

NININS 2020**International Scientific Forum «National Interest, National Identity and National Security»****MULTILINGUALISM IN CONTEMPORARY TRANSLINGUAL
GERMAN-LANGUAGE LITERATURE: FORMS AND FUNCTIONS**

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Abstract

Multilingualism is a relevant notion in the context of modern multicultural research. In Germanic studies, it is common practice to explore multilingualism through the example of transcultural German-language literature and consider it a major distinctive feature. This research is based on Hall's theoretical principles of cultural hybridity in the era of globalization, Bhabha's views on the productivity of "the third space", which appears on the border of contacting cultures, and Bakhtin's idea of the dialogical nature of cultures as a key feature of cross-cultural communication. The study is aimed at examining the forms of multilingualism typical of literary works of contemporary German-speaking migrant writers. They have chosen German as a language of socialization and literary activity, although it is not their mother tongue. The evident and latent forms of multilingualism are relevant for imagological studies and meaningful in terms of the preservation and transmission of the value potential of the linguocultures that are in contact with each other. This study is based on the literary works of Tawada, a Japanese writer who is actively using evident and latent structures in her literary activity: the book of prose and poetry *Where Europe Begins* and the collections of literary essays *Talisman* and *Overseas Tongues*. This article is the first attempt to analyse the works of this writer from such a perspective.

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1. Introduction

Active migration processes that started in the second half of the XX century and have only intensified today are transforming the traditional notions of historically established societies and furthering the processes of transnationalisation of languages and cultures. The study of translingual practices in literature makes up the basis of research on contemporary multiculturalism.

Modern cross-cultural German literature (Esselborn, 1997; Esselborn, 2009), also known as German migration literature, represents a new literary genre, which has brought together migrant writers who have chosen the German language as a language of socialization and literary activity, although it is not their mother tongue. The research on German migration literature in western Germanic studies began in the 1990s due to the emerging interest in migration, multiculturalism, and postcolonial literature in international discourse. In the context of the modern “global ethnoscapes” (Appadurai, 1990), the literature of German-speaking migrants is studied along with the works of the world’s multicultural/transcultural literature (postcolonial cultures and literatures of Canada, France, Great Britain, and the USA).

The latest European research projects such as Literature on the Move (Literature on the move), Polyphony: Multilingualism – Creativity – Writing (Polyphony: Project), and Polyphony: Interuniversity Research Centre (Polyphony) are devoted to the study of translingual literary practices. They are aimed at the interdisciplinary analysis of “multilayer ties” between “the multilingualism and creativity” of modern transcultural German-language literature. Multilingualism and bilingualism manifest themselves at different language levels (phonetic, morphological, verbal and figurative, and genre ones). The combination, or hybrid mixture, in one literary work of the elements of several natural languages, often the first (native) language of migrant writers, and cultures with the literary (German) language of these authors is considered in most studies as one of the constituent features of modern German transcultural literature. It forms its distinctive specific “creative” potential (Bürger-Koftis et al., 2010). As follows from the foregoing remarks, multilingualism and hybridity are understood as synonymous but not identical phenomena and are used as complementary ones in contemporary studies.

Different intensities of the usage of multilingual elements by migrant writers in German literary works help to reveal evident and latent forms of multilingualism in transcultural German-language literature.

Scholar Immacolata Amodeo (1996) introduced the notions “latent and evident” bilingualism/multilingualism into scientific discourse. She defined the terms accordingly as “latent, or background, presence of any other language in a German-language text” that enters into dialogue with the dominant (German) language. For example, the author may use the names or toponyms that are not typical of the German linguoculture and include foreign structures, belonging to the first (native) language of migrant writers, in a German-language text (Amodeo, 1996). According to recent research, the term “latent multilingualism/bilingualism” often corresponds to “internal, implicit multilingualism/bilingualism”. The definition “evident multilingualism/bilingualism” is used together with the terms “external, explicit multilingualism/bilingualism” (Baumann, 2010, p. 235).

Each author chooses their own aesthetics of integrating evident and latent forms of multilingualism into a literary work. Thus, it is impossible to state that there is one single creative strategy.

The evident and latent forms of multilingualism are meaningful in terms of analysing their imagological potential in the dialogue of languages and cultures.

2. Problem Statement

The multilingualism of translingual German-language Literature is an actively researched phenomenon in modern Germanic studies. However, the question of the literary (theoretical) analysis of forms and functions of modern multilingualism to a large degree remains open. This approach pursues two objectives. Firstly, the empirical study of the evident and latent forms of multilingualism associated with the different intensities of the usage of foreign-language structures in a German-language literary work makes it possible to analyse the specific nature of individual aesthetic, translation, and intermediary strategies employed by migrant authors in the dialogue of languages and cultures. Secondly, it creates the basis for further analysis of the imagological and stylistic potential of multilingualism in the creative activity of migrant writers.

3. Research Questions

Transcultural interaction, which among other manifestations reveals itself through different forms of multilingualism (often hybridization), is a consequence of any migration processes. Stuart Hall's theory on hybrid cultures and new human identities shaped by globalization contacts forms the basis of contemporary research on multilingualism. In the context of migration, a person has to learn to interact with the cultures in which he/she lives and eventually becomes "a product" of a variety of interconnected and interweaving histories and cultures and their differentiating features. As Stuart Hall (1994) emphasizes, in the space of hybrid cultures an individual irrevocably assumes his/her new mission: to be an interpreter and a mediator between cultures.

The notion of "space" and its variable categories "middle space" and "the third space" are relevant to the culturological hypotheses of Bhabha who interprets the phenomenon of cultural hybridity as a certain metaphorical "intermediate space" where "the I" and its identity are being formed. The "hybrid identity" created by "the third space" should not be understood as a certain enclosed static "formation", since continuous multifaceted and controversial development and transformational processes are happening and generating subsequent changes (Bhabha, 2000).

Bakhtin expressed the idea of the productive and enriching potential of the dialogue of cultures long before Hall and Bhabha. Dwelling on the creative understanding of a foreign culture, Bakhtin (1986) points out that "It is only in the eyes of another culture that foreign culture reveals itself fully and profoundly" (p. 52). The continuity and further development of this process are intensified by the imagological influence of subsequent cultures that will "come, see and understand even more" (Bakhtin, 1986).

It is obvious that the productivity of cultural and linguistic interaction is reflected in the creative biographies of migrant writers. Their multifaceted identity (Vertlib, 2007) is formed by several natural languages overlapping in the linguistic consciousness of writers, and it manifests itself in multilingual "segments" of their literary creative work (Smirnova, 2017; Zhiganova 2012). The representation of

individual authorial strategies connected to the integration of evident and latent multilingual structures into a work of Literature, as well as the stylistic (imagological) and structural peculiarities of evident and latent multilingualism, define the subject of this study.

4. Purpose of the Study

Multilingualism is an essential feature of German-language translingual Literature that is natural per se. Multilingualism appears at different levels of a literary text and is typical of the creative biographies of those migrant writers who are familiar with two or more linguocultures.

From this perspective, the study analyses the literary works of Tawada who creates her works in German, which is not her native language. The ways of representing multilingualism through evident and latent “combinations” in Tawada’s literary texts, their classification, the identification of the functional and stylistic potential of multilingual structures, and the specific nature of their usage in the works of this Japanese writer remain to a large extent unexplored. This matter constitutes the purpose of the study.

5. Research Methods

This research is carried out at the intersection of linguistics and the study of Literature, combining the methods and approaches used in the fields mentioned above of the humanities: biographical, cultural and historical, as well as comparative methods, the method of interpretative analysis and the elements of quantitative analysis. The study also employs the thesaurus approach and hypothesis of Valery Lukov and Vladimir Lukov (2014) concerning “the dyadic structure” of comprehension as the semantic foundation of the dialogue of cultures which “reveals itself inside the thesaurus for acquiring another culture based on your one”.

This study made it possible to define the unique features of Tawada’s authorial strategy related to the usage of evident and latent multilingual structures, as well as their unusual configurations; all of which is significant in terms of the formation of the original artistic language of the writer and an imagologically productive dialogue of cultures.

6. Findings

The thesis concerning the productive, creative potential of cultures in contact with each other formulated in the theories of Hall, Bhabha, and Bakhtin finds its continuation in the creative biography of Japanese essayist, prose writer and playwright Yoko Tawada (1960). She is the author of multi-genre works in the German, Italian, and Japanese languages and the winner of prestigious international literary prizes and awards such as National Book Award (2018), The Warwick Prize for Women in Translation (2017), Kleist-Preis (2016), Yomiuri-Literaturpreis (2013), Adelbert-von-Chamisso-Preis (1996), and others (Tawada: Homepage). For Tawada, to be a recognized literary person in foreign language culture, means “enrichment.” In this case, as the Japanese writer believes, you can feel that you are a unique writer, but not “a global one”, i.e., belonging to everyone and no one (Catone, 2015).

Tawada’s creative and linguistic biography is linked with a few language cultures: her native Japanese, Russian, and German. Tawada has a bachelor of arts in Russian Literature, with the artistic

images of Russian culture taking a significant place in the writer's literary works. In the meantime, German culture has become her "language motherland."

In her works, Tawada makes ample use of multilingual, or hybrid, models, combining the elements of different languages and cultures, including her native one. It may be for this reason that Western scholar Jürgen Wertheimer calls the Japanese creator of unusual works "a postmodern shaman of poetic speech" (Catone, 2015). In many reviewers' opinion, Tawada is one of the most creative, "provocative" and original writers in the world (Catone, 2015). The writer skillfully employs her creative potential of multilingualism and includes its evident and latent forms in her literary works. Let us look at a few examples.

Tawada's autobiographical reminiscences of her first trip to Moscow (at the age of 19) and then to Europe, Berlin, along the legendary route of the Trans-Siberian railway, served as the basis for the story *Where Europe Begins* (1991) from a collection of poems and prose of the same name. It contains multiple references to the cities and regions of Japan and other countries connected with the biographies of the characters. Toponyms appear in the dialogues of the heroine's fellow-travellers on her long trip to Moscow:

Example 1

*My father comes from a businessman family in **Osaka**. After World War II he moved to **Tokyo** only with a small bundle* (Tawada, 1991).

Example 2

*"Do you come from **Vietnam**?" an old man asked me. "No, I come from **Tokyo**".*

*His grandson looked at me and asked him quietly, "Where is **Tokyo**?"*

*"Didn't I always ask such questions as a child? – Where is **Beijing**? – In the **west**"*

(Tawada, 1991).

The toponymic designations in the cited dialogues do not carry any visible semantic load. They are transmitted in the context of traditional "everyday" conversations, capturing – at first sight – only the geographical "locus" of universal biographical narration. However, everyday "life stories" are related to "the memory of the place", "the landscape" metaphors, and mythologemes reflected in them. Thus, the association "The West is Beijing" that is unusual for a European person is continued in subsequent metamorphoses of the story *Where Europe Begins*. The story-teller's naïve ideas of Moscow as the starting point of Europe are debunked by the remark of her female travelling companion who points out that the beginning of Europe "is not in Moscow, but behind the Urals." Then a Frenchman, her fellow-traveller, reveals that, according to him, Moscow is NOT Europe (Tawada, 1991). Later in the context of Tawada's real biography, the myth about "idealized Europe" interpreted by the author as repetition and "a mere return to Orientalism" turns out to be just as illusory (Catone, 2015).

It is evident that the latent forms of multilingualism, which lead among other features to "the transformation" of the expected outcomes of the plot, are meaningful for the artistic strategy of Tawada. The writer masterfully employs them for the purposes of "entertaining" and "lively" narration, which is interesting to the readers.

Nevertheless, due to their little representativeness in the text of a literary work, latent forms of multilingualism are not of significant research interest for modern Germanic studies. Greater importance

is assigned to the visible, evident forms of hybrid language and cultural contact, which create the special stylistic effect of a literary work.

For Tawada, the most frequent means of integrating evident foreign models consists of directly opposing them to a German-language equivalent in the text of a literary work. For this purpose, the *texte en regard* format is adopted, which is traditional for translating and editing practices and suggests a parallel layout of the original text and its translation. In her essay, *From the Mother Tongue to the Language Mother*, an evident multilingual structure of this kind is represented by a lexical pair in the Japanese (in Latin transliteration) and German languages:

Example 3

A German pencil was barely different from a Japanese one. However, it was no longer called “Enpitsu” but rather “a pencil”. Until then, I had not been aware of the fact that the relationship between me and my pencil was a linguistic one (Tawada, 1996).

Tawada’s collection of poems and prose, *Where Europe Begins*, describes a trip on a cruise ship. In the ship reading room, the main character is looking in an atlas and comparing Japan to the lost “child” of Siberia who is swimming lonely in the Pacific Ocean. The shape of the “baby” resembles a small seahorse, which has turned its back on its mother. A lexical three-fold structure is used for building the description: *Seepferdchen* (German) versus – *Tatsu-no-otoshigo* (Japanese), followed by the author’s commentary and translation into German:

Example 4

In the world atlas in the reading room of the ship, I saw Japan, this child of Siberia who has turned its back on its mother and is swimming lonely in the Pacific Ocean. His body resembled a small seahorse which in Japanese is called “Tatsu-no-otoshigo” – the lost child of a dragon (Tawada, 1991).

In the same collection of stories, there is an explanation of the etymological meaning of the word “Siberia”, and pairs of morphemes in the Tatar and German languages are given:

Example 5

“Siberia, “the sleeping land” (from Tatar: sib = sleep; ir = earth), was not sleeping, though. That’s why the prince didn’t have to come there and kiss the earth to awaken it” (Tawada, 1991).

An unusual example of a “multistage” usage of foreign evident/latent structures is found in Tawada’s essay *The Apple and The Nose* (Tawada, 2002). It describes the main character’s attempts to translate a Japanese hieroglyphic text into German and type it onto a computer. The lexical units *hana* and *hana* are spelt in the same way but are pronounced with different intonation patterns and represented with different hieroglyphs-ideograms for “the nose” and “the flower.” The computer interprets them as identical homonyms without taking into account their semantic differentiation. The choice of German equivalents made by the computer is based on the probability principle: the machine selects the most frequent symbol used by the heroine in the previous extract (Tawada, 2002). Obviously, “the nose” often appears in the text instead of “the flower” because the computer “gives preference to” this lexical unit of the text as a more frequent one. The essay concludes with a remarkable pun in Tawada’s style: the acoustic equivalent of the German “nose” (in the text the word is given in German: *Nase*), which is pronounced with a short “a” in Japanese, means “why” in the narrator’s interpretation. The word is also

written in German: *warum*, which, in turn, coincides with the German word *Nase* (nose) in its transcription variant (not mentioned in the text) (Tawada, 2002).

In the given example, the evidential oppositions of the words based on the *texte en regarde* principle are accompanied by a detailed description of the opposing (Japanese and German) sign systems (Zierau, 2010) and the mutual imagological misunderstandings that occur in this connection. In the essay, German-Japanese lexical units are repeatedly juxtaposed: German *Nase* – Japanese *hana*; German *Blume* – Japanese *hana*; German *Nase* – Japanese *warum* – Japanese and German *Nase*. However, it is clear that the foreign “component” of the differential features of the Japanese and German linguocultures that are auto-translated into German by Tawada is “hidden”, or represented latently. Thus, the Japanese ideograms for “the flower” and “the nose” are described but not represented graphically in the essay and the possibly coinciding transcriptions of the Japanese “why” and the German “nose” are mentioned but not stated. Tawada also uses the principle of “the combination” of evident and latent forms in the fragments of legends and tales from native Japanese culture and other cultures that are meaningful to her and that she has translated into German. Such is the legend of Japanese “kokeshi” dolls, a peculiar prototype of the Russian matryoshka in the heroine’s interpretation, from the collection of stories *Where Europe Begins*. The dolls were passed on to her in her childhood by her grandmother.

Example 6

*A very long time ago when people in the village were suffering from extreme poverty, it could sometimes happen so that women killed their own children, with whom they would have starved otherwise, immediately after birth. For each child, a **kokeshi**, which means in Japanese “let a child disappear”, was made so that people would never forget that they survived at the expense of these children (Tawada, 1991).*

Tawada’s authorial commentary differs from the conventional idea (communicated to tourists) about kokeshi as brightly painted interior dolls-toys, complementing it with absolutely different connotations.

The indicated evident/latent multilingual quotations could be called metalanguage “insertions” (Skiba, 2010) oriented to philosophical, mentally meaningful invariant concepts of culture reflected in the language. Their imagological potential is beyond any doubt.

7. Conclusion

The multilingualism of literary works by Tawada, as well as other migrant writers, is determined by the combination, or intersection, of several natural languages in the linguistic consciousness of migrant writers. The mental overlap of the differentiating features of the confronting linguistic systems forms the multifaceted identity of migrant authors and creates open “dual perspectives” on simultaneously occurring, or hybrid, images in their literary works. Japanese writer Tawada adopts in her literary texts evident and latent multilingual models, which ensure the readers’ stable interest in her creative activity. The latent structures not only convey the toponymy of the described storylines but are also associated with the memory of those places and are meaningful for the artistic strategy of the writer. Evident multilingual structures are shown in Tawada’s works in the oppositional confrontation of morphemes, lexemes and metalanguage forms oriented towards a true understanding of linguocultures in their

dialogue. The open texts of Tawada and other migrant writers who consistently integrate variable combinations of evident and latent multilingual structures into their literary works capture the value potential of the interacting cultures, contributing to an immediate understanding of reality and the effective, timeless dialogue of multiethnic communities.

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