You Say *Khorosho*, I Say *Horrorshow*: English Translations of Russian-language Passages in Contemporary Ukrainian-language Literature

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Abstract: The article focuses on English-language translations of Ukrainian–Russian bilingualism in Ukrainian literary texts. This code shifting is rooted in colonial history and its cultural implications, and does not necessarily have a semantic equivalent within target cultures. I analyse several approaches adopted by translators, from omitting the fact of bilingualism altogether to graphically marking the passages that were originally in Russian or indeed looking for equivalents within the target culture.

1. Introduction

In this article, I will analyse the various strategies adopted by English-language translators confronting the interpenetration of the Ukrainian and Russian languages in Ukrainian literary texts. Ukrainian–Russian bilingualism has been a feature of modern Ukrainian literature since its very first days. With his *Aeneid* (*Енеїда*), the publication of which in 1798 is widely considered to mark the beginning of modern Ukrainian literature (and, parenthetically, would become the subject of the first intellectual property scandal in the history of Ukrainian culture), Ivan Kotliarevsky (1769–1838) – a minor official in the Russian Empire and a former soldier, hence an unlikely figure for subversive affirmations of the cultural and historical distinctness of Ukraine from the dominant imperial cultural option – unwittingly made a forceful statement for the existence of a distinct Ukrainian language and culture. He did so not just by creating a burlesque and subversive retelling of the imperial foundation myth in the vernacular and from the perspective of the marginalised community, but also with the selection of paratexts that dictated the poem's reception. The first, unauthorised, edition of *Eneiida*, published by Maksym Parpura in 1798, included a Ukrainian–Russian dictionary with 972 entries compiled by Yosyp Kamenetskyi, the first such dictionary to ever be published; while no aspect of the original publication was authorised by Kotliarevsky, the author ended up using and expanding the dictionary in the subsequent authorised edition. The role of this bilingual addendum seems ambiguous: while it implicitly claims that the target audience belonged to Russian imperial culture and was not expected to have any fluency in Ukrainian, it was also a persuasive argument that the Ukrainian language was indeed not a dialect of Russian, but a language different enough to require dictionaries for the uninitiated reader, and worthy of dedicated

study (see Grabowicz 1997, 327–328). Bilingualism in 19th-century Ukrainian literature was not limited to such paratextual decisions that set the parameters of interactions between the reader and the text though: it often permeated literary works, sometimes to thematise the author grappling with his or her material, writing back against the power hierarchy and struggling to develop a stylistic strategy against the backdrop of unformed linguistic norms. In what is possibly the best-known example from that early period, Ivan Kotliarevsky's vaudeville *Natalka Poltavka* (1819), a local bailiff tries to woo an unwilling village girl, and while he is clearly set up as a class foil, the narrative also has a linguistic dimension. In stark contrast to the folk song-imbued speech of the girl and her paramour, the bailiff adopts a different linguistic strategy, mixing Ukrainian, Russian, Church Slavonicisms, bookish officialese and Polish locutions, often tautologically and stutteringly, as if searching for the right word. While his incessant code-shifting is a source of comic effect within the play, it can also be argued that the bailiff is, to an extent, a projection of the author, an embodiment of both his literariness and his uneasy positioning between several cultural and linguistic traditions (Grabowicz 2021, 27).

These early instances seem to set the paradigm for subsequent uses of bilingual code-shifting in Ukrainian literature, which may have different semantic functions. Bilingual texts can facilitate the tackling of the nation's colonial history and its impact on the cultural tradition, construct social difference, map the liminality of (post)colonial subjectivities, underscore the polyphony of (post)colonial spaces and deconstruct their different textual and cultural encodings, or simply entertain the audience with interlingual puns. This strategy offers authors an interesting toolbox for cultural, linguistic and aesthetic play. Of course, it also poses a major challenge for translators who don't necessarily have an equivalent sociolinguistic situation in their target language(s).[1]

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1 Belarusian, Polish and some other cultures that have experience with the Russian Empire and/or Soviet Union might have enough sociolinguistic equivalents and a similar degree of mutual intelligibility between the languages to leave this bilingual code-shifting without adaptation in translations (indeed, this strategy seems quite common and can be observed, among other examples, throughout Polish translations of Oksana Zabuzhko's novels by Katarzyna Kotyńska). Postcolonial cultures from other regions theoretically could have experimented with finding equivalents from their own cultural and linguistic history to substitute the original code-shifting. Translators into English enjoy no easy solutions in this case though. While this remains beyond the scope of the present study, it should parenthentically be noted that what could pose an even more radical challenge to a translator are translations of these instances of multilinguality into Russian. Translations into Russian of self-consciously postcolonial or anti-colonialist multilingual texts from the cultures that had a history of asymmetrical power relations with the Russian language and culture could potentially require the defamiliarisation or even deterritorialisation of the target language to open it up to a heterogeneity that "resists homogenizing or assimilative translation practice by recognizing the asymmetrical power relations inherent to translation and asserting identity through submitting the dominant literary language to constant variation" (Bandia 2012, 420).

2. Methodological context

The challenge of conveying linguistic heterogeneity within a target language/culture that largely privileges monolingual translatorial solutions can be approached within the framework of postcolonial translation studies. Since Ukrainian literature (or, indeed, the knowledge of Ukrainian cultural history) hasn't been well integrated into global literary markets, it poses all the usual challenges of translating marginalised texts in that the conventions, literary allusions or historical implications behind the source texts might be unfamiliar or altogether unintelligible to the audience conversant in the target language/culture. As Maria Tymoczko noted in her article on the vagaries of translating marginalised literatures, when no existing knowledge can be presupposed, "[t]he way in which a literary text metonymically represents features of its literary system and ultimately features of its whole culture is what makes translating a text of a marginalized culture so difficult" (Tymoczko 1995, 17). As metonymical representations of colonial history and its attendant cultural policies and hierarchies, instances of Ukrainian–Russian bilingualism are an obvious challenge on the productive intersection between postcolonial and translation studies. This polyphony in the original is often predicated, on the one hand, on the assumption of untranslatability, where the very fact of code-shifting adds another layer of meaning to the explicit verbal massage, and on the other, points to the inevitably translational nature of (post)colonial cultures and identities that often don't have the choice but to transpose meanings between several languages and cultures. For this reason, more attention to the Ukrainian case could be an illustrative addition to the current discourse on postcolonial experiences, translations and multilingual creativity. While it can be said that "[i]f the postcolonial is to survive as a viable critical discourse, it will have to become literally a discourse *of* and *on* translation in order to be responsive to the complexity of the textuality, and even the literariness, of postcolonial texts" (Bertacco 2014, 27; original italics), the opposite might also hold true: attention to (self-)translation as a practice and epistemological framework shines the light on many aspects of postcolonial literature.

The available sample of translations from Ukrainian into English doesn't allow us to track the changes in preferred translatorial choices over time, since, with a few exceptions, the corpus of translations dates from the last decade and focuses on newer works. Of the strategies available to translators of marginalised literatures – either prioritising dense information transfer by opting for a more literal translation accompanied with a set of paratextual devices such as footnotes, appendices, parallel texts and so forth, or creating a more popular translation, sometimes sacrificing the swaths of information that would be opaque to the target audience (see Tymoczko 1995, 17–18) – translators seem to have chosen the less academic path aimed at the broader readership. Nevertheless, there is a considerable variety of approaches within

this trend. There doesn't seem to be an established consensus for conveying Ukrainian–Russian bilingualism among the translators dealing with this issue at present, although one may doubtlessly arrive as the corpus of texts accumulates, the discussion around translations of postcolonial texts within this literary tradition intensifies, or as established publishing norms (for example, an expectation of a monolingual translation easily accessible for the most monolingual of readers) shift. Moreover, one can find a considerable heterogeneity of approaches even within one text. As will become clear from the provided examples, in the cases when there are many instances of multilingualism in the novel, translators inevitably use several strategies depending on the context of each individual scene. Therefore, I will provide descriptions of the texts where necessary to better contextualise the translatorial choices in each individual case. Of course, I do not naively expect the "Jerome ideal" of utmost fidelity and do not "elevate faithfulness to this central position" (Lefevere and Bassnett 1998, 2), instead focusing on the plurality of possible choices and their implications where mimetic imitation of the original in terms of linguistic equivalence is unfeasible.

3. Analysis

The solutions offered by translators can be roughly subdivided into five groups: (1) preserving Russian-language passages in Russian; (2) marking Russian-language passages graphically or orthographically; (3) substituting Russian with other equivalents (for example, French); (4) using extratextual or intratextual metalinguistic commentaries or glosses to indicate that the text was in Russian; (5) not reproducing the linguistic shifts of the multilingual original and producing a monolingual translation. While a reader may have expected a clearer correlation between the incidence of each translation strategy and the framework of the source text (postcolonial versus anti-colonial, linguistically heterogeneous or featuring clearly separated passages in either language, etc.), the translators' choices seem to be less rigid and predefined, often combining several approaches in neighbouring passages.

1) Preservation of Russian as-is

English-language translatorial history is no stranger to creative multilingual solutions (possibly the most famous example is John Felstiner's translation of Paul Celan's *Death Fugue*, which introduced multilingualism where there was none in the original, with passages in German eventually crowding out English-language fragments as the poem progresses, creating a translated text that is identical to the original in graphics, but not in implications). Nevertheless, these solutions have not become the mainstream, with monolingual translations remaining the normative default within the current publishing market, a presumption that is probably not altogether uninformed by

the English language's hegemonic status. The tendency to opt for monolingual translations is evident in the texts under analysis in the present article: the translators under consideration here have been sparing with this approach of preserving multilinguality, possibly out of pragmatic reasoning that their target audience was less likely to be fluent in Russian than, say, in German.

Beyond the purely pragmatic, there are textual reasons to be cautious with the conservation of this authorial strategy: although preserving bilingualism might seem like an equivalent solution, it might lead to "one of the great pitfalls of the traditional notion of equivalence: the fact that something absolutely identical, even in its graphic component, might be absolutely different in its collective reception" (Aixélâ 1996, 61). In the case of translations geared towards Anglophone audiences, leaving snippets of untranslated Russian is liable to make the text more exotic and opaquer to the audience in the target language than it was for the intended readers of the original; at the same time, the transposition into a different culture excises the historical context in which the text was rooted. Therefore, translations seem to conserve snippets in Russian either when the power dynamics implicit in the exchange are clear enough from the context, or when the translator is confronted with a culture-specific item that has no equivalent in the target language, and the text leaves little room for generalising, omitting or explaining it.

One example of a scene where the context explains the purpose of breaking the linguistic uniformity comes from the short story "Oh Sister, My Sister" by Oksana Zabuzhko (first published in 2003), translated into English by Halyna Hryn. Throughout her literary oeuvre, Oksana Zabuzhko has been one of the most consistent explorers of the intersectionality of national and gender-based traumatic experiences during the Soviet era, and the impact it has had on the narrative choices available to such subjects. In "Oh Sister, My Sister", the first-person narrator describes a KGB search of her family home that she witnessed as a young child, after which her mother, seeing that she could not protect even one child from the regime's brutality, much less two, chose to abort the eponymous sister. The KGB officer conducting the search addresses the young protagonist in Russian:

> [. . .] ніби-лице, так і не глянувши на тебе, сказало по-російськи: "Дєвочка, ану-ка покажи свої кнігі", – голосом, який також тебе не бачив, у якому не було жодної познаки, що його адресовано тобі, – таж ти не була "дєвочка", ти була – Дарця [. . .] (Zabuzhko 2014, 164)

> [. . .] that's when this almost-a-face said in Russian, "Let's have a look at your books, *dyevochka*," in a voice that also didn't really have room for you, contained no indication, in fact, that it was addressing you. And you were not *dyevochka*, your name was Darka [. . .] (Zabuzhko 2020, 6)

Of course, the whole sentence rather than just "dyevochka" is in Russian in the original. It is worth noting that from her later temporal vantage point the narrator reclaims some of the linguistic power that was stripped of her past self by subverting the expectations of Russian as the linguistic default: the phrase is spelled out phonetically with the Ukrainian alphabet, as if in a rejection of the hegemony of the language of the empire. While the English-language translator does not have access to that tool of anti-colonialist linguistic resistance, a single foreign word breaking through the formerly cohesive linguistic fabric seemingly mirrors the way that the KGB officer broke into the domestic space, and emphasizes the sense of forceful displacement of an individual identity evoked by the scene. The context conveys that linguistic code-shifting, here served as a signifier of asymmetric power relations that play out within the realm of language choices, among other spheres.[2]

Stanislav Aseyev *Svitlyi Shliakh*. Transl. *The Torture Camp* by Nina Murray and Zenia Tompkins.
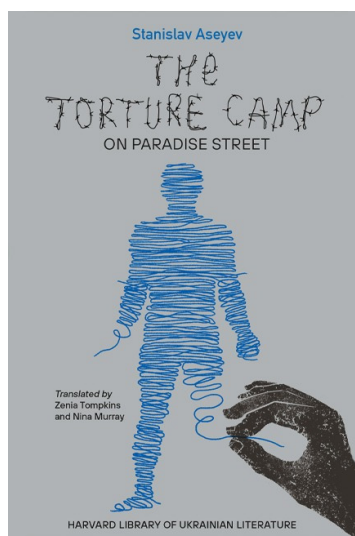
Another obvious instance where translators were free, or forced, to preserve the original multilingual text is an encounter with what might be described as 'culture-specific items', such as historically motivated collocations, allusions and references, individual names and titles, in a word, a translatorial challenge that "does not exist of itself, but as the result of a conflict arising from any linguistically represented refer-

2 It should be noted that, while Russian is sometimes used as a metonymy of complicity in the Soviet policies in some of the texts analysed here, it would be extremely misleading to equate language practices with political allegiances. In the nation defined in civic rather than ethnolinguistic terms, language differences are not an indication of differences in identity. For a concise overview of the current situation, see Kulyk 2016.

ence in a source text which, when transferred to a target language, poses a translation problem due to the nonexistence or to the different value (whether determined by ideology, usage, frequency, etc.) of the given item in the target language culture" (Aixélâ 1996, 57). (One could say, of course, that the very issue of Russian–Ukrainian bilingualism in a Ukrainian literary text functionally constitutes one big culture-specific item.) Before proceeding to instances where the translator, confronted with a culture-specific item, opted to produce a multilingual translation, in the interest of providing an overview of all available options I would like to provide an example of the opposite: specifically, the choice to translate culture-specific items, such as place names, despite the overwhelming tendency to leave them transliterated or transcribed. In possibly the best known example, the title of Stanislav Aseyev's autobiographic account of surviving a Russian concentration camp in occupied Donetsk, *Svetlyi Put´* in Russian or *Svitlyi Shliakh* in Ukrainian (the account was published in the original Russian and in the authorised Ukrainian translation under one cover), was translated as *Torture Camp on Paradise Street* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 2020, translated into English by Nina Murray and Zenia Tompkins). The concentration camp in Donetsk is indeed located on 3 Svitlyi Shliakh Road, which can be translated as "The Bright Road", referring to the road towards the bright Socialist future in Soviet ideology. While arbitrary, this particular place name seems loaded with meaning in the context of symbols from the Soviet era being weaponised to legitimise the Russian aggression. The irony of the title is derived from the contrast between the gruesome setting and the optimistic name, the promise of a bright future, made by a repressive ideology, that predictably turns into a nightmare. Since English-speaking readers won't necessarily recognise the Soviet slogan, the translators decided to depart from the tradition of transcribing or transliterating proper nouns and opted for a semantic equivalent. Tellingly, translators from countries that had more extensive experience with Soviet ideology seem to be more inclined to leave the recognisable ideological symbol in literal translations: cf., Świetlana *Droga* in the Polish translation (Wojnowice: KEW, 2020, translated by Marcin Gaczkowski) or *Heller Weg* in the German translation (Stuttgart: Ibidem Verlag, 2021, translated by Martina Steis and Charis Haska).

Despite revealing and interesting counterexamples, preserving a multilingual text (often with an in-text metatextual explanation) seems to be a more common approach to culture-specific items. One such example comes from *Museum of Abandoned Secrets* by Oksana Zabuzhko, translated into English by Nina Shevchuk-Murray. In a conversation with a former KGB agent, the protagonist notes a peculiarity in his speech pattern stemming from a translation from Russian into Ukrainian, and from the sociolect of the secret police into the language of civilians:

– Матінка ваша ще жива?

Він так і каже – "матінка". По-російськи це було б "матушка" – нормально, навіть поштиво. А так вони всі й говорили в своєму колі – "матушка", а на дружину – "супруга": "Передавайте привіт Вашей супруге", ні в якому разі не "жене", – "жёны" були в допитуваних, у тих, з ким не рахуються і привітів не передають. А в цих – "матушки", "супруги": владний жарґон, арґо переможців. Як це я не відразу догледіла, що він подумки перекладає з російської? (Zabuzhko 2009, Room 4)

"Your *matinka* still alive?"

That's exactly what he says–*matinka*. In Russian, this would've been *matushka*–appropriate, even respectful. That's how they used to talk among themselves–*matushka*, and also *supruga*, as in "Send my regards to your good *supruga*," never "wife"–"wives" were something the people they interrogated had, men not to be considered or given regard. But for their own: *matushka, supruga*–the jargon of power, the victors' argot. How did I not notice that he is translating from Russian in his head? (Zabuzhko 2012, Room 4)

The narrator therefore contends that, while neutral terms for forms of kinship (the ones that would occur on bureaucratic forms like those accompanying the dissidents' police files) are reserved for those under interrogation, KGB agents use slightly more archaic and literary synonyms for their own families. The Ukrainian equivalent does not have that connotation, having not been part of the specific sociolect of the KGB, and this seems like an odd choice to the narrator. English-language synonyms do not have similar connotations either, and the terms are introduced as foreign enough to merit their conservation in the original.

Another category of word that tends to get this treatment is ethnic and/or class pejorative terms. In an interesting example from Maria Matios' novella "Moskalytsia" (Matios 2008), uncharacteristically translated into English twice by different translators (as "Moskalytsia, That Russky Girl" by Michael M. Naydan and as "The Russky Woman" by Yuri Tkacz), the eponymous illegitimate child is nicknamed "Moskalytsia" by villagers because they suspect that she must have been fathered by soldiers from the Russian Imperial Army, colloquially known as *moskal* (a term that ended up expanding its meaning to become a pejorative term for all Russians). Curiously, to make the etymology of the nickname more legible, both Tkacz and Naydan ended up changing the nickname in the title to the foreignised "Russky Girl/Woman", privileging the ethnic over the social factor (granted, the novella does elsewhere state that the soldiers were *rusaky*, that is, ethnic Russians). In the text itself though, Naydan ends up keeping *Moskalytsia*:

[. . .] дехто із більш милостивих та м'якосердих пробував пом'якшити ім'я невинного байстряти, називаючи його позаочі русачкою. Але назвисько москалиця прилипло до дитини.

[. . .] the more gracious and soft-hearted tried to soften the name of the innocent bastardess, calling her a Russian girl (*rusachka*) behind her back. But the nickname *Moskalytsia* stuck to the child. (Matios 2014)

[. . .] the more charitable and kind-hearted people tried to soften the name of the innocent illegitimate child, calling her *Rusachka* behind her back. But the nickname *Russky* stuck fast to the child. (Matios 2011, 11)

In one instance, an ethnic pejorative that does have an equivalent in English was left untranslated because the narration engaged with its onomatopoeic effect. In Oksana Zabuzhko's short story "Girls", translated into English by Askold Melnyczuk, children taunt their Jewish classmate, and the narration conveys the pervasiveness and viciousness of the soundscape through the metaphor of bumblebees buzzing: "відверненій до дошки вчительці чутно було лиш монотонний низький гул, ніби класну кімнату раптом виповнили джмелі: "Жи-дов-ка, жи-дов-ка, жи-дов-ка…"" (Zabuzhko 2014, 228) – "The teacher facing the blackboard heard only a monotonous buzz as though the room had been filled with bumblebees–Zhid, zhid, zhid" (Zabuzhko 2020, 18). The English-language equivalent does not lend itself naturally to this soundplay.[3]

Another clear instance when the choice to leave the text unaltered is fairly straightforward is when the word is treated as requiring translation in the original. For example, the protagonist of Nina Bichuya's short story "The Stone Master" enquires about the possible translation of a Russian word: "Тату, як перекласти – "благоразумие"?" The English-language translator Olesia Wallo leaves the term, which was unclear to the character in Russian ("Dad, how do I translate *blagorazumie*?"), and adds the note clarifying the narrative situation: "*Blagorazumie* is Russian for 'common sense' or 'good judgment'. As the girl quotes from the Russian translation of the French work, she is translating the text for her listeners into Ukrainian" (Bichuya 2014). It should be acknowledged though that there might be pressure to avoid footnotes in English-language publications of translated fiction, so not every publishing house would allow its translators the opportunity to provide extensive footnotes.

A similar example can be seen in the translation of *Cecil the Lion Had to Die* (Смерть лева Сесіла мала сенс) by Olena Stiazhkina, translated by Dominique Hoffman. A more detailed discussion of the novel will follow in the subsequent subsection dedicated to

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3   I have also discovered one slightly perplexing instance of an ethnic pejorative term not preserved and not replaced with an equivalent from the target language, but translated literally. In an excerpt from Lina Kostenko's novel *The Diary of a Ukrainian Madman*, the translator Michael M. Naydan chose to convey the ethnic pejorative term for Ukrainians, "хохол," as "topknot," adding the following footnote: "The Russian derogatory term for Ukrainians is khokhol, literally a 'topknot,' harking back to the haircuts of the Cossacks in ages past" (original Kostenko 2010, translation Kostenko 2014). While the word in the context could have been replaced functionally by any slur, the translator prioritized an opportunity to convey the historical rootedness of the expression.

a different translation strategy, whereas at present it is sufficient to say that the poly-phonic fabric of the text is preserved within the context of discussing the foreignness of linguistically proper Russian words within the city of Donetsk, stereotypically seen as heavily Russified:

У новому «руском мірє» Донецька, як, зрештою, і в старому, у магазинах ніколи не продавалася «свєкла». І «свьокла» теж ні. Їх просто неможливо було ані купити, ані навіть замовити продавчині. Тільки буряк. (Stiazhkina 2021, ch. "Dina. Derevo. 2020")

In the new "Russian World" of Donetsk, just like in the old one, Russian *svyokol* [sic], or beets, weren't available. Not even *svyekel*, if you wanted to try it with a Ukrainian accent. It was simply impossible to buy them or even to ask the saleswoman for them. If you wanted to get a beet, you would have to use the Ukrainian word: "buryak." (Stiazhkina 2023, forthcoming)[4]

While the characters are tackling the thorny issue of identity construction between Russian (or, in many cases, remaining Soviet) cultural influences and new Ukrainian options, the structures of their quotidian life remain entrenched in Ukrainian, despite decades of Russification, deportations and population transfer designed to forge a homogeneous Soviet identity during the Soviet era. Normative Russian vocabulary and culture is not assimilated into their linguistic experience, and that sense is conveyed by retaining a foreign word in the English translation.

2) Graphic or orthographic marking of Russian-language passages

In some cases, translators chose to single out the Russian parts of the text ortho-graphically or graphically.

A significant portion of the canonical works in Ukrainian literature created after Ukraine regained its independence in 1991 are best described as anticolonial, that is, struggling for cultural self-definition through the forceful rejection of the norms asso-ciated with the colonising culture, rather than postcolonial (for an in-depth analysis of the differences between anticolonial and postcolonial goals and strategies in the Ukrainian literary context, see Pavlyshyn 1994). In that spirit, many authors spell out Russian parts of the text phonetically in the Ukrainian alphabet, in a strategy reminis-cent of the subversive literalism strategy in postcolonial translation, which entails "subjecting the colonizing target language to its grammatical and conceptual struc-tures" (Kirkley 2013, 279). This strategy, which in the original allows translators to

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4   I would like to express my gratitude to the Manager of Publications of the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute Oleh Kotsyuba for early access to the text of the translation (expected publication date: 2023).

decentre Russian as the normative default, is fairly easy to convey in English, so it is surprising that more translators did not use it. The one text where I have found this strategy is the translation of Oksana Zabuzhko's *Museum of Abandoned Secrets* by Nina Shevchuk-Murray, where the speech of one character is conveyed through a phonetic spelling of English with supposedly a Russian accent. The name of the town of Boryspil is transliterated in its Ukrainian version (as opposed to the Russian Borispol, as in the original), further underscoring Ukrainian as the normative default:

[. . .] здєсь прішол дядька, прігородний, із-под Борісполя откуда-то, пріньос швєйцарскій ножик, воєнних врємьон, с пілочкой, в хорошем состоянії... Он говоріт, у нєво в хатє часи с кукушкой і єщо шкаф орєховий, говоріт, от отца осталось [. . .] (Zabuzhko 2009, Room 2)

I hev some hick here, from a villadzh, somevere next to Boryspil, he brot a Swiss knaiv, from var-taim, with a small so, in gud condishn. He ses at home he hes a kukoo clock end a walnut wardrobe, used to be his grandpa's, he sed. (Zabuzhko 2012, Room 2)

Paradoxically, bilingualism might be the hardest to convey in translation precisely in the texts where it is used the most extensively as the text's load-bearing structure. One such example is *Cecil the Lion Had to Die* (*Смерть лева Сесіла мала сенс*) by Olena Stiazhkina, a sprawling family epic following the lives of children born in Donetsk in April 1986, on the centenary of the German communist politician Ernst Thälmann (1886–1944). A minor party functionary tries to persuade the young parents to name their newborns Ernst in honour of the former leader of the German Communist Party; some comply (the existence of baby girls among the cohort is a minor setback for the functionary's plan). Tracking the characters' progression through the years of tumultuous transformation after 1991 and into the Russo-Ukrainian war, the novel explores how the monolingual Russian and monocultural Soviet space was opened up to dialogue and negotiation, with each character embodying a different choice. As characters stray beyond the familiar inherited ideological narratives encoded in their names, the text, which begins in Russian, becomes heterogeneous with the inclusion of ever more Ukrainian-language chapters. In this translingual and transcultural dialogic narrative, a process of cross-cultural and increasingly cross-linguistic translation mirrors the process of identity formation in a strategy similar to that sometimes adopted by migrant writers creating "polyvocal works [which] test the boundaries of form as they explore the limits of expression and thus the boundaries of the self" – only here the displacement happens to be temporal rather than spatial (Wilson 2018, 55). In the later, almost exclusively Ukrainian-language chapters, the identity of the translator narrator is revealed, introducing a subjectivity that could integrate the debris of old myths and new realities into a polyphonic but still cohesive account. The choice to introduce a

translator narrator offers a fascinating thematisation of the idea of interlingual literary translation as an analogue for post-colonial writing (Tymoczko 2002, 20) in that post-colonial writers (especially those choosing to write in the majority language), much like literary translators, are preoccupied with transposing a culture across a cultural and/or linguistic gap. None of this lends itself easily to a translation into English, of course.

Recognising that there wasn't a feasible way to maintain bilingual narration across long stretches of text in the English translation, the translator Dominique Hoffman decided to mark the different sections with different fonts (in the early access copy of the translation's manuscript that I had access to, the Russian portions are in Libre Caslon, whereas the Ukrainian portions are in Lucida Sans). Another important decision that had to be made pertains to the names. By longstanding tradition, Slavic names descended from common roots are 'translated' rather than transliterated between Ukrainian and Russian (so, for example, Vladimir Putin would be Volodymyr Putin in Ukrainian, while Volodymyr Zelensky would be Vladimir Zelensky in Russian), with only some publishing houses adopting a pro-transliteration stance since 1991 (most notably the Kyiv-based Krytyka). Hence the changes in names between Ukrainian- and Russian-language chapters are not so much markers of shifting identities (although they are sometimes also that) but rather functions of shifting linguistic contexts. In many cases, the translator had to commit to a unified spelling of each name to facilitate an easier reading experience, and the choice of one version or the other possibly lifted some of the ambiguity and fluidity inherent in the text.

3) Substitution with (near) equivalents

Since the sociolinguistic history of Ukrainian literature is not quite conducive to finding full equivalents in English translation, a search for equivalents often involves prioritising one semantic aspect. For example, in her translation of Oksana Zabuzhko's *Fieldwork in Ukrainian Sex* (*Poliovi doslidzennia z ukraiins'koho seksu*), Halyna Hryn conveyed the power imbalance in an interaction between the Ukrainian-speaking protagonist and a Russian-speaking KGB officer coming to arrest her father by adding a note of condescension that belies the address per formal "you" in the original: "вы еще слишком молоды" (Zabuzhko 2007, 158) becomes "sweetie, you're a little young for this, aren't you?" (Zabuzhko 2011). That same translation provides a rare instance of the translator maintaining bilingualism in the text by introducing another foreign language to convey irony: "Еге ж, exactly – чи, коли хто воліє, "вот імєнно"," (Zabuzhko 2007, 41) which combines English and (phonetically spelled) Russian, is translated as "Yep, exactly, or *bien sûr*, if you prefer" (predictably, Katarzyna Kotyńska's Polish translation keeps the phonetically spelled Russian: "Ano, exactly – albo, jak kto woli, *wot imienna*").

Another aspect of texts where one often expects to see substitutions with equivalents from the target culture is allusion and quotation. Umberto Eco famously advised his translators to substitute a Leopardi quote with a recognisable quote from a Romantic poet from their own tradition in *Foucault's Pendulum* to best convey the fact that the characters are only capable of interacting with reality through the mediating lens of literature. Unfortunately, this strategy would be highly problematic in a postcolonial literature actively engaged in reintroducing the formerly banned names and constructing an alternative cultural continuity. Nevertheless, I have found one instance of a somewhat mysterious change in literary quotations in Oksana Zabuzhko's short story "Girls", translated into English by Askold Melnyczuk:

[. . .] ось цей-от віршовий рядок, що тепер раз у раз повторюється машинально, губами, мов платівка заскочила: "Мимо ристалищ, капищ, мимо шикарных кладбищ, мимо Мекки и Рима по свету идут пилигримы..." А дурні ж вірші, дурні, як сирі дрова [. . .] (Zabuzhko 2014, 261)

[. . .] this line of poetry, which repeats itself mechanically as if the needle were stuck on a spinning record: "So long had life together been"–Brodsky, stupid verse, stupid as green firewood [. . .] (Zabuzhko 2020, 44)

Both quotes are indeed by Brodsky, but the quote in the original, from the poem "Pilgrims", deals with a futile search for meaning that can only be ascribed by poets rather than found as a relic, whereas the quote in the translation comes from a more straightforwardly lyrical "Six Years Later". While the reasoning behind this substitution remains obscure, it does shift the theme of the protagonist's reflections from her role as a poet to her role as a romantic subject.

A rare stroke of luck occasionally allows a translator to find an equivalent even in passages that deal with translations between several linguistic and cultural norms. One such instance can be found in *Museum of Abandoned Secrets* by Oksana Zabuzhko, translated into English by Nina Shevchuk-Murray:

Декотрі клієнти, знаючи мою принципову нехіть до «батькування» [. . .] зациндолюють щось уже й геть несамовите – «ґаспадін Адріан»: їм здається, це те саме, що по-українському сказати: пане Адріяне. Абсолютно анекдотична форма, а дедалі шириться – теж свого роду посткомуністичний гібрид. (Zabuzhko 2009, Room 3)

Some clients, aware of my principled distaste for patronymics [. . .] pitch something totally outrageous, like "Mister Adrian"–somehow they think it's the Russian equivalent of saying "sir" in Ukrainian. It's ridiculous and ungrammatical, but really popular–another post-Communist hybrid. (Zabuzhko 2012, Room 3)

The character is addressing the speech norms that were emerging in the 1990s as an alternative to Soviet parlance, with the pre-Soviet Russian honorific *gospodin* as one option and the Ukrainian honorific *pan* as another. The problem arises from the fact that *gospodin* is used with a surname or a job title whereas *pan* can also be combined with first names, hence the mix-up; "Mister" happens to function similarly to *gospodin*, which allows the translator to maintain the strange collocation without conserving the original wording and providing a footnoted explanation.

4) Extratextual or intratextual gloss indicating that the text is Russian

In possibly the most commonly used strategy, translators can indicate the language of certain passages with an intratextual gloss or a footnote. Although relatively non-intrusive and serviceable, this strategy, of course, has the downside of obscuring the linguistic heterogeneity of the source text if the gloss is not clearly marked as a translator's addition.

This strategy was used in the one Soviet-era translation of a text that featured bilingual dialogues that I have found, Oleksandr Dovzhenko's autobiographic 'film novella' *The Enchanted Desna* (1956; translated by Anatole Bilenko in 1982). Recognising that an autobiography of the author is about the formation of his style as much as about biographical facts, Dovzhenko follows the protagonist's life not just through his adventures in a village in northern Ukraine in the late 19th century, but also through his acquisition of various narrative models, from mythological visions of the deluge to eventual integration into a Socialist realist mode with its preoccupation with class conflict. The protagonist's integration into society with all its inherent conflicts is emblematised in his encounter with a schoolteacher. Arguing against Soviet repressions against Ukrainian culture, Dovzhenko relegates the language conflict to earlier Tsarist days:

– Это твой? – спитав він батька […] – А как зовут?

[. . .] – Сашко, – прошепотів я.

– Александр! – гукнув учитель і невдоволено глянув на батька. [. . .] – А как зовут твоего отца?

– Батько.

– Знаю, что батько. Зовут как?! [. . .] Не развитой! – промовив нерозумний учитель.

(Dovzhenko 2007, 197)

"That yours?" he asked Father in Russian [. . .] "What is the name?"

[. . .] "Sashko," I whispered.

"Alexandr!" the teacher exclaimed and gave Father a disgruntled look. [. . .] "What is your father's name?"

"Father."

"I know he's father. What is his name?" [. . .] "He's not intellectually mature!" declared the not-too-clever teacher. (Dovzhenko 1982, 69–70)

The translator adds a gloss clarifying that the teacher speaks Russian, but keeps the fact that the teacher corrects the Ukrainian diminutive of the name Oleksandr to its formal Russian version Alexandr without a footnote.

This approach is not limited to older translations, appearing with high consistency throughout the entire corpus. To name just one example, it is the preferred strategy in Marko Pavlyshyn's translation of *Recreations* by Yuri Andrukhovych (original 1992, translation 1998), a novel that conveys the carnivalesque atmosphere prevalent in Ukrainian culture in the early days of independence. In the novel's finale, the police roundup of artists plays out as a farce rather than tragedy; predictably, representatives of the security forces speak Russian, interrupting the Ukrainian festival unfolding around them, and the translator indicates this fact with a gloss ("– Всем выходить, строиться на улице, – коротко сказав лейтенант" translated as "'Everybody out, line up in the street,' said the lieutenant in Russian" (Andrukhovych 1998, 123)).

5) Erasing the multilinguality of the text

Last but not least, a translator may leave out the fact of bilingualism of the original altogether, choosing to avoid the untranslatable linguistic polyphony of the source text while privileging readability and facilitating easy reception. A certain degree of omission is almost unavoidable in translations from marginalised literatures less familiar to the target audience; the amount of literary information in such cases may prove excessive for the translator, in which case he or she might choose which aspects not to translate (Tymoczko 1995, 17). This, of course, erases the tension inherent in this code-switching and conceals the historically motivated power relations that inform the production of meaning; again, texts that use bilingual passages most extensively might be more likely to be translated this way.

For example, this is the preferred strategy in Mark Andryczyk's translation of *Mondegreen* by Volodymyr Rafeyenko (original 2019a; translation 2022), a novel delving into self-translation as a mechanism for constructing an identity, and into ways in which different linguistic choices inform which narratives might be accessible to the protagonist: "the past depends directly in the language. The past you seem to have lived changes too whenever the language changes" (Rafeyenko 2019b). A native of Donetsk, in the east of Ukraine, Volodymyr Rafeyenko started his literary career as a Russian-language novelist, winning acclaim, including the respectable Russian literary prizes the Russian Prize (2010, 2012) and the New Literature prize (2014), but opted to switch to writing in Ukrainian in response to Russian propaganda that cited "the

defence of Russian speakers" as justification for the Russian occupation of his home town, making him "simultaneously a victim and a pretext of the war" (ibid.). The novel's protagonist is, like the author, an internally displaced person trying to make a home in both a new city and a new language, and semantic ambiguities of the free-floating associative linguistic logic typical of the early stages of language acquisition are the driving force of the narrative. The text is a collage of quotations and misquotations from very different sources, and while the footnotes of the translation provide the context, the linguistic code-shifting isn't (and possibly couldn't be) conveyed.

Vitaly Chernetsky's translation of *The Moscoviad* by Yuri Andrukhovych (Andrukhovych 2000 for the original; Andrukhovych 2008 for the translation), a 1993 novel set in the Gorky Literary Institute in Moscow, shows the same approach. Set during the last days of the Soviet Union's existence at the institute the purpose of which was to cultivate official writers to promote Soviet ideological narratives across the Soviet republics, the novel does feature some code-switching, mainly to mock the literary uses of the Soviet grand narrative, although the instances of bilingualism are omitted in the translation.

4. Concluding remarks

The practice of translation is always a tally of wins and losses, and nowhere is this fact more prominent than in the case of translating instances of bilingualism rooted in colonial history. From daring substitutions to phonetic renditions or straightforward erasures of the fact of multilingualism, no single homogeneous strategy is fully satisfactory, as evidenced by the fact that almost every translator juggles several of these approaches depending on their interpretation of the priorities in each instance of bilingualism in the text. While fidelity or finding the near-mythical perfect equivalent in the target language are not the primary concern, each solution has its implications for the shape and reception of the text that emerges as the result of translatorial rewriting of the source. The findings might be a challenge to quantify, given that bilingual fragments are too unequal in length and effect (from chapters in different languages in *Cecil the Lion Had to Die* to single-word inclusions), but intratextual glosses clarifying the language of the text seem to be the most common approach. In general, there seems to be a tendency, by no means unique to translations from Ukrainian, to omit linguistic heterogeneity in favour of a monolingual accessible translation in normative English, with translations of culture-specific items as possibly the most prominent exception where a measure of multilinguality is indeed expected.

This overview and analysis of various translatorial approaches to the issue of bilingualism in literary texts highlights the phenomenon of linguistic code-shifting as a mirror of cultural negotiations in Ukrainian literature, as well as the theme of nar-

rator as (self-)translator engaging with their liminal position between several linguistic and cultural traditions. Hence, combining postcolonial and translation studies could help to provide a more nuanced understanding of fairly common if less commonly studied authorial strategies in Ukrainian literature.

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Sina ütled „Horošo", mina ütlen „Horrorshow": venekeelsete katkendite ingliskeelsed tõlked ukrainakeelses kirjanduses

Iaroslava Strikha

Võtmesõnad: ukraina-vene kirjanduslik kakskeelsus, postkoloniaalsed uuringud

Selles artiklis analüüsin ma strateegiaid, mida kasutavad inglise keelde tõlkijad, kohates ukraina ja vene keele omavahelist segunemist ukrainakeelsetes kirjandustekstides. Ukraina-vene kakskeelsus on olnud moodsa ukraina kirjanduse jooneks selle algusest saadik ning see võib täita erisuguseid semantilisi funktsioone. Kakskeelsed lõigud kirjandustekstides võivad hõlbustada tegelemist rahvuse koloniaalajalooga ja selle mõjuga kultuuritraditsioonile, konstrueerida sotsiaalseid erinevusi, kaardistada (post)koloniaalsete subjektiivsuste liminaalsust, rõhutada (post)koloniaalsete ruumide polüfooniat ning dekonstrueerida nende tekstuaalseid/kultuurilisi kodeeringuid või siis lihtsalt lõbustada lugejat keeltevaheliste sõnamängudega. Koloniaalajaloo ning sellega kaasneva kultuuripoliitika ja hierarhiate metonüümiliste representatsioonidena on ukraina-vene kakskeelsuse esinemisjuhud ilmselgeks tõlkeväljakutseks postkoloniaalsete uuringute ning tõlketeaduse produktiivsel lõikumispinnal. Mõistagi võib osutuda raskeks nende vahendamine inglise keeles, milles puudub ekvivalentne sotsiolingvistiline olukord.

Olemasolev tõlgete valim ukraina keelest inglise keelde ei võimalda järgida eelistatud tõlkevalikute muutumist ajas, sest paari erandiga pärineb tõlkekorpus viimasest kümnendist ning keskendub uuematele teostele. Sellele vaatamata esineb lähenemistes märkimisväärset mitmekesisust, sageli ühe ja sama teksti raames (kui romaanis leidub arvukalt mitmekeelsusjuhtumeid, kasutavad tõlkijad vältimatult mitmeid strateegiaid, sõltuvalt iga üksiku stseeni kontekstist).

Strateegiad võib jagada järgmistesse kategooriatesse: (1) venekeelsed lõigud säilitatakse venekeelsetena; (2) venekeelsed lõigud markeeritakse graafiliselt või ortograafiliselt; (3) vene keel asendatakse teiste ekvivalentidega (nt prantsuse keelega); (4) kasutatakse tekstiväliseid või siseseid metalingvistilisi kommentaare või sõnaseletusi, näitamaks, et tekst oli venekeelne; (5) mitmekeelse originaali keelelisi nihkeid ei reprodutseerita, kustutades seega lähteteksti keelelise heterogeensuse ning andes tulemuseks ükskeelse tõlke. Pidades vajalikuks täpsustada, et originaalitruudust (ükskõik milliseid tähendusi sellele kategooriale on võimalik omistada) ei tohiks pidada tõlke peamiseks eesmärgiks ning seda siin nõnda ei käsitleta, visandatakse artiklis erisuguste lähenemiste kasulikud küljed ja võimalikud probleemid, kasutades mõõdupuuna originaali implikatsioonide edastamist.

Strateegiat 1 kasutatakse kõige sagedamini, kui tõlkijal on tegemist ajalooliselt motiveeritud kollokatsioonide, allusioonide ja viidetega, isikunimede ja tiitlitega, mõistetavatel pragmaatilistel põhjustel pole seda kuigivõrd võimalik rakendada pikemate tekstilõikude puhul ning see võib muuta teksti sihtpubliku (vene keelt mitteoskavate inglise keele kõnelejate) jaoks raskemini mõistetavaks, kui see oli lähteteksti lugeja puhul (kellelt eeldati vene keelest arusaamist). Strateegia 2 ehk venekeelsete tekstide ortograafiline markeerimine foneetikat järgiva kirjapildiga kõlab kaasa hulga ukraina nüüdiskirjanduse postkoloniaalsete tekstidega, milles venekeelsed tekstiosad pannakse tihtipeale kirja foneetiliselt ukraina tähestikku kasutades, kõigutades vene keele staatust vaikenormina. Ilmsete erinevuste tõttu sotsiolingvistilises ajaloos on strateegia 3 kõige harvemini esinev valik, kuid selle kohta

on siiski olemas mõned huvitavad näited. Strateegiat 4 kasutatakse, vastupidi, ilmselt kõige laiemalt; kuigi see strateegia on suhteliselt vähesekkuv, on selle mõistetavaks puuduseks lähteteksti keelelise heterogeensuse hägustumine, kui sõnaseletused pole selgelt tähistatud tõlkijapoolsete lisandustena. Strateegia 5 puhul võib tõlkija algteksti kakskeelsuse tõiga täiesti kõrvale jätta, otsustades vältida lähteteksti tõlkimatut keelelist polüfooniat ning eelistades loetavust.

Praktilise tõlkimisega kaasnevad alati võidud ja kaotused ning see ei torka kusagil silma nii hästi kui koloniaalajaloost võrsuvate kakskeelsusjuhtumite tõlkimisel. Ühest küljest lähtub algteksti polüfoonia tihtipeale tõlkimatuse eeldusest, nii et koodivahetuse tõik lisab eksplitsiitsele sõnalisele tähendusele veel ühe tähenduskihi, ja teisalt osutab see (post)koloniaalsete kultuuride ja identiteetide paratamatult tõlkelisele olemusele: tihti ei jäägi neil üle muud kui mitmete keelte ja kultuuride tähendusi omavahel vahetada. Sel põhjusel illustreerib ja täiendab kakskeelsusjuhtumite tõlkimine ukraina nüüdistekstides postkoloniaalseid kogemusi, tõlkeid ning mitmekeelset loomingulisust käsitlevat hetkediskursust.

Iaroslava Strikha – ilukirjanduse tõlkija ja kirjandusteadlane. Tema tõlgete nimekirja kuuluvad teosed sellistelt autoritelt nagu nt Henry David Thoreau, Julian Barnes, Kate Atkinson, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Art Spiegelman, Paul Auster ja Don DeLillo. Ta kaitses doktorikraadi Harvardi ülikoolis 2017. aastal ning on välja töötanud kursused Ukraina nüüdiskultuurist ja Ida-Euroopa kirjanduslikust modernismist, mida õpetas Harvardi slaavi keelte ja kirjanduste osakonnas 2022. aasta kevadsemestril.
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