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Ukraine

UKRAINIAN BOOK MARKET DURING THE WAR

The relevance of the work lies in the current difficult situation on the Ukrainian book market, which needs its own authentic literature. Before Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, a large share of the publishing assortment belonged to Russian literature. Therefore, now that the Ukrainian book market has been freed from Russian shackles, it is necessary to fill the arsenal of publishing houses with high-quality domestic publications.

The purpose of the study is to investigate the Ukrainian book market and the needs of the readership. The scientific novelty lies in the analysis of Ukraine's publishing output during the war.

The study was conducted in three genre niches: contemporary Ukrainian poetry; children's literature divided into two areas: literature for preschoolers and literature for primary school children aged 6–10; and products that encourage reading, including reading diaries. Despite the different focus of the analyzed publications, certain similar problems in the market can be traced. In recent years, the already deplorable state of book publishing in Ukraine has become even more acute due to the Covid-19 pandemic and

martial law. The market has suffered many losses and found itself in a real crisis: many publishing houses and printing houses have ceased operations and bookstores have closed.

However, despite the difficulties, Ukrainian publishing houses survived, adapted to work during the war, and even managed to bring the national book to a new level: new publishing houses were founded, books by Ukrainian authors were published abroad, domestic publishers became partners with foreign companies and received grants for new projects¹.

The renaissance of Ukrainian poetry and its influence on reading preferences

In modern conditions, Ukrainian literature is experiencing an active reformation, due to the terrible events that took place in the country. For many years, even decades, Russian culture has been imposed on the Ukrainian community. That is why there is an urgent necessity, especially now, during Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, to revive Ukrainian poetry, primarily with the help of young Ukrainian authors, to show that our culture is not inferior to any culture in the world, including Russian.

According to a study by the Ukrainian Institute for the Future, «Reading Practices during the War,» it is clear that before the full-scale invasion, 65 % of the readership preferred fiction, but after the outbreak of hostilities, preferences changed to a certain extent. Nowadays, people are more likely to choose military themes. 49 % of respondents say that reading is a way to keep oneself going, especially during the war². In the face of a full-scale invasion, people are trying to find their lifeline in a book, so publishers should restore demand for fiction.

It's quite natural to feel exhausted by the war and not want to read the news feed, because it can be a trigger. Fiction and poetry, which are full of emotions, can distract their readers from everyday problems. But what if contemporary poetry mainly covers only one topic: war. Naturally, we all sincerely kneel before our Armed Forces, our Heroes who are protecting us from the Russian plague, but even in such a difficult time, Ukrainian readers need quality poetry, for example, about love. This is not to say that there are no such poems on the Ukrainian market, but there are very, very few of them.

1 Chitomo. Culture of reading and the art of book publishing. 9 months of invasion: how Ukrainian publishers work during the war. URL : <https://chytomo.com/9-misiatsiv-vtorhnennia-ia-k-zaraz-pratsiuiut-vydavstv-v-ukraini/#:~:text=Так,%20у%203СУ%20служать%20члени,,%20«Свічадо»%20та%20інших.>

2 Report on the results of the online survey «Reading practices during the war» - UIF. UIF. URL : <https://news.uifuture.org/zvit-za-rezultatami-onlayn-opituvan/>.

The period that every Ukrainian is going through is a time of change, so young authors should not be afraid to express their ideas and create unique works that can be recognized both in Ukraine and on the international level. Of course, there are the classics - Taras Shevchenko, Lina Kostenko, and more recent Serhiy Zhadan (the names listed in the Reading Practices in Time of War survey as the most popular in 2023²) but there is a need for a new, modern literary face.

Fiction for preschool children. The state of the market

Since the beginning of the full-scale war, the Ukrainian publishing market has undergone significant changes. The most important is the disappearance of Russian books from the range of publishing houses. This means that Ukrainian publishers and authors are opening doors to create and publish quality literature in the Ukrainian language.

Analyzing a study conducted by Info Sapiens on behalf of the Ukrainian Book Institute, in 2023, «the share of children reading books increased in all segments – daily, weekly, and monthly readers. The decline in the share of children who never read for leisure from 18 % to 15 % is also statistically significant.»³. That is, it is clear that Ukrainian children are reading more and more, so there is a need for Ukrainian books.

Inclusive literature is becoming increasingly popular, teaching children from an early age to respect and tolerate those around them. Unfortunately, this topic is especially relevant now, when children are becoming disabled as a result of war. Examples of such publications include «World Without Borders» («Osnovy Publishing»), «The Sun in Your Lake», «Pearl, Our Butterfly» («Publishing Center 12»), and others.

Another hot topic is bilingual books, for example, using Ukrainian and English. Thus, from birth, a child understands and perceives 2 languages, which means that he or she becomes bilingual. Bilingual children have better cognitive skills because their brains are used to changing languages quickly, so they have the ability to quickly perceive information, analyze it, and adapt it to the situations they find themselves in⁴. Examples of such books are «Rudolf. The Pompous Cat» («Staryi Lev Publishing House»), «Little Corgi», «Quick Flynn», «Is It Alive?» («Talent»), and many others.

3 Ukrainian Book Institute. War and Books: The Ukrainian Book Institute presented a study on the impact of a full-scale invasion on Ukrainians' reading. URL: <https://ubi.org.ua/uk/news/kategoriya-2/viyna-i-knizhki-ukra-nskiy-institut-knigi-prezentuvav-doslidzhennya-vplivu-povnomasshtabnogo-vtorgnennya-na-chitannya-ukra-nci>

4 Channel 24. How to help a child learn two languages at the same time: pros and cons of raising bilingual children. URL: https://simya.24tv.ua/diti-bilingvi-yak-pravilno-vihovuvati-yaki-perevagi-ostanni-novini_n1491406

Today, the use of artificial intelligence in the creation of own products is becoming increasingly popular. Ukrainian publishing is no exception. In 2023, Ranok Publishing House published a book written and illustrated by artificial intelligence for the first time. It was a test to see if AI could still beat humans. The authors of the book shared in an interview with «Chitomo»: «It was an experimental decision because we were interested in exploring technologies ourselves, and we realized that the children we work with are interested in them. AI is about development and the future, and sooner or later we will all have to face it, so why not do it now, let's say, in a controlled manner?»⁵ Therefore, Ukrainian publishing houses will probably soon have a book in their arsenal that will involve artificial intelligence.

Children's fiction for primary school children. Market situation

Given the circumstances in which the publishing industry has found itself, the last few years have not been successful for children's publishing. After all, there was a reduction in the launch of new products due to a number of factors, but Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine was decisive. An additional factor in the decline in circulation is the gradual loss of interest in books due to the lack of public awareness campaigns⁶. Let's consider the situation on the market for publications aimed at the second age category, namely for children aged 6 to 10 years old. The study of the Ukrainian book publishing market shows that this segment provides opportunities and material for educating the most demanding consumers of this group, and the production of products meets the needs and interests of the target audience.

Modern Ukrainian publishing houses such as: «Ranok», «Vivat», «Chas Maystriv», «Vydavnytstvo Vydavnytstvo», «ARTBOOKS», «Staryi Lev Publishing House», and «Chytarium» are quite popular in Ukraine. They take into account the tendency of the emergence of relevant topics of contemporary literature with the change of generations, which is caused by differences in the preferences and interests of the child, which are modified over the years. But when it comes to sensitive social topics, publishers try to avoid such concepts. The majority of Ukrainian parents have conservative views on child-rearing. Therefore, literature for children with non-standard beliefs, same-sex couples, and motives that were unacceptable for discussion

5 Chitomo. Culture of reading and the art of book publishing. The authors of I Want to Go to Mars do not want our children to read books written by AI. URL: <https://chytomo.com/ia-b-ne-khotila-shchob-moi-dity-chytaly-knyzhky-napysani-shi-avtory-khochu-na-mars/>.

6 Viktor Shpak (2015). Publishing business in the conditions of Ukrainian statehood: a monograph. K.: SE «Express-ob'yava», 392 p. P. 36

in the past will have little demand on the Ukrainian book market. Such products are more difficult to sell⁷.

Ukrainian literature is gradually being integrated into the extracurricular reading of schoolchildren. Previously, this space was filled by the literature of foreign writers, which still remains relevant in the book publishing market. Today, the situation has changed somewhat, as Ukrainians are eager to study the works of domestic authors. These include: «The Elderberry King» by Lina Kostenko; «The Harp for the Spider» by Movchun Lesia; «The Country of Naughty Children» by Valentyna Kokhan, and others. Nevertheless, bestsellers and world classics are in demand on the Ukrainian market.

Ukrainian contemporary books for schoolchildren are notable for their visual richness, fostering moral values, developing children's skills and imaginations. Most of the products of Ukrainian publishing houses are characterized by the concept of literary creativity, which was once defined by B. Hrinchenko. That is, the characteristic presence of moral values in works, prudent imagination without exaggeration, richness of content and the art of the word⁸.

Position in the market of entertainment publications focused on encouraging reading. Ukrainian and foreign experience

With every passing day, the interest and need for reading in society is growing, which is why new bookstores and libraries are being actively opened, book clubs are being organized, and themed festivals and fairs are being held. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has had a significant impact not only on the ability of publishing organizations to produce new literature, but also on reading habits and preferences in general. The Info Sapiens agency conducted an analytical study that showed that after 2022, Ukrainians started reading more and preferred Ukrainian authors among all the literature: the share of people who did not read a single book in a year decreased, and over the three years from 2020 to 2023, the number of people who read daily increased by 9 %³.

Various forums and book festivals are organized in Ukraine to promote reading, for example: MERIDIAN CZERNOWITZ, Book Arsenal, KyivBookFest, BookForum, Book Space, and others. Modern forms of media

7 Publishing activity in the context of the development of new technologies: studying the needs of specialists : monograph / edited by H. V. Horbenko; compiled, scientific editor N. M. Vernyhora ; Institute of Journalism of Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University. Kyiv, 2019. 272 p. P. 114.

8 Ogar, E. I. (2002). Children's book: problems of publishing preparation : a textbook. Lviv: Az-Art, 158 p. P. 33.

such as podcasts also contribute to the popularization of reading culture. The following literary podcasts are popular among Ukrainian consumers: «Book Depository», «Station 451», «Morning Dose», and «Kult: Podcast»⁹. In addition, the book community is becoming more and more popular in tracking and sharing its reading progress. Smartmobs are held on social media, where people share lists of books they have read, tell what they want to buy, and summarize their year of reading³.

The practice of regulating the reading process is not a new experience for foreign readers. In the book market of other countries, one can easily find printed and digital reading journals, PDF templates for book reviews, as well as online platforms for reviewing and rating books, the most popular of them being Goodreads. The Ukrainian equivalent of this service is the e-reader tracker Rork, which was fully launched in March 2022. The app tracks reading time and tells you how many hours you have left to read until the end of the book, allows you to take notes, check what your friends are reading, and send reactions to other users.

Printed reading diaries can be considered a publication that is almost non-existent on the Ukrainian market. Big publishing houses do not produce such products, and it is therefore almost impossible to find reading journals on bookstore shelves. In Ukraine, there are only 5-6 publications that specialize in topics that meet the needs of readers in time management and tracking reading activity, and their creators are: the publisher «readingwithyana», book merch stores «Manor.ua», «bookuniverse_merch» and «readbox.ua».

For Ukrainians, analyzing and regulating the reading process is a new practice that has only begun to spread in the reading community in recent years. Currently, the media do not cover reading journals properly, which means that Ukrainian readers are not aware of the existence of such publications, which leads to a lower popularity of reading journals in Ukraine than abroad.

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9 Chitomo. Culture of reading and the art of book publishing. If you're tired of reading about books: 7 literary podcasts you can listen to right now. URL: <https://chytomo.com/iakshcho-chytaty-pro-knyzhky-nabrydlo-7-literaturnykh-podkastiv-iaki-mozhna-slukhaty-prosto-zaraz/>.