quietly and motionlessly on something': покійник – Lv., Ch., Kh.* (ЕОСУ: 215, 273, 330), покойник – S., Ch. (ЕОСУ: 279, 371), покійний – S., Kh. (ЕОСУ: 280, 330) 'deceased'. Actively used names are derived from the root *мер-*, which traces back to the Indo-European **mer-* (Конобродська 2007: 83-84): мрець – Lv., Ch. (ЕОСУ: 216, 371), мерлець – Lv. (ЕОСУ: 215), мертвець – Ch. (ЕОСУ: 375), мертвий –

Kh. (ЕОСУ: 340), померлий – Kh. (ЕОСУ: 329) 'dead man'. In Cherkasy and Lviv regions, variants of the nomination небожчик – Lv. (ЕОСУ: 215), небіжчик – Lv., Ch. (ЕОСУ: 216, 372) 'dead man' have been preserved, where the Proto-Slavic root **bog* appears in its oldest reconstructed meaning 'fate' (Мельничук 1985: 219-220), so небожчик is one who is already deprived of fate.

Family members of the deceased involved in the funeral ritual are referred to by Ukrainians with various terms: рідні – Kh., S. (ЕОСУ: 333, 293), родичі – S., Kh. (ЕОСУ 2020: 279, 332), рідня – S. (ЕОСУ 2020: 280), родина – Lv., (ЕОСУ 2020: 213), рідніші – Lv. (ЕОСУ 2020: 220), найближчі – Kh. (ЕОСУ 2020: 332), близькі – S. (ЕОСУ 2020: 293), ті шо в хаті – Lv. (ЕОСУ 2020: 226), свої – S., L., Ch., L. (ЕОСУ 2020: 280, 201, 369, 213). The term свої 'family members' represents the binary opposition that dictates the clear division of roles among all participants in the funeral ritual "one's own" – "alien": Своїм можна обмивати покійника, но кликали всігда чужих людей. 'It is allowed for family members to wash the deceased, but they always called upon strangers' – Ch. (ЕОСУ: 369); Рідня хліб несла, чужі не несли. 'The family brought bread, strangers did not' – S. (ЕОСУ: 280-281); Сусіди обмивали. Родичі не должни ні мить, ні в гроб ложить, не переносити ніде нічого. 'Neighbors washed the deceased. Family members should not wash, lay in the coffin, or carry anything anywhere' – S. (ЕОСУ: 293); Свої не прийнято. Покличуть дві жєнщини. 'Family members are not accepted. Two women are called upon' – L. (ЕОСУ: 201).

In the naive worldview, чужі 'strangers' are correlated with the deceased, who is connected with the other world, and therefore своїм 'family members' are prohibited from contacting them.

Apart from the opposition between 'family members' – 'strangers', it is observed that in all studied regions there is a tradition regarding the performers of washing and dressing the deceased based on gender and age: Женщини обмивають і того, і того. Мужчини ніколи не обмивають. Молоді не ходять обмивати. 'Women wash both men and women. Men never wash. Young people do not participate in washing' – S. (ЕОСУ: 279); Потім бабка обмиває, одіває. 'Then old woman washes and dresses' – Ch. (ЕОСУ: 372); Спіціальні бабки, шо приходять одягають, якшо ви не можете, допустім, одягнуть. 'Some old women come to dress the deceased if you cannot do it yourself' – Kh. (ЕОСУ: 331).

Women are the most active participants in the night vigil, reading prayers by the deceased. They are nominated in the studied regions as певчі – S. (ЕОСУ: 281), півчі – L. (ЕОСУ: 202), спеціальні жінки 'special women' – Ch. (ЕОСУ: 372), and та, що читає біля покійника 'those who read by the deceased' – Ch. (ЕОСУ: 383).

At the same time, the performance of certain ritual functions, due to physical properties, is entrusted only to men: men make a coffin, dig a grave, and carry a deceased to the grave. Here we also observe a nominative commonality in the studied regions. In particular, men who dig graves are called грабарі – Lv. (ЕОСУ: 214, 226), копачі – S. (ЕОСУ: 293, 332), чоловіки, що копають яму – Ch. (ЕОСУ: 377).

Linguistic lacunarity, due to the tabooing of ritual text, is especially evident in expositive ritual performers' nomination (женщина така, то одчитає Псалтирь 'a woman who reads the Psalter'; ті, що в хаті 'those in the house'; хто ніс вінки 'who carried the wreaths'; ями копають хлопці такі спеціально 'special boys who dig graves'; баби, що миють 'old women who wash'). Avoidance of direct nomination, replacing it with descriptive constructions, is typical for all regions and demonstrates the desire to euphemize ritual text, which serves as a magical precaution (Конобродська 2007: 130).

Realemic Code

In the realemic code of the semiotic corpus of traditional funeral rites, two lexico-thematic groups can be distinguished: a) names of items used in ritual actions; b) names of dishes and products consumed by participants of the funeral ritual at the memorial meal.

The first subgroup primarily includes the names of items used for preparing the deceased: додільна сорочка – L. (ЕОСУ: 201), для смерти сорочка – L. (ЕОСУ: 207) 'shirt for death'; for an unmarried girl – велєн – L. (ЕОСУ: 219), фата – Ch. (ЕОСУ: 376), хвата – Lv., S. (ЕОСУ: 215, 291) 'veil', вінок / віночьок 'wreath', біле плаття 'white dress' – L., Lv., S., Ch. (ЕОСУ: 204, 215, 291, 280, 376). In Cherkasy region, a funeral wreath for an unmarried girl is called кальондра – Ch. (ЕОСУ 2020: 377). A common element in the funeral ritual across all regions of Ukraine is placing a strip of paper with a prayer on the forehead of the deceased, called вінець 'crown' – Lv., Ch. (ЕОСУ: 212, 375) or проходна 'passage' – Kh. (ЕОСУ: 331, 328), which is considered a pass to the world of the dead.

For the container in which a deceased is placed, the following names are used: гроб – S. (ЕОСУ: 279), труна – S., Ch. (ЕОСУ: 288, 369, 374) – derived from the German Trune, borrowed into Ukrainian via Polish; домовина – Lv. (ЕОСУ: 213) with phonetic variants доломина, дулумина – L., Ch. (ЕОСУ:

201, 371, 372) – a derivative from дім 'house' meaning 'house for a deceased' (Жайворонок 2006: 195); дубовина – Ch. (ЕОСУ: 382), related to дуб 'oak', harking back to ancient beliefs about the realm of the dead, which is crossed by a mythical river, for which the deceased were provided with a boat carved from a wooden (oak) log (Жайворонок 2006: 204). The coffin is usually placed on a лаву 'bench' – Ch. (ЕОСУ: 382).

According to the Orthodox canons, which are followed by the majority of the Ukrainian population, the свічка 'candle' occupies a significant place in the funeral ritual, accompanying it from beginning to end, and is also used in the context of the funeral ritual after its conclusion (ЕОСУ: 201, 215, 223, 328, 369). The connotative semantics of the свічка in the funeral ritual is clarified by the contextual synonym проводнічок, used by speakers in Cherkasy region: Ну, свічечка горить, стараюца, шоб свічечка горіла. Освіщяє дорогу в підземний світ. 'Well, the candle burns, they try to keep it burning. It illuminates the path to the underworld' (ЕОСУ: 339); Начинає править, запалює ці проводнічки. … Тоді батюшка каже: «Гасіть проводнічки». 'They begin to serve, light these guide candles … Then the priest says: «Extinguish the guide candle»' (ЕОСУ: 369).

Traditional in the ritual of Ukrainians are платок / платочок 'handkerchief', хустинка / хусточка 'shawl', рушник 'towel' – L., Lv., S., Kh., Ch. (ЕОСУ: 208, 220, 280, 290, 332, 335, 374), which are used to tie the hands of those participants in the funeral procession who carry wreaths, a coffin, or its lid; сіно 'hay' – L., S. (ЕОСУ: 204, 279, 288), солома 'straw' – Kh. (ЕОСУ: 331), which fill the pillow for a deceased; гроші 'money', which are placed in the coffin or thrown into a grave so that a deceased can buy a place in the afterlife (ЕОСУ: 201, 213, 220, 284, 288, 331, 369, 374); полотно 'cloth', which lines the inside of the coffin – L. (ЕОСУ: 211); пута 'strips of fabric or bandages', which are used to bind the legs and hands of the deceased and are believed to have magical powers in the practice of black magic – S., Ch. (ЕОСУ: 288, 369); жито 'rye' and пшениця 'wheat', in which a candle is placed, scattered on the road behind the funeral procession, and also in the grave into which the coffin is lowered – L., S., Ch. (ЕОСУ: 215, 280, 370). The Western region is distinguished by the use of святченого зілля 'holy herbs', which are placed under the head of the deceased – L. (ЕОСУ: 213, 219).

A special place among the items used in funeral rites in all regions of Ukraine is occupied by water. The phenomenon of water in the ethnocultural tradition of Ukrainians against the general Slavic background

has aroused research interest among many ethnographers, ethnolinguists, and folklorists (O. Antoniuk, I. Horofianiuk, L. Horoshko, V. Zhaivoronok, O. Simovych, and others). Most researchers emphasize the magical connotation of water in the naive worldview of Ukrainians, particularly as a channel of communication between the world of the living and the world of the dead: Воду свячену ставлять …, щоб душа кажний Божий день приходила умиваться додому сорок днів. 'Holy water is placed … so that a soul comes home every day for forty days to wash' (ЕОСУ: 282). In the context of the funeral ritual, water symbolizes the protection of the living from the harmful influence of the dead: Батюшка освящає труну свяченою водичкою. 'They sprinkle holy water in the house after the deceased' (ЕОСУ: 283).

After the funeral, all its participants wash their hands with вода 'water' in all regions (ЕОСУ: 220, 280, 283, 290, 332, 372, 379). There is a widespread belief in all regions that the water used to wash the deceased is мертва вода 'dead water': Кажуть, шо, як люди через тую воду перейдут, то погано буде, людина може вмерти. 'They say that if people cross that water, it will be bad, the person might die' (ЕОСУ: 219).

Among the names of dishes and products consumed by visitors to the funeral ritual, мед 'honey' and сахар 'sugar' – S., Ch. (ЕОСУ: 280, 341) clearly dominate. A sweet dish made from pieces of white bread, boiled wheat or rice, poured with water mixed with honey or sugar, known as канун – L., Kh. (ЕОСУ: 202, 341) or коливо – S., Kh., Ch. (ЕОСУ: 280, 286, 335, 372), is also common: *Родичі сперва **беруть канун** три рази, потім – инші.* 'Relatives first take the ritual sweet dish three times, then others' – L. (ЕОСУ: 211). L. Artiukh emphasizes the connotation of grain in the funeral ritual of Ukrainians as a symbol of family continuity, so before the start of the memorial meal, each attendee must taste three spoons of коливо (in Right-Bank Ukraine and the north of Left-Bank Ukraine) or канун (in Left-Bank Ukraine) (Артюх 2004: 45).

In all regions of Ukraine, it is customary for those attending a funeral to bring *печиво/печеньє/ печенья* 'cookies' and *канфети/конфети* 'candies'. The tradition of all regions includes a hot memorial meal, for which *пиріжки* 'stuffed buns', *капусняк* 'cabbage soup' or *борщ* 'beet soup' – L., S., Kh., Ch. (ЕОСУ: 202, 206, 280, 285, 335, 340, 373), *каша* 'porridge' – S. (ЕОСУ: 280, 283), and *кисіль* 'a fruit jelly' – S., Ch. (ЕОСУ: 280, 372) are essential. *Хліб* 'bread' is used not only for eating but is also placed on a coffin lid, offered for the requiem, and distributed to the needy people (ЕОСУ: 279, 332, 373).

The realemic code of the traditional funeral rite semiotic unites the mentality of residents of all regions of Ukraine through a naive worldview, created by many generations based on traditions, faith, and beliefs that reach back to ancient common experiences.

Actional Code

The importance of the actional code in the semiotics of the funeral rite is determined by the integral property of linguistic units that fill it, acting as a central component of a sentence. Lexical units denoting ritual actions in the funeral ceremony provide a meaningful connection between the units of agentive and realemic codes.

Verbal signs of the action code show a clear division into affirmative and negative. The former denotes the actions of participants in the funeral ceremony that customary tradition recognizes as normative. The second group consists of taboo actions, which are necessarily used with the negative particle *не* 'not'.

Empirical material indicates that the funeral items for a deceased were *вперед же* **готовили** 'prepared in advance' – L. (ЕОСУ: 201). To announce the death of a relative, *відкривають* **ворота** 'gates are opened', and *відкривають* **калітку** 'the small gate is opened' – Lv., Kh., Ch. (ЕОСУ: 213, 331, 336, 371, 376), and *зав'язують* **хустку** 'a scarf is tied' – Kh. (ЕОСУ: 331, 333, 338). In the house where there is a deceased person, *закривають* **дзеркала** 'mirrors are covered' – Lv., S., Ch. (ЕОСУ: 215, 283, 372), and in the Western regions, *зупиняють* **годинники** 'clocks are stopped' – L. (ЕОСУ: 215). The hands and feet of the deceased are *зв'язують* **путами** 'tied with cloth' – Ch. (ЕОСУ: 372). The deceased is *обмивають/ миють* 'washed', *наряджають/***обряжають** 'dressed' – L., S., Kh., Ch. (ЕОСУ: 201, 280, 335, 376), and in the morning after the first night of the deceased being in the house, they are *вмивають* 'washed again' – Lv. (ЕОСУ: 224). The water used to wash the deceased is *виливають там, де люди не ходять* 'poured out where people do not walk' – Lv., S. (ЕОСУ: 219, 288). The cleansing properties of fire are used in the funeral rite: the clothes in which the person died are *палять* 'burned' – Lv. (ЕОСУ: 219). Relatives *сидять* 'sit' near the deceased – L., S., Ch. (ЕОСУ: 201, 203, 293, 370): **Сидять** *тільки рідні … Кажуть,* «**сидять** *над душечкою»,* «**сидять** *над покійником.* 'Only relatives **sit**... They say, **sit** over the soul, they **sit** over the deceased' – S. (ЕОСУ: 293).

In the Western, Central, and Northern regions, specially invited women *читають* **Псалтир** 'read the Psalter' – Lv., S., Ch. (ЕОСУ: 214, 281, 289, 372), while in the Eastern regions, all those present *співають* 'sing' psalms – L. (ЕОСУ: 204). In the Central and Eastern regions, they *голосять* **за покійником** 'lament for the deceased' – L., Ch. (ЕОСУ: 204, 375). They *прощаюця* 'bid farewell' to the deceased – L., S., Ch. (ЕОСУ: 202, 279, 370).

A mystical ritual action that residents of all regions of Ukraine sporadically resort to is *передати* 'passing' a certain item to a deceased relative through the newly deceased – S., Ch. (ЕОСУ: 288, 369, 371): *Вона купила, щоб* **передати** *через другого покійного, поклала: "Діду Павле,* **передасте** *моєму батькові майку".* 'She bought something **to pass** through another deceased person, placed it: 'Grandfather Pavlo, *pass* this shirt to my father' – Ch. (ЕОСУ: 371).

In the West of Ukraine, when carrying the deceased out of the house, they **вклоняються** 'bow' three times at the threshold: *Виносять з хати,* **три рази** *вклоняються* **в порозі,** *прощається з хатою, своєю працею.* 'They carry the deceased out of the house, **bow** three times at the threshold, saying goodbye to the house and their work' – Lv. (ЕОСУ: 215).

The threshold, according to folk beliefs, is the place in the house where the power of ancestral spirits, possibly even the ancestors of the family, is concentrated. This belief explains the numerous superstitions and prohibitions that demand respectful treatment of the threshold. The ritual of touching the coffin to the house thresholds symbolizes the deceased's farewell to their home and household spirits, as ancestors were traditionally buried beneath the threshold in ancient times (Подолюк 2009: 41). **Покійника** *виносять* **вперед ногами,** *щоб не повернувся у хату ще один покійник або когось не забрав із собою.* 'The deceased is **carried out** feet first so that another deceased person does not return to the house or take someone else with them' – Kh. (ЕОСУ: 335). After the deceased is carried out, the doors and gates *закривають* 'are closed' in all regions (ЕОСУ: 214, 217, 279, 283, 332, 370, 375, 385): *Двері* **закривають** *скоро і ворота, шоб люди ше лишилися у дворі, шоб ніхто більше не вмирав.* 'The doors and gates **are closed** quickly so that people remain in the yard and no one else dies' – Ch. (ЕОСУ: 375).

On the way to the cemetery, the procession *зупиняється* 'stops': *Процесія* **ставать повинна** *на вуглі, на повороті, на всіх поворотах.* 'The procession must **stop** at the corner, at the turn, at all turns' – L. (ЕОСУ: 192); *До кладьбища поки дийдеш, треба три рази* **остановиться** *на перекрьостках.* 'On the way to the cemetery, you have **to stop** three times at the crossroads' – S. (ЕОСУ: 279).

In Cherkasy region, at all crossroads encountered on the funeral procession's route, **стелять**

рушник і **переходять** *через нього.* 'A towel is laid down and crossed over it' – Ch. (ЕОСУ: 379). It is generally accepted that before the funeral procession, one should *стань і постій, спинись, пропусти, не йди, треба стать, перечекать* 'stop and wait' – S., Kh., Ch. (ЕОСУ: 283, 332, 372).

After the funeral, all participants in the funeral procession **роздають** *дари поминальні* 'are given memorial gifts' – Kh. (ЕОСУ: 334), and participants in the ritual **миють** *руки* 'must wash their hands', which is a significant ritual action in all regions of Ukraine (ЕОСУ: 220, 280, 283, 290, 332, 372, 379).

In the subgroup of taboo actions in the action code of the funeral ritual, the following linguistic-mental signs are recorded: people *не здороваються* 'do not greet each other' when there is a deceased in the house – S. (ЕОСУ: 280, 296); **не можна дивиться** *на померлого чи на поховальну процесію* крізь вікно 'it is not allowed to look at the deceased or the funeral procession through a window' – S., Ch. (ЕОСУ: 280, 283, 372, 375); *до дев'яти / до сорока днів / нічого не роблять* в домі, де відбувався похорон, *не можна білити, ні прати* 'for up to nine or forty days nothing is done in the house where the funeral took place, such as whitewashing or washing' – Lv., Kh., Ch., S. (ЕОСУ: 214, 216, 337, 377, 282); at the memorial dinner, people *чарками* **не чокаються / не чаркаються / не здоровкаються** 'do not clink glasses or greet each other' – S. (ЕОСУ: 280); **взувати / убувати не треба** *покійника* 'the deceased should not be shod' – S. (ЕОСУ: 288); *не треба приходити* на похорон вагітній жінці 'a pregnant woman should not attend the funeral' – S. (ЕОСУ: 289); *дороги* **не можна переходить/ перетинати** 'it is forbidden to cross the road in front of a funeral procession' – Lv. (ЕОСУ: 219); when a person dies, *не можна кричать, не можна тривожить* 'there should be no shouting or disturbing / one shouldn't shout or disturb' – Kh. (ЕОСУ: 330); **не можна лишати** *померлого* самого в хаті 'the deceased should not be left alone' – Lv. (ЕОСУ: 222); bread for the memorial dinner **не ріжуть,** *а ламають* 'is broken, not cut' – Ch. (ЕОСУ: 372); *не можна дуже* **тужити/плакати** *за померлим* 'excessive mourning or crying for the deceased is not allowed' as it makes it difficult for them – Lv., S., Ch. (ЕОСУ: 223, 280, 378) and it is believed that excessive mourning can *приплакати* 'bring back' the deceased – Ch. (ЕОСУ: 342). Empirical material shows that until recently, Ukrainians believed in unclean deaths (Луценко 2012: 125), which included suicides and drowned persons **не одспівує** *батюшка* 'not given last rites by a priest' – L., S. (ЕОСУ: 204, 291); *хрести* **не ставлять** *самогубцям* 'crosses are not placed for suicides' – Ch. (ЕОСУ: 373), and *їх* **не поминають** 'they are not commemorated' – L. (ЕОСУ: 209). However, this customary norm is no longer supported in all regions of Ukraine.

In a separate subgroup of the semiosis of the funeral ritual, actional signs associated with the deceased and/or their soul should be considered. These signs are conditioned, on one hand, by the Ukrainians' belief in the fundamental Christian doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and on the other hand, by the belief that the deceased continues life in another dimension in their physical manifestations. Hence the conviction that *покойник приходить* **довідуєця,** *чи його поминають* 'the deceased comes to check if they are being remembered' – Ch. (ЕОСУ: 369); *покійник* **прощається** *з хатою, своєю працею* 'deceased says goodbye to the house and their work' – Lv. (ЕОСУ: 215); a glass of water is placed so that the soul **попила** *водички* 'can drink some water' – Ch. (ЕОСУ: 370); the soul **приходить вмиватися** 'comes to wash' – Lv. (ЕОСУ: 223); the soul **літає** 'flies' and **матається** 'wanders' for nine days, and on the fortieth day it **успокоїлась** 'rests' – S. (ЕОСУ: 279); money is placed in the coffin so that the deceased can **викупив** 'buy' themselves a place – S. (ЕОСУ 2020: 281).

The activity coding of the traditional funeral ritual, imbued with mystical connotations, clearly traces two vectors of intention: on the one hand, maintaining communication with the otherworld, and on the other, protecting the living from the harmful influence of the dead. This symbiosis is conditioned by the close intertwining of the Christian faith's tenets and relics of pagan beliefs in the naive worldview of Ukrainians. The signs of these beliefs are mostly found in similar verbal forms and with the same semantics across different regions of contemporary Ukraine.

Discussion and conclusions

The funeral rites of Ukrainians are a semiotic complex that forms an element of traditional folk spiritual culture. Its taboos have ensured the conservativeness of the rite and the preservation of its original foundation. The analysis of traditional funeral rites among Ukrainians from Lviv, Cherkasy, Kherson, Sumy, Luhansk regions through the lens of agentive, actional, and realemic codes has led us to the following conclusions. The structure of the Ukrainian funeral rite is typologically homogeneous, due to its common Slavic base. Variations are observed sporadically at the level of the verbalization of individual objects within the agentive, actional, and realemic codes among Ukrainians from different regions. However, the degree of variability is so low that

there is no nominative unit actively used in one region that is unknown in another. In our opinion, this is an important observation, as it refutes speculations about the "differences" between eastern and western Ukrainians. On the contrary, integrality prevails both in terms of content and in terms of the verbalization of ritual phenomena, realities, and persons.

Note

* For better perception of the localization of empirical material in the text, we use a system of conventional abbreviations for toponyms: Lv. – Lviv, S. – Sumy, Ch. – Cherkasy, Kh. – Kherson, L. – Luhansk regions.

List of abbreviations

ЕОСУ – Етнографічний образ сучасної України. Корпус експедиційних фольклорно-етнографічних матеріалів. Т. 5. Похоровально-поминальні звичаї та обряди / [голов. ред. Г. Скрипник]; НАН України; ІМФЕ ім. М. Т. Рильського. Київ, 2020. / Etnohrafichnyi obraz suchasnoi Ukrainy. Korpus ekspedytsiinykh folklorno-etnohrafichnykh materialiv. T. 5. Pokhovalno-pomynalni zvychai ta obriady. Skrypnyk, Hanna (Ed.). Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo IMFE, 2020.

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