TRANSLATION STUDIES:
THEORY AND PRACTICE

International Scientific Journal

YEREVAN STATE UNIVERSITY
Department of Translation Studies

TRANSLATION STUDIES: THEORY AND PRACTICE

International Scientific Journal

volume 4 | issue 2 (8)

The *Translation Studies: Theory and Practice* (TSTP) is a peer-reviewed international scientific journal published by the Department of Translation Studies of Yerevan State University. It presents original research articles of high standards in all areas of translation. The journal appears in two issues per annum. Papers submitted to the journal should be written in English. The journal is available both in print and online.

Should you require any further information or have any queries regarding the submission process, please contact us via email at tstp@ysu.am or tstp.ysu@gmail.com.

CONTENTS

THE COMING OF AGE NOVEL IN UKRAINIAN TRANSLATION: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

ARTUR GUDMANIAN*
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4196-2279
NATIONAL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF UKRAINE
"IGOR SIKORSKY POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE"

ANDRIANA IVANOVA**
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1733-4416
UZHHOROD NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Abstract: The present paper makes an attempt to analyse the genre of the coming of age novel in the light of modern translation studies. The research is based on the Ukrainian translation of the coming of age novel *The Queen's Gambit* by Walter Tevis. The dominant genre peculiarities such as the issue of upbringing, symbolism realized in the depiction of chess game and the author`s peculiarities of character portrayal have been analyzed. Contextual substitution, transposition, concretization, omission, addition, antonymic translation are considered to be the dominant translation transformations used by the translator to convey the genre specificity of the coming of age novel.

Keywords: coming of age novel; translation transformations; upbringing; characters' portrayal; genre specifity in translation

1. Introduction

The genre of coming of age novel is extremely popular nowadays due to its focus on personal growth, transformation, and the development of characters. Coming of age novels highlight the challenges, triumphs, and lessons learned during the transition from youth to adulthood. The relevance of the topic lies within the fact that coming of age novels are a significant genre in literature, depicting the growth, maturation, and self-discovery of a protagonist. Analyzing the genre's specific elements within the context of translation offers insights into how these narratives are transformed or preserved across languages. The aim of the study is to identify and analyze the specificity of coming of age novel in translation. The material for this study is the

---

* artgud13@gmail.com
** andriana.ivanova@uzhnu.edu.ua

English-language novel by W. Tevis *The Queen`s Gambit* and its translation into Ukrainian by Ella Yevtushenko.

2. Theoretical Background

The coming of age novel as a theoretical, historical, and literary phenomenon is still of interest to many researchers of both domestic and foreign literary studies, including philosophers. There is a considerable amount of research devoted to the origin and evolution of this genre in various literatures, its specificity as a novel that developed during different epochs, starting with the Enlightenment and up to the present day, the structure of this genre, and its philosophical and artistic nature. Researchers express some doubts about the clarity of the genre, whether a particular novel belongs to coming of age novel, since the criteria are blurred and almost every novel contains some elements of this genre.

It is well known that the genre of coming of age novel emerged in German literature in the second half of the eighteenth century during the Enlightenment, spreading in the first half of the nineteenth century due to the change in the role of an individual in society, the emergence of the Enlightenment's belief in the need to improve human natural qualities through education, experience, and self-education. The bourgeoisie's backwardness and weakness contributed to the representation of issues of education, the meaning of life, and the purpose of the individual in fiction.

The term 'bildungsroman,' from which the coming of age novel then derived, was first used in 1774 by F. Blankenburg, who defined it as a type of novel dominated by education and character development (Zarva 2014: 7). Over time, Blankenburg's term gained recognition. The concept of the bildungsroman was introduced into literary criticism by the German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey, who was the first to recognise it as a historical genre, which found its best embodiment in Goethe's Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship.

Among the scholars who have studied the peculiarities of the genre characteristic of coming of age novel are Svitlana Prytoliuk, Oleksandr Sydorenko and Victoria Zarva.

According to Prytoliuk, coming of age novel is a specific genre form that, on the one hand, demonstrates a certain constancy of structure in the process of historical development, which is fixed by a number of invariant features (such as the presence of the history of the individual's formation, evolution of his or her character in confrontation with the environment, localisation of the conflict around the protagonist who plays the role of a 'student,' the obligatory presence of 'mentors,' who consciously or unconsciously guide the process of spiritual and physical maturity of the character.) On the other hand, it reveals the flexibility of the genre model, which is expressed in a number of variations that we observe in the so-called modified examples of the genre. Prytoliuk points out that the nature of these changes indicates the dominance of two main trends: the desire to preserve the traditional structure of the genre and an attempt to reconcile the structure of the novel with the changed concept of the protagonist (Prytoliuk 2004: 103)

By the type of plot, which is a defining element of any prose form, the coming of age novel is a novel, centered around a single protagonist who is formed and brought up under the influence of various factors (education, home and close people around him or her). Other characters perform a constructive or destructive function in his formation, helping with good guidance, understanding, or placing obstacles in the protagonist's way, while becoming his opponents or even enemies, which forces him or her to move forward, to look for other ways out of difficult situations.

In the composition of the coming of age novel, an important role is played by descriptions (of portrait, interior, places, landscapes, description of clothes, things, food, space, etc), which perform not only a specific reflective function, but are signs or symbols of certain attitudes, values and lifestyle.

The plot and compositional structure of the coming of age novel uses the method of introspective depiction of events, while also allowing for retrospection, the principle of monocentric composition, etc. Scholars call the essential characteristic of this genre biographical time, which is fully corresponding to the real time, but not always correlated with historical milestones, the generations serve as a dividing line in it, and it prevails over historical time (Zarva 2014: 9).

Typically, the coming of age novel is the story of a mature person who evaluates his or her past from the point of view of a person who is aware of the consequences of his or her own behaviour. Therefore, as S. Prytoliuk notes, such a distanced reflection on one's own history in terms of life experience is due to the shift of time layers (Prytoliuk 2004), which focuses even more attention on the moment of the character's development and upbringing.

Writers turn to the means of fully concentrating the action around the protagonist, and show the lessons of life he or she has learnt. Along with external events in the main character's life, there are more important internal factors of biography, represented by spiritual changes and an emphasis on the educational complex, where a significant role belongs to the obligatory characters - teachers, mentors who guide the educational process through knowledge and prevent possible mistakes of their students. The protagonist's inner development is revealed in his or her encounters with the external world and various trials in which he or she tries to achieve their goal and self-improve. The character's search for truth, justice, and the ideal significantly contributes to their spiritual growth.

In the process of forming the protagonist's worldview, it is evident that his views and ideas clash with those that prevail and are cultivated in this society. Such confrontations are quite understandable and natural, since with the change of socio-cultural conditions comes a change of generations, which leads to certain intellectual discussions and reflections on this issue. The coming of age novel is full of the characters' reflections on existential issues, which ultimately shape their attitude towards themselves, people around them, and their understanding of the world in general.

The main idea of the coming of age novel is the growth and formation of a dynamic personality. The dynamism of the protagonist's development lies in the constant search and desire of a character to self-realise in the rapidly changing conditions of life. A character's personality is not a static category, it is constantly changing under the influence of various psychological, socio-cultural, and political factors.

In the coming of age novel, the role of the young protagonist's mentor is also very important, as the mentor usually guides the character in the right direction. Such person is often either a teacher at the educational institution where the character is studying, or an older person whose worldview appeals to the hero at certain stage of life.

Overall, the system of features that characterise the specificity of the coming of age novel include: the inner development of the protagonist, which is revealed in clashes with the outside world; life lessons learned by the protagonist as a result of evolution, depiction of the protagonist's character development from childhood to physical and spiritual maturity, active activity of the central character aimed at establishing harmony and justice, the pursuit of an ideal that harmoniously combines physical and spiritual perfection as well as the protagonist's shift from extreme individualism to society.

One of the central elements of the coming of age novel is the portrayal of the protagonist's personal growth and evolution. Translating this aspect demands careful attention to the character's changing thoughts, emotions, and perspectives throughout various life experiences. Translators face the challenge of capturing the nuances and subtleties of this transformation. They must carefully select linguistic registers, narrative techniques, and lexico-stylistic choices that effectively convey the character's emotional and psychological states. The translated work must resonate with readers, providing an authentic portrayal similar to that of the original text. The narrative perspective, such as first-person or third-person narration, also has a significant role in this genre of novel, shaping the readers' connection with the protagonist. Therefore, it is important for translator to consider how to retain the intended voice and perspective in the target language, as it influences the readers' immersion in the protagonist's personal journey.

Symbolism plays a vital role in the coming of age novel, serving as a vehicle to represent abstract ideas, inner conflicts, and the protagonist's evolution. These symbols, whether objects, settings, or recurring motifs, require careful translation to resonate with readers in the target language. However, the challenge lies in finding suitable equivalents or alternatives that capture the symbolic essence while considering cultural context. Translators must navigate the potential loss or alteration of cultural significance, ensuring the intended meaning is effectively conveyed.

Coming of age novel may use different linguistic and stylistic devices to reflect the development of the protagonist or the narrative structure. Translators should capture the author's use of language, including dialects, slang, or puns, and find appropriate equivalents in the target language without altering the intended effect and tone.

The genre of coming of age novel is often deeply rooted in a particular cultural and historical context, and the protagonist's personal development is closely linked to his or her social environment. Thus, the translator faces the challenge of conveying these cultural nuances and historical references in a way that readers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds can understand and appreciate the context. Coming of age novels often contain idiomatic expressions and cultural references that may be specific to the source language. Translating these expressions while preserving their meaning and cultural significance poses a challenge, as direct translation may result in loss of impact or comprehension for readers in the target language.

Coming of age novels often follow a specific narrative structure (Millard, 2007: 24), with episodic events or milestones marking the protagonist's development. Translators need to maintain the coherence and pacing of the narrative while accounting for potential differences in linguistic structures and storytelling conventions in the target language.

Coming of age novel may address sensitive themes such as identity, trauma, or social issues, which can vary in cultural significance and reception. Translators must navigate these themes with cultural sensitivity, ensuring that the target audience can engage with and understand the narrative while respecting the author's intentions and societal norms.

Authors often employ symbolism that operates on multiple levels, creating layers of ambiguity. Translating this complexity presents a significant challenge, as each language may lack direct equivalents for nuanced symbolic associations. Therefore, translators face the challenge of preserving these elements while ensuring clarity in the target language. Striking a balance between staying faithful to the author`s original intent and making the text accessible to readers can be demanding.

To ensure effective conveyance in the target language, translator should be able to identify and understand the intertextual references present in the novel, which often refer to other literary works, cultural texts, or historical events. If translator is not familiar enough with the referenced material, it can hinder accurate translation and diminish the intended impact on readers.

3. Discussion

Walter Tevis employs a distinct and detailed writing style when describing chess games in *The Queen's Gambit*. Tevis uses rich and evocative language to paint a visual picture of the chessboard and the movements of the pieces. He describes the strategic maneuvers, and the intensity of the game in a way that brings the chess games to life.

Tevis delves into the psychological and emotional aspects of the game, providing insight into the mindset of the players. He explores the thought processes, calculations, and the mental battles that take place during the matches, giving readers a deeper understanding of the characters' approaches to chess. Also, Tevis employs symbolism and metaphor to enhance the depiction of the chess games. In *The Queen's Gambit*, chess plays a central role in the life of the protagonist, Beth Harmon. Chess is not only a game to Beth, but a way of life and a means of escape from her troubled upbringing.

The novel's title refers to a chess opening known as the Queen's Gambit. This is a strategic move in which a player sacrifices a pawn to gain control of the center of the board. The Queen's Gambit symbolizes Beth's journey to greater confidence and control through chess. The Queen's Gambit is an opening in chess – a specific sequence of moves that begins the game. In fact, it is the first opening that Beth herself can recognize when she plays with Mr. Shaibel, and she is pleased when she does so. This makes it clear he Queen's Gambit, and chess in general, give Beth a sense of control and accomplishment.

Later, however, the Queen's Gambit reflects Beth's insecurity, which undermines her confidence. When Beth plays Benny Watts for the first time, she feels that she is a

weaker player than him, especially after Benny notes that she made a mistake in her game against Harry Beltik:

> "*Beltik could have made the pin, and then his queen knight became a threat. She had to break the pin and then protect against a fork with that damned knight, and after that he had a rook threat and, bingo, there went her pawn. It could have been crucial. But what was worse, she hadn't seen it.*" (Tevis 2014: 126)

> "*Белтік міг би зв'язати її фігуру слоном, і тоді його ферзевий кінь ставав небезпечним. Бет довелося б звільнятися від зв'язування, а тоді захищатися від вилки з тим клятим конем, а після того він вивів би туру і — гоп — кінець її пішаку. Це могло б усе змінити. Але, що ще гірше, Бет не побачила цього.*" (Tevis 2021: 129)

Here the translator used such transformations as substitution: "make the pin" is translated as "зв'язати її фігуру слоном." Similarly, "break the pin" is translated as "звільнятися від зв'язування." Modulation was used in the phrase "his queen knight became a threat."

The verb tense and aspect are changed in the Ukrainian sentence to convey the ongoing and developing nature of the threat. The expression "and, bingo" is translated as "і – гоп." This is a substitution of the English expression to a Ukrainian interjection that conveys a similar sense of suddenness or surprise. The phrase "there went her pawn" is translated as "кінець її пішаку." This is a transposition of the English phrase to a different word order that is more natural in Ukrainian.

In her match, Beth opens with the Queen's Gambit, but she quickly regrets doing so because it is a complicated position. She does not feel as assured of herself because of Benny's perception of her as weak. This causes self-doubt, which is in turn a contributing factor to Beth's loss in the game:

> "*The horrible feeling, at the bottom of the anger and fear, was that she was the weaker player – that Benny Watts knew more about chess than she did and could play it better. It was a new feeling for her, and it seemed to bind and restrict her.*" (Tevis 2014: 127)

> "*Найжахливішим почуттям був не гнів і не страх, а усвідомлення того, що з них двох Бет – слабший гравець, що Бенні Воттс знав про шахи більше за неї і грав краще. Це було нове почуття для неї, і воно неначе зв'язувало і сковувало її.*" (Tevis 2021: 131)

The translator used a superlative adjective (найжахливішим) to convey the same intensity as the English phrase "the horrible feeling." This is an example of concretization, where the translator expands on the original text to convey a similar meaning with greater emphasis or intensity.

Overall, Tevis' portrayal of chess games in *The Queen's Gambit* is characterized by vivid imagery, psychological insight, symbolism, and strategic analysis. These elements combine to create an engaging and immersive experience for readers, even if they are not avid chess players themselves. The translator has employed various translation techniques, including equivalent translation, substitution, antonymical

translation, omission, and concretization, to effectively convey the intended meaning and maintain the author's style. The translated passages maintain the narrative flow and emotional impact of the original text while adapting it to the target language.

Tevis delves deep into the inner world of the main character, Beth Harmon, offering readers a profound understanding of her thoughts, feelings, and motivations. He explores the complexity of her psyche and provides insight into her fears, desires, and struggles. This psychological depth adds realism and believability to the main character.

Beth also feels a sense of exclusion and alienation within the chess community:

"*Listening to the two of them, she had felt something unpleasant and familiar: the sense that chess was a thing between men, and **she was an outsider**. She hated the feeling*." (Tevis 2014: 125)

"*Коли вона слухала тих двох, її охопило знайоме неприємне почуття: наче шахи були чоловічою справою, а **вона тут зайва**. Бет ненавиділа це почуття.*" (Tevis 2021: 128)

The phrase "she was an outsider" is transposed as "вона тут зайва." The translator has rearranged the word order to convey the meaning in a slightly different way while preserving the overall sense of being excluded. Beth's inner world is often portrayed as a place of solitude. She finds solace and comfort in her own thoughts and in the game of chess:

"*She was alone, and she liked it. It was the way she had learned everything **important** in her life.*" (Tevis 2014: 136)

"*Бет була одна, і їй це подобалося. Саме так вона навчилася всього, **що важило в її житті.***" (Tevis 2021: 139)

In this example the same structure is maintained in Ukrainian translation. While "important" is an adjective in English, in the Ukrainian translation, it is rendered as a verb "важило." This transposition might be a stylistic choice by the translator to convey the sense of significance or importance.

Chess becomes an all-consuming obsession for Beth. She is constantly studying, practicing, and seeking opportunities to play. The game provides an escape from the challenges and loneliness she faces in her life, and she becomes completely immersed in its intricacies and possibilities:

"*She felt powerless and silly. But then she looked at the boards again, with the pieces set in the familiar pattern, and the unpleasant feelings lessened. She might be **out of place** in this public high school, but she was not out of place with those twelve chessboards.*" (Tevis 2014: 39)

"*Бет почувалася безсилою й дурненькою. Але тоді знову глянула на шахівниці з розставленими у звичному порядку фігурами, і неприємне відчуття послабшало. Може, тут, у старшій школі, вона **була не в своїй тарілці**, зате поруч із цими дванадцятьма шахівницями була на своєму місц*и." (Tevis 221: 44)

Here, the expression "out of place" is replaced with "не в своїй тарілці," which conveys a similar idea of not belonging.

Beth's journey is marked by her determination to excel in the game and her internal struggle with addiction. Beth overcomes her addiction through a combination of self-reflection, support from others, and her renewed focus and dedication to chess:

> "*Then one morning after a night of dark and confusing dreams she awoke **with an unaccustomed clarity**: if she did not stop drinking immediately she would ruin what she had. She had allowed herself to sink into this frightening murk. She had to find a foothold somewhere to push herself free of it. She would have to get help.*" (Tevis 2014: 228)

> "*Тоді одного ранку, після сповненої темних, сумбурних снів ночі, вона прокинулася **з незвично ясним усвідомленням**: якщо вона не припинить пити просто зараз, то зруйнує все, чого добилася. Вона дозволила собі вгрузнути в цю страхітливу пітьму. Їй треба було знайти точку опертя, щоб виборсатися з неї. Їй знадобиться допомога.*" (Tevis 2021: 223)

Here the translator mostly used equivalent translation. The phrase "with an unaccustomed clarity" is translated as "з незвично ясним усвідомленням" in Ukrainian. The translator uses contextual substitution to capture the meaning of the phrase in a different linguistic structure.

To conclude, Beth Harmon's portrayal in Walter Tevis' work is characterized by her isolation, resilience, and intellectual prowess. As an orphan navigating a male-dominated world of chess, she experiences a sense of alienation and strives to prove herself. Through Tevis' depiction, Beth emerges as a complex and relatable character, highlighting the challenges she faces and her relentless pursuit of success and self-discovery.

The translator has done a commendable job in rendering the original text into Ukrainian. The translation exhibits a good understanding of the source material and effectively captures the meaning, tone, and style of the author's work.

4. Conclusion

To sum up, we have defined that the coming of age novel is a type of novel dominated by education and character development. Its main characteristics include concentration of the action around the protagonist, the method of introspective depiction of events, biographical time, and the depiction of character`s worldview formation and inner evolution. In the course of our research we have analyzed W. Tevis' novel *The Queen`s Gambit* and defined its main tendencies characteristic of the coming of age novel, namely the topic of upbringing, symbolism realized in the depiction of chess and the author`s peculiarities of character portrayal.

We have identified the most prevalent translation transformations in the reproduction of the coming of age genre specificity of W. Tevis' novel. Contextual substitution (78%), transposition (11%), and concretization (11%) were among the

translation transformations used by the translator to convey the specificity of depiction of chess in the novel. The translator employed many alterations, including contextual substitution (50%), concretization (20%), omission (10%), addition (10%), and antonymic translation (10%), to convey the idea of upbringing in the novel. The translator resorted to contextual substitution (50%), transposition (38%), and omission (12%) when translating the author's character portrayal.

In all cases, the most dominant translation transformation is contextual substitution. This is due to the fact that contextual substitution enables the translator to express the original text's content in a manner that is more acceptable and in keeping with the target language and cultural context. The translator makes sure that the intended message is properly delivered to the readers without sacrificing clarity or coherence by replacing certain words or phrases with their equal counterparts.

Transposition can be seen in the rearranging of sentence elements, such as the subject-verb-object order, or in the rearranging of adjectives, adverbs, or prepositional phrases in the analyzed passages. The meaning and flow of the original text are effectively conveyed to the readers due to this transformation, which also aids the translator in producing a target language text that sounds more idiomatic and natural.

References

Harasym, Tetiana. 2014. "Roman vykhovannia ta roman initsiatsii: typolohichni zbihy i vidminnosti" [Bildungsroman and Initiation Novel: Typological Similarities and Differences]. *Naukovyi visnyk Mizhnarodnoho humanitarnoho universitytu. Seriia: Filolohiia* [Scientific Bulletin of the International Humanitarian University. Series: Philology], 11 (1): 102-105.

Millard, Kenneth. 2007. *Coming of Age in Contemporary American Fiction*. Edinburgh University Press.

Prytoliuk, Svitlana. 2004. *Zhanrovi osoblyvosti romanu vykhovannia* [Genre Features of the Coming of Age Novel]. Ternopil: Vydavets Starodubets.

Tevis, Walter. 2021. *Khid korolevy* [The Queen's Gambit]. Kharkiv: Knyzhkovyi klub "Klub simeiinoho dozvillia."

Tevis, Walter. 2014. *The Queen's Gambit*. RosettaBooks.

Zarva, Viktoriya. 2014. "Stanovlennia, evoliutsiia i osoblyvosti romanu vykhovannia" [Formation, Evolution and Peculiarities of the Coming of Age Novel]. *Naukovi zapysky Berdiaskoho derzhavnoho universytetu universytetu. Ser. Filolohichni nauky* 2: 5-14. Accessed September 15, 2024. http://nbuv.gov.ua/UJRN/nzbdpufn_2014_2_3

POLISH AND ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF HORST BIENEK AND THE QUESTION OF SILESIAN IDENTITY

DANIEL PIETREK[*]
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1582-6070
UNIVERSITY OF OPOLE

Abstract: Horst Bienek (1930-1990) was one of the greatest German writers of the 20th century. He was born in Gleiwitz, in Upper Silesia, and his works contain many references to Silesian culture and language. This, however, is often overlooked in his translations, both into Polish and English. It seems that Bienek's Germanness is overwhelming for his translators who see in him a contemporary embodiment of *Sehnsucht* – a nostalgic desire for the past. However, the most important aspect of Bienek's writing is his multiculturalism, expressed in the use of toponyms, but also dialectical lexical elements. They play an important role in the work of the Upper Silesian writer, because thanks to them it is possible to express the historical truth of the complicated relations between Poles, Silesians and Germans.

Keywords: Horst Bienek; Silesian identity; multiculturalism; translation studies; Silesian dialect; cultural specificity; Gleiwitz tetralogy

1. Introduction

Translation of literary texts related to Silesian literature is one of the most interesting issues in contemporary translation studies and literary studies, both Polish and German. This is due to a number of factors. In addition to the standard procedures associated with translation, resulting, for example, from the need to adapt the original text to the *Erfahrungsraum* (space of experience) and *Erwartungshorizont* (horizon of expectation) of the target text's audience, there is yet a third, hybrid space to be considered in translations of Silesian literature. This space consists in language (the use of dialect), images (e.g., a specifically constructed landscape) and cultural elements (iconography, characters and events) related to Silesian culture, literature and identity. These are the elements that need to be taken into account in order to find a suitable strategy for them in translation. I would like to highlight these aspects in my paper using examples from Horst Bienek's chosen works.

First, it is necessary to present the most important biographical facts about Horst Bienek. Regardless of our methodological apparatus, the belief that literature is

[*] danielpietrek@poczta.onet.pl

supposed to create the effects of the output language in the target language still prevails. However, effects of 'foreignness' are also important and valued by critics and readers. To demonstrate the specificity of foreignization necessary for the successful translation of Bienek's prose, I also provide a historical context about Silesia, where he grew up.

As the youngest of six children, Horst Bienek was born on May 7, 1930, in Gleiwitz, Upper Silesia. However, his childhood in Upper Silesia "between factories and coal dumps, the Klodnitz River and the Oder River, between the Don Bosco League and the Hitler Youth Service" ended quickly (Morita 1988: 5).

In 1942 his mother and brothers died, and he saw his father only once after that. In addition, he had an accident. While climbing a fence, he impaled himself on it and damaged his urethra. His sensitivity, readiness to help and commitment to others, especially to outsiders, outcasts and persecuted people, can be traced back to the tragic experiences of his childhood and adolescence, including the death of his close ones, his witnessing the horrors of war, then his arrest in Berlin and imprisonment in Soviet prisons and camps (1951-1955).

The very traumatic event of January 19, 1945, when Bienek witnessed the SS-driven concentration camp prisoner columns, was a recurring theme in the Gleiwitz author's works and mentioned in his memoirs, one of which he would still write about 40 years later:

> "I was fourteen when the train of concentration campers met me on the way home, it was January 1945, KL Auschwitz was being cleared. [...] The Kapos beat the striped prisoners with sticks. In front and at the end went the German guards with machine guns. I have never forgotten this picture." (Bienek 1993: 117)

After the invasion of Russian troops on January 22, 1945, Bienek was conscripted to do dismantling work. In March 1946, he had to leave Gleiwitz after refusing to accept Polish citizenship and moved to Köthen / Anhalt in the Soviet occupation zone. After graduating from high school, he worked (thanks in part to the recommendation of August Scholtis) as an editorial trainee at the *Tagespost* in Potsdam. In 1951, he was accepted into the theater class of Bertolt Brecht's "master students" at the Berlin Ensemble, but was arrested by the German Democratic Republic's State Security Service as early as November 8, 1951, and transferred to the Soviet Ministry for State Security. After six months of pre-trial detention in a solitary cell, he was sentenced on April 12, 1952 to 20 years of forced labor in the Soviet Union for espionage and anti-Soviet agitation.[1] Since June 1952, Bienek was in the labor camp in Vorkuta, one of the most notorious of the Gulag Archipelago. Besides the brutality and despair, which came to the fore especially in the very late texts[2], he also learned here "to love the Russian language, to read the Russian poets, Dostoevsky above all, Chekhov and

---

[1] For a more detailed account, see Pietrek, Daniel. 2012. "Horst Bienek's Arrest: Archival Records, Confession and Self-Representation. In Reinhard Laube and Verena Nolte (Eds.). *Horst Bienek – A Writer in the Extremes of the 20th Century*. Göttingen, 209–231.

[2] Cf. especially: Bienek, Horst: 2013. *Workuta*. Göttingen.

Pushkin" (Bienek 1987: 12). There, he also wrote some poems that were later published in the *Dream Book of a Prisoner* (1957).

In 1955, when Adenauer negotiated the repatriation of the German prisoners of war detained in the USSR, Bienek was also released from the labor camp on October 10, 1955.

Later, he described his experiences in his books. The most important part of Horst Bienek's work is the Gleiwitz tetralogy, which was written between 1975 and 1982 and is set between 1939 and 1945 in Gleiwitz (and in the last part also in Dresden). Although very important historical events are woven into the fictional plots, history is supplemented by fiction, thus resurrecting in a literary way a world that historically ended in 1945, but which literature allowed to continue. As Heinrich Böll noted, the protagonist of the entire Tetralogy was the city of Gleiwitz and the whole of Upper Silesia. The German Nobel Prize winner said that Bienek's prose was "a hymn to the Upper Silesian land and the people who lived and worked there" (Böll 1975). Interestingly, this prose uses very modern techniques of presentation, in which language is not a finished material. The author is interested in what is organic and alive in language, which surrounds people in their everyday lives and is overlooked. Moreover, he uses narrative leaps and breaks, and incorporates into his texts linguistic "found objects" – overheard scraps of speech that "lie in the street" (Joachimsthaler 2012: 78-91).

2. Problems of Bienek's Translations

Bienek developed his peculiar writing techniques in his early phase while working on a novel about Bakunin. The novel demonstrates how to write one's biography by describing someone else and how the process of writing such a novel can change one's own identity. Bienek uses exactly the same method when he puts together and combines in the tetralogy. In the table below, we can find a fragment from *The First Polka* (1975) in Polish and English translation. Characteristically, both translation overlook cultural specificity of Bienek's prose, omitting Silesian references:

German Original	English Translation	Polish Translation
Valeskas Augen tasteten die Werbesprüche ab, ohne sie richtig zur Kenntnis zu nehmen:	Valeska ran her eyes over the advertising slogans without really noticing them:	Oczy Valeski prześlizgiwały się po reklamowych sloganach, nie przyjmując ich naprawdę do wiadomości:
Bewunderung ein Schuh erregt *Der ständig mit Egü gepflegt*	*Your shoes are always looking fine* *If you don't forget that Egü shine*	Chcesz, by but twój budził podziw, pastą Egü czyść go co dzień.
Dazwischen in dicken schwarzen Buchstaben: HIER WIRD NUR DEUTSCH GESPROCHEN	Between them, in thick black letters: ONLY GERMAN SPOKEN HERE	Wśród nich grube czarne litery: TU MÓWI SIĘ TYLKO PO NIEMIECKU

Sie sah auf ein paar alte Frauen mit weißen Kopftüchern, mit Gesichtern, die das oberschlesische Land gefurcht und verstein hatte, die Lippen dünn und zusammengepresst, damit kein Wort entschlüpfte. Sie sahen sich manchmal an, nickten sich zu, eine von ihnen zeigte auch mal mit dem Finger nach draußen. Zu haus sprachen sie eine Sprache, die hier verboten war. Hier waren sie Stumme. Valeska hätte sie fragen können: *Jak wom idzie?* (Bienek 2000: 63).	She looked at a few old women in white headscarves, whose faces the Upper Silesian land had furrowed and tuned to stone, their lips thin and pressed shut so that not a word could slip out. Sometimes they nodded or looked at each other, and one of them even pointed out of the window. At home they spoke a language that was forbidden here. Here they were mute. Valeska could have said: *Jak wom idzie?* (Bienek 1984: 54)	Popatrzyła na kilka starych kobiet w białych chustkach na głowach, z twarzami pobrużdżonymi i skamieniałymi za sprawą górnośląskiej ziemi, z cienkimi, mocno zaciśniętymi wargami, by nie wyśliznęło się z nich ani słowo. Od czasu do czasu spoglądały na siebie, kiwały sobie głowami, jedna z nich pokazywała czasem palcem za okno. W domu mówiły językiem, który tu był zabroniony. Tu były nieme. Valeska mogłaby spytać je po polsku: Jak się pani wiedzie? (Bienek 2008: 53-54)

In the above fragment, Bienek uses advertising slogans, official announcements and dialectal phrases (sounding strange to the German reader). They immediately follow each other and get fused together, but at the same time they are typographically differentiated, which means that in their multi-level coding they have the same value. In *The First Polka*, these textures are used to emphasize the exclusivity of Silesian identity – in opposition to the *Deutschtum* (Germanness) of the Reich. These quotations underline the fundamental opposition of Silesia and Silesians to the Nazis and Nazi ideology, which is constructed throughout the Tetralogy. One of the elements that Bienek uses in creating the identity and exclusivity of Silesia and Silesians is the Silesian dialect. At the end of the above passage, the phrase *Jak wom idzie?* / *How are you doing?* is an example of the dialect used in Gleiwitz in the 1940s.

In the Polish translation, we have four fundamental errors in this passage alone. First, the translation unifies the quoted passage at the level of editing, not emphasizing (as the author wanted) the four different textures from which it is built. Secondly, it adds in the last sentence the phrase "po polsku" [in Polish], producing the utterance "Valeska mogłaby je spytać po polsku" [Valeska could ask them in Polish]. Thirdly, and this is my most serious objection to the Polish translation, the Upper Silesian autochthons spoke neither Polish nor German, but only Silesian. In fact, Valeska could not speak Polish. In Bienek's novel, Silesianness is a synthesis of Polish, German (also Czech) cultures. Thus, such an interpretive doxology (applied by the translator) not only spoils the effect of this scene, but it destroys the author's intentions and the vision of the world created in his work.

The fourth mistake consists in an improper use of dialect: "Jak wom idzie" is replaced with the phrase "Jak się Pani wiedzie," which is a rather untypical Polish phrase, because it smacks of sophisticated register. In 1939, such a language could be used by the representatives of the intelligentsia or aristocracy in the Polish capital Warsaw, but not by simple women living in the German countryside of Upper Silesia.

Thus, the translator neglects the question of cultural appropriateness and erases the local character of the world of Bienek's childhood. In his works, Bienek does not mourn or sentimentally recollect his German homeland, but (re)constructs a homeland for German, Polish and Jewish Upper Silesians, stressing the fact that this myth was destroyed by the Nazi's ideological obsession to clearly define the national identities.

In his famous poem "Gliwice Childhood," published in his poetry collection *Was War Was Ist* [What was What is] in 1966, Bienek formulates his program for epic poetry and the determinants of his writing – memory, recollection, mythologization – and lists the tools to bring them out – language, smell, sounds, colors and landscape, and again – the Silesian dialect. In the fragment of the poem below, we can see a different translation strategy, which does not erase Bienek's cultural specificity:

> Memories of a winter woodland
>   of Pistulka and his merry men
> of a turbid river sluggishly flowing
>   of a Corpus Christi procession
> of the drunken shouts of the next-door Mainkas
>   and once the local broadcast program
>   interrupted by shots
> as the prelude to the great drive eastward
>
> Nothing more
>   just a few pictures
>   from an overexposed film
> sporadic shadows and
>   if I peer hard enough
>   perhaps a face
> a motion
> a gesture
>   someone's smile
>
> Does boyhood consist of memory
> or memory of boyhood?
> Reading Borges I am struck by the relentless memory
>   or Ireneo Funes
>   what interests me in Sartre
>   in his reaction to Descartes
> I would like to know what went on in Coriolanus' mind
>   when they made him captive
>
>   Then the sudden
> cracking of an almond
> the smell of fish frying in Bunzlau earthenware
> a jay squawking in Laband Woods
> blurred scenes
>   flicker across the retina (Bienek 1989: 69-70)

The vocabulary is simple, the rhythm of the poem is created by repetition and sequence, but above all by the staggered lines, which are unobtrusive and

"imperceptible, like pulsations" (Kalow 1966). In addition, there are the dense images which determine not only the thematic scope of the poem, but also of the later *Gleiwitz Tetralogy*: Remembrance, memory, and mythologizing. Moreover, the tools for bringing forth these themes are also defined. They are made tangible with the use of all senses; they are images, smells, sounds, the unique color of the Upper Silesian dialect. This also includes the sound of the names of tributaries of the river Oder which are so natural for the author that he gladly accepts their potential incomprehensibility for some readers, because they do not provide material for geography lessons, but are themselves a part of the poem's musical composition.[3]

The above translation is successful, because it preserves the key to Bienek's world, which lies in Upper Silesian tradition, culture and language.

3. Conclusion

With his portrayal of the Upper Silesian Chronicle, Horst Bienek undoubtedly advanced to become one of the central figures in the literary debate accompanying the efforts to achieve German-Polish understanding. With the *Gleiwitz Tetralogy*, he offers an alternative reading of the expulsion as well as an alternative model (to the expellees' associations) of the cultural memory of Upper Silesia. The importance of the author and the significance of his literature for the cultural heritage of Upper Silesia can be seen, among other things, in Bienek's victory in the 2012 survey of the magazine *Fabryka Silesia,* which ended with an "overwhelming success of Horst Bienek" and led the main editor to the statement: "But could anyone predict years ago that Bienek, with the Gliwice Tetralogy, would be the most important classic in Polish Upper Silesia at the beginning of the 21st century?" (Lewandowski 2012: 16). For me, this is an interesting phenomenon, because this success happened despite, or even in spite of, the poor Polish translation of the first novel of this tetralogy, *The First Polka*.

References

Ahrens, Thomas. 2000. *Auf der Suche nach der Heimat: Horst Bieneks Gleiwitzer Tetralogie.* Michigan: UMI.

Bienek, Horst. 1983. *Beschreibung einer Provinz. Aufzeichnungen. Materialien. Dokumente*. München.

Bienek, Horst. 1984. *The First Polka.* Translated by Ralph R. Read. San Francisco: Fjord Press.

Bienek, Horst. 1986. *Der Blinde in der Bibliothek. Literarische Portraits*. München.

Bienek, Horst. 1987. "Das allmähliche Ersticken von Schreien. Sprache und Exil heute." *Münchner Poetik-Vorlesungen.* München.

---

[3] A letter from Horst Bienek to Mr. Seitz, dated August 26, 1966, archived in the Carl Hanser Verlag Archives.

Bienek, Horst. 1987. *The Gradual Stifling of Screams: Language and Exile Today.* Munich Poetics Lectures. Munich.

Bienek, Horst. 1989. *Selected Poems 1957–1987.* Translated by Ruth Mead, Matthew Mead, and Eva Hesse; with an introduction by Hans Bender. Greensboro: Unicorn Press.

Bienek, Horst. 1993. *Journey to Childhood. Reunion with Silesia.* Munich/Gliwice.

Bienek, Horst. 2000. "Die erste Polka. " In *Bienek, Horts: Gleiwitz. Eine oberschlesische Chronik in vier Romanen.* München.

Bienek, Horst. 2000. "Die erste Polka." In *Gleiwitz. Eine oberschlesische Chronik in vier Romanen*. Munich.

Bienek, Horst. 2008. *Pierwsza polka.* Translated by Maria Przybyłowska. Gliwice: Wydawnictwo "Wokół nas."

Bienek, Horst. 2013. *Workuta.* Göttingen.

Böll, Heinrich. 1975. "Das Schmerzliche an Oberschlesien." *Frankfurter Rundschau,* October 11.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2007. *Reguły sztuki. Geneza i struktura pola literackiego* [Rules of Art. Origin and Structure of the Literary Field]. Kraków.

Capote, Truman. 1994. *Other Voices, Other Rooms.* New York.

Frühwald, Wolfgang. 1985. "Sprache als Heimat: Zum Verhältnis von Erinnerung und Geschichte im Werk Horst Bieneks." *Loccumer Protokolle 1983,* 30: 42–56.

Joachimsthaler, Jürgen. 2012. "Das Atmen der Sätze in der Enge des Wort-Raums. Zu Horst Bieneks Schreibweise." In *Horst Bienek – Ein Schriftsteller in den Extremen des 20. Jahrhunderts,* edited by Reinhard Laube and Verena Nolte. Göttingen.

Kalow, Gert. 1966. "Poetry as Document: 'was war was ist' – New Poems by Horst Bienek." *FAZ,* December 31.

Krüger, Michael (Ed.). 1980. *Bienek lesen.* Munich.

Lewandowski, Jan F. 2012. "Czerdziestu wybiera kanon" [Forty Choose the Canon]. *Fabryka Silesia* 1: 15–17.

Morita, Linda G. 1988. *Wandlungen von Stil und Themen im Werk Horst Bieneks.* University of South California, August.

Orłowski, Hubert. 2000. "Überwachung und Ausgrenzung: Horst Bienek, *Das allmähliche Ersticken von Schreien. Sprache und Exil heute.*" In *Literatur und Herrschaft – Herrschaft und Literatur.* Opole.

Pietrek, Daniel. 2012. *Ich erschreibe mich selbst. (Autor)Biografisches Schreiben bei Horst Bienek.* Dresden.

Pietrek, Daniel. 2022. "Hinter diesen oft grellen Kulissen spielte sich sein anderes Leben ab, sein Leben voller: Solidarität und Freundlichkeit, sein entschiedenes Eintreten für andere…" *Wer hat Angst vor Multikulturalität? Erfahrungen und Vorstellungen in der deutschen und polnischen Kultur.* Edited by Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg and Izabela Surynt. Wiesbaden: Studien zur Multikulturalität, vol. 5: 275–286.

Pietrek, Daniel. 2023. "Horst Bieneks oberschlesische Bilder (Schlesien)." *Von Popkultur bis Stereotyp. Handbuch der deutsch-polnischen Kommunikation.*

Teilband 3, edited by Sylwia Dec-Pustelnik et al. Wiesbaden: Studien zur Multikulturalität 1(3): 139–162.

Laube, Reinhard, and Nolte, Verena (Eds.). 2012. *Horst Bienek – Ein Schriftsteller in den Extremen des 20. Jahrhunderts.* Göttingen.

Conflict of Interests
The author declares no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

Ethical Standards
The author affirms this research did not involve human subjects.

A Literata Translator from Russian into Italian:
Enrichetta Capecelatro Carafa, Duchess of Andria

Giulia Marcucci*
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5945-6430
University for Foreigners of Siena

Abstract: In this paper, I focus on the writer and translator Enrichetta Capecelatro Carafa (1863-1941), who signed all her translations from Russian into Italian, from the 1920s until her death, with the pseudonym Duchess of Andria. Reconstructing the trajectory of this prolific and talented translator means shedding light on one of the many profiles of women translators who worked hard in the early decades of the 20th century to introduce foreign literature into Italy. The case of the Duchess of Andria is emblematic, and at the same time original, for how she approached literary translation, for the number of translations she signed, and for the valuable legacy, still partly unexplored, that she left in the field of translations from Russian. The aim of this work is therefore to document a significant case study, with a brief foray into the field of translation criticism of Chekhov's short stories, translated and prefaced by the Duchess and published in 1936 by Utet.

Keywords: Duchess of Andria; Anton Chekhov; history of translation; women translators

1. Introduction

In the early 20th century, numerous women dedicated themselves to the field of translation, rendering important works of foreign literature into Italian. Despite their vital role, these women's efforts have often been unacknowledged, resulting in a "double invisibility" stemming from both their profession and gender. The volume *La donna invisibile. Traduttrici nell'Italia del primo Novecento[1]* (The Invisible Woman: Women Translators in Early 20th-Century Italy) seeks to rectify this oversight. As editors (with Anna Baldini), we collaborated with essay authors to illuminate the crucial work of ten female translators who rendered works from Swedish, English, German, French, and Russian into Italian.

---

* marcucci@unistrasi.it

[1] The volume was published following a study day organized at the University for Foreigners of Siena on October 5 and 6, 2021. The recording is available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OQL5W8oHZBM.

In the early 20th century, Italian literary magazines frequently featured discussions on women's issues. However, as Irene Fantappiè (2023: 25) observes in one of the two introductory essays in *La donna invisibile*, women's names – particularly those of writers and even more so, translators – were very few. Women rarely intervened, and those who did often used pseudonyms. Among translators, one of the most striking cases is that of Lucia Rodocanachi, the ghost translator who worked for prominent writer-translators (Montale, Gadda, Vittorini) in the 1930s and 1940s, earning the title of the true 'invisible woman' of the 'decade of translations.' However, it also happened that translators themselves, more or less willingly and for various reasons, employed strategies of self-invisibilization: such is the case of Rosina Pisaneschi, a translator from German and a professional Germanist, who ended up in the shadow of her husband Alberto Spaini (cf. Biagi 2023: 124); and among the more well-known cases is Natalia Ginzburg, who was forced to sign herself as Alessandra Tornimparte, both as an author and a translator, to hide her Jewish origins following the racial laws of 1938 (cf. Bassi 2023: 183-195).

Other cases highlight gender disparities in recognition. Ada Prospero and Piero Gobetti began co-translating Russian works in 1919, including those by Andreev and Kuprin. However, they received unequal critical acknowledgment. In a review of Andreev's play *Savva* for the August 1921 issue of *Italia che scrive*, Ettore Lo Gatto, a founding figure of Italian Slavic Studies and a translator himself, repeatedly praised Piero while completely overlooking Ada's contributions. He thus writes: "It is a great merit of Gobetti to have translated this work of Andreief as well. The translation is almost excellent: very few flaws, almost insignificant ones" (Lo Gatto 1921: 167).

However, in a predominantly male context such as the early decades of the 20th century, there are exceptions, such as Enrichetta Capecelatro Carafa, Duchess of Andria (1863-1941), who was for two decades an extremely active translator from Russian, in addition to being a writer. Her translating career starts in 1921, with her versions of Andreev's *A Thought* and *The Black Masks*, up until 1941, when the Utet series *I GRANDI SCRITTORI STRANIERI* (Great Foreign Writers) includes her version of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* – Tolstoj being the author she translated the most, with an overall collection of eight titles, including *War and Peace* (Slavia, 1928), *Father Sergius* (Slavia, 1931), *The Kreutzer Sonata* (Utet, 1934), and *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* (Utet, 1934)[2].

The present study will examine the trajectory of this prominent figure, drawing analytical insights from her published and unpublished memoirs[3]. The emerging

---

[2] For a complete bibliography of the works and translations of Enrichetta Capecelatro Carafa, Duchess of Andria, refer to Marcucci (2022: 174-175).

[3] The memoirs (ms XX, 2. Entry numbers 535347-51) are contained in five handwritten notebooks housed in the "Rare Books and Manuscripts" section of the National Library in Naples. While it is difficult to determine the beginning of the writing due to the absence of dates, some chronological indications allow us to conjecture that the end of the writing occurred around 1940. The published sections are in Grizzuti (1991: 11-24; 25-64). In this contribution, I will cite directly from the memoirs by indicating the memoir number as well as the page when referencing the unpublished parts, while I will refer to the page number only when quoting from the published sections of Capecelatro's memoirs.

trajectory will be combined with some reflections on her translation approach, referring especially to Duchess of Andria's translations of Chekhov's novels (Utet, 1936).

The translator's memoirs, a collection of five notebooks, were entrusted in 1945 by her friend Benedetto Croce to Guerriera Guerrieri, the director of the National Library in Naples, along with some unpublished novels[4]. Regrettably, the Duchess of Andria's archive was destroyed during the American bombing of Naples in 1942. This archival gap, common in the trajectories of many translators from the first half of the 20th century, has deprived us, at least for now, of potentially invaluable materials. These might include correspondence with publishers of her translations (Caddeo, Sansoni, Slavia, Utet), notes, and workbooks. However, we remain hopeful that similar materials may yet emerge through future research and exploration of other archives.

2. The Profile of Enrichetta Capecelatro through Her Memoirs

Enrichetta was born in 1863 in Turin, where her father, Antonio, served as Inspector General of the Postal Service.

A little over a year later, the family moved to Naples, where young Enrichetta "became aware of her existence" (I, p. 39). Then, in 1867, another change occurred: a move to Florence, where, as one can read in an unpublished part of the notebooks, "almost immediately my mother wanted to give me a female companion who, without being a teacher, would teach me to read and write a bit, and above all to speak the beautiful Tuscan language" (I, p. 42). The passion for reading and writing emerged early in this child, who had few toys and loved composing stories more than anything else.

As with other children from upper-middle-class and noble families, her education was individualized: at the age of six, she was entrusted to two teachers, one for music and one for French. In the following years, when she was about ten, additional teachers were added for Italian literature, English, handwriting, and drawing.

The tendency towards introspection and an inner life, as recalled by adult Enrichetta, was very strong in her: "my happiest moments were those when I was alone writing on my own. I would come up with short stories, comedies, poems, novels, but I was extremely protective of these writings and didn't want to show them to anyone" (II, p. 60).

The Florentine period was a vibrant time for Enrichetta, a time filled with continuous discoveries and growth, outings and important meetings, including her first contacts with the Russian world and culture. Her exposure to this new context came through two primary channels: firstly, through her interactions with Angelo De Gubernatis and his Russian wife, Sof'ja Bezobrazova (a cousin of the renowned anarchist Bakunin), who were frequent visitors to their home. Secondly, Enrichetta's

---

[4] *Amor Fati* (ms XX-15), *En silence* (ms XX-11), *Fiat voluntas mea*! (ms XX-16), *Fonte Gaia* (ms XX-9 e ms XX-10), *Il peccato di disperazione* (ms XX-6 e ms XX-7), *La Cia* (ms XX-8), *L'attesa* (ms XX-5), *L'attimo* (ms XX-12), *Rondini e viole* (ms XX-13).

father returned from a trip to Russia with a collection of books, personal gifts from Tsar Alexander II, who had sought his expertise on the Italian postal system[5].

On October 27th 1877, fourteen-year-old Enrichetta had to leave Florence with her family due to another transfer of her father, this time to Rome. She recalls the pain of that moment: "There was no remedy. That was an extremely painful time for me: it was a whole period of my life that was closing" (II, p. 79). Even the Florentine house, ready to be left behind, had become "sad," but what saddened her most was parting with her French teacher, who had been with her for eight years and had left an unparalleled mark on her spirit, shaping the pupil's literary endeavor: Enrichetta wrote the novel *Miettes* (Pierro, Naples 1906), and the unpublished *En silence*, both in French.

In Rome, where she lived for eight years, her literary talent flourished. It was there that she published her first works, including *Diario dantesco* (Elzeviriana, Rome 1881) – where she drew on her studies in Florence with Giambattista Giuliani (1818-1884), one of the most highly regarded Dante scholars of the 19th century – and the poetry collection *Rime* (Cellini, Florence 1888). The latter, republished with additions in Naples in 1892, solidified her reputation as a talented poet and writer. Her work garnered acclaim from eminent critics of the time, including Benedetto Croce, as well as contemporary literary figures such as Carlo Catanzaro and Carlo Villani.

In 1885, Enrichetta moved to Naples and married Riccardo Carafa, Count of Ruvo and later Duke of Andria, on April 19th of the same year. Both descended from patriotic families that were hotbeds of revolutionary and anti-Bourbon ideas. The couple also shared a love for the arts, literature, and theatre, transforming their home into a literary salon. Among those who gathered there were distinguished writers, translators, and intellectuals from both Italy and abroad. Notable among their foreign guests were Émile Zola, the French novelist, and Pyotr Boborykin, the Russian writer.

Florence and Naples, more than Rome, represent two foundational pillars for Enrichetta: Florence contributes to the formation of her cultural identity; it is the city where she spends her childhood and early adolescence, which were both periods of study and solitude, but also of creativity and relationships with important teachers. Tuscany also leaves an indelible mark that is evident linguistically when reading her translations, and it is also present in some of her creative works. For example, the protagonist of the novel *Rovine di stelle* (1928), Professor Onorato Aldinelli, inherits two estates in Valdinievole and a house in Siena, the birthplace of his wife Sara. One of her unpublished novels, started on July 16th 1927 and titled *Fonte Gaia*, is entirely set in Siena.

Naples, on the other hand, represents a return to her roots and is the city with which she never lost contact. She spent her summer vacations there, and her mother, through her stories, kept the connection to her grandparents and loved ones alive. Naples is also the place of her emotional and intellectual maturation, as well as her social ascent. In *Gli anni napoletani*, there are numerous depictions of luxurious interiors and receptions, such as when she recalls her appointment as a lady-in-waiting to Queen Margherita in the spring of 1900. With a life surrounded by splendid liveries, "refined

---

[5] About this cf. Caratozzolo's article about the Duchess of d'Andria, in which the author highlights her significant contributions to literary translation from Russian into Italian (2011: 58).

and sumptuous" dinners, evening silk or velvet gowns, and wool morning dresses, as well as men's redingotes, some of Enrichetta's life scenes echo the aristocratic salons of St. Petersburg depicted in *War and Peace*. This novel, translated by Enrichetta in 1928 for Slavia, marks the beginning of an intense career translating Tolstoy's works[6].

In general, the notebooks she left behind appear as a family and cultural history, with a distinct interest in describing daily life in Naples during the last quarter of the 19th century; they include detailed references to modes of transportation, theatres, receptions, and balls, but also featuring the rituals of ordinary people. This work thus showcase her exceptional talent for self-narration over time. Her writing style is fluid yet literary, occasionally verging on the grandiose – a hallmark of the Duchess's creative prose. From an early age, she constantly experimented with diverse writing genres, laying the groundwork for her later accomplishments as a translator.

Notably, this text only briefly touches upon her reflections on translation, which nonetheless takes on an important significance, offering valuable insights into how she entered this new field: the death of her husband in 1920 coincided with her longing for renewal. Consequently, translation became her ideal pursuit as her life, though not brief, neared its conclusion. This 'rebirth' was facilitated by her mentor, Federigo Verdinois, one of the few respected translators of Russian literature at the turn of the century.

Shortly after mentioning her husband's death, Enrichetta recounts: "I passionately devoted myself to studying Russian, and translated volume after volume; by now, I might have translated more than thirty of them" (p. 63). Her dedication was immense, facing a language she described as: "so rich, evolved and, at the same time, primitive in its grammatical forms" (II, p. 99).

Interestingly, for the Duchess of Andria, coping with grief meant successfully integrating her new passion for literary translation with her longstanding love of creative writing. This integration came after years of apparent inactivity, as evidenced by her own words:

> I regained my fervour for work. I wrote a volume: *Favole comuni e meravigliose*, which reflects my state of mind at that time: a shadow crossed with light. Then I wrote another book: *Il miracolo*, and finally a long novel: *Rovine di stele*, bearing an epigraph from Friedrich Nietzsche: 'Ruins of stars. In these ruins, we have built our universe' (p. 63).

This trajectory is notable when compared to other female translators of the same period, who typically used translation as a stepping stone to careers in publishing or as poets and writers. In contrast, this woman's experience represents an original fusion of translation and original creative work, born from her process of mourning.

3. The Beginnings of a Translator: The Duchess of Andria According to Ettore Lo Gatto and Leone Ginzburg

If the Duchess of Andria's poetic activity had been baptized by Benedetto Croce, the recognition of her debut as a translator is no less authoritative. In the already

---

[6] Caratozzolo (2011: 63-65) discusses this translation in detail.

mentioned 1921 review, Lo Gatto (1921: 68) indeed also focuses on Andreev's translations by the Duchess of Andria. He first praises her skill as a writer in both Italian and French, particularly emphasizing the beauty of her fables (*Favole comuni e meravigliose*), some of which are described as "unsurpassed in their exquisite conception and expression." Later, regarding "this other proof of literary activity," meaning her translation work, he says that she has succeeded "truly well" (ibid.) and adds important words about her translation poetics:

> Striving to render Russian expressions as literally as possible, she has never forgotten her fine Italian literary taste and has managed, with simplicity, to resolve to a large extent one of the translator's most serious tasks: the reproduction of the characteristic expressions of the translated writer, without resorting, as Verdinois often does, to so-called corresponding expressions that ultimately alter both the thought and the form of the writer (ibid.).

The value of the Duchess as a translator did not go unnoticed by Leone Ginzburg either. A leading anti-fascist intellectual in Italy during the 1930s, Ginzburg was a prominent figure in the militant wave that, from the late 1920s, aimed at promoting the study of Russian language and literature. His contributions to Russian literature were significant, encompassing roles as a translator, preface writer, editor, and reviewer for journals such as *Cultura*, *Pegaso*, and *La Nuova Italia*[7]. All these texts attest to Ginzburg's philological rigor and the importance he placed on a direct and deep understanding of the Russian source text, which he viewed as an essential starting point for successful translation and cultural criticism.

Immediately after the 1928 publication of the translation of *War and Peace issued by Slavia*, Leone wrote the following in the opening of his article *Celebrazione fattiva di Lev Tolstoj*, published in *Il Baretti*:

> A distinguished Italian woman of letters […], the Duchess of Andria, as she translates for the first time fully and faithfully *War and Peace* by Lev Tolstoy […], has applied this principle herself, commemorating Tolstoy's centenary in the best possible way; and she has accomplished the enormous task, […], with infinite patience and constant love, achieving consistently excellent results, and in many parts truly remarkable (Ginzburg 1928: 57).

Thirteen years later, following the Duchess's death in 1941, when Ginzburg had to review the translation of the novel, which was to be published by Einaudi the following year and would become the canonical Italian version of Tolstoy's work for decades, his opinion on certain passages (especially the ending) had changed[8]. This underscores how no reading is more "up-close" than that of a competent, attentive, and meticulous translator.

---

[7] For a more in-depth exploration, cf. Béghin (2007: 403-446).
[8] On the Einaudi editions of *War and Peace* cf. Marcucci (2020).

4. The Duchess of Andria and Anton Chekhov

Among the particularly fruitful encounters between the Duchess and the great Russian writers she tirelessly translated, her work on the prose of her contemporary Anton Chekhov (1860-1904) remains a vital chapter in the latter's reception in Italy. This is evident non only from the prestige of the published selection titled *Novelle*, but also from the enduring relevance of her translation choices. The collection comprises twelve stories written between 1884 and 1890, featuring a diverse cast of characters: a banker, a lawyer, a second lieutenant, a shepherd, a pilgrim, a secret advisor, thieves and peasants, actors, an apprentice child, a surgeon's assistant.

While other translators of the time (and even subsequent ones) might occasionally make more felicitous individual translation choices, the Duchess of Andria's versions stand out for their vibrancy and linguistic freshness. To a contemporary reader, her translations remain notably less dated, preserving the dominant characteristics of Chekhov's poetic.

Undoubtedly, there are some oversights or errors that warrant revision, but these do not overshadow the significant work she achieved in capturing the deeper nuances of Chekhov's language, which resists to approximation and does not tolerate any embellishment. As stated by Korney Chukovsky (2007: 89)[9], only a superficial gaze may judge Chekhov as a simple, clear, and "permeable writer"; the Duchess adeptly embraced this apparent simplicity, by adopting a particular sensitivity to the more lyrical and musical passages. Short stories such as the *Untitled*, *The Horse-Stealers* or the Tolstoyan *The Name Day Party* seem to align more closely with her strengths when compared to an earlier Chekhovian sketch like *Boots*, where she nonetheless attempts to reproduce the distinctiveness of the characters' speech through, for example, emphatic repetitions.

Let's consider the opening of the story *The Bet* (1889) as an example of a precise and respectful rendering of Chekhovian dominant themes: «Была темная, осенняя ночь. Старый банкир ходил у себя в кабинете из угла в угол и вспоминал, как пятнадцать лет тому назад, осенью, он давал вечер» (Eng. Translation "It was a dark autumn night. The old banker was walking up and down his study and remembering how, fifteen years before, he had given a party one autumn evening.") (Chekhov 1977: 229).

Is this a typical Chekhovian beginning, where the narrator immediately enters the heart of the situation, without reconstructing the background? Not to be underestimated is the rhythmic structure of this incipit, with the repetition of the temporal marker 'osen'yu' in relation to the initial adjective 'osennyaya.' From a contrastive analysis between the version by the Duchess of Andria and two later translations – specifically, Agostino Villa's translation published in 1958 by the prestigious publishing house Einaudi and – it clearly emerges that the Duchess of Andria was able to translate Chekhov's incipit in a direct and immediate manner, in a literary Italian that is still

---

[9] For further insights into Chekhov's poetics, see in particular the studies by Chudakov (2016), Stepanov (2005), and Suchich (2016).

current today and, above all, without the inadequate lexical and syntactical recherché that characterize Villa's version[10].

In the case of a short story like *Van'ka*, the translator demonstrates an awareness of Russian stylistic variations, as she judiciously employs Tuscanisms in order to recreate the popular linguistic atmosphere of Russian; she leverages, without exaggeration, the resources of Italian, including its regional variations, drawing on the lively language she experienced in her Florentine childhood.

The talent of the Duchess of Andria as a translator is complemented by her critical acumen as a preface writer, as evidenced in her introduction that precedes the translated stories. This is indeed yet another exception if we consider that, as Michele Sisto (2023: 51) points out, at least for the first half of the twentieth century women were almost excluded from the practice of "marking" their translations: prefaces were generally reserved for men.

Regarding Chekhov's stories (1936: 7), the Duchess describes them as "sketches made with a pencil," but with "the incisiveness of an etching," whereas in the misery that unites the characters and in the vulgarity of their daily lives she sees, as it filters through and trembles – these are the verbs she uses which – "a clarity that comforts, one that, amid today's despair, says: "Tomorrow! ...." In another text, this time introducing Gogol's *Taras Bulba – The Overcoat* (1937, 5), she turns to the analogy of wildflowers, "much more personal than garden or greenhouse flowers," in order to describe the originality of this writer's prose, in which she sees the coexistence of light and shadow, the alternation of "moments of extreme emotion and moments of calm ruefulness" (ibid., 11), thus reminding us of Belinsky's famous definition of "laughter through tears."

The Duchess of Andria's translations encompass seven out of eleven titles included in the Russian prose series published by Utet between 1934 and 1941[11], during a period of ideological closure and tension, and of a generally decreasing number of translations from Russian[12]. The astonishing quantity of her works, as well as their prestigious placements and consistently high quality indeed warrant her a name on par with those of men who have long been recognized for this role, and even more it underscores the need for continued exploration of her extensive body of translations.

---

[10] I report here the three Italian versions also commented on Marcucci (2022: 105-106): «Era una scura *notte di autunno*. Il vecchio banchiere *andava* da un angolo all'altro del suo studio e *ripensava* come quindici anni innanzi, *di autunno*, *egli* aveva dato una *serata*» (Chekhov 1936: 13); «Era una cupa *nottata d'autunno*. Il vecchio banchiere *passeggiava innanzi e indietro* nel suo studio, e *s'andava rievocando* come quindici anni prima, *d'autunno*, aveva dato un *ricevimento*» (Chekhov 1974 [1958]: 152).

[11] *The Kreutzer Sonata* (1934) and *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* (1934) by Tolstoy; *Notes from the House of the Dead* (1935) by Dostoevsky; *Short Stories* (1936) by Chekhov; *Boris Godunov and Other Stories* (1937) by Pushkin; *Short Stories and Plays* (1939) by Andreev; and *Anna Karenina* (1941).

[12] In this regard, cf. Sorina (2009), who identifies the following four phases in the history of translations from Russian: 1. growth (1924-1929); 2. saturation (1930-1933); 3. decline (1934-1940); 4. recovery (1941-1945).

References

Baldini, Anna, and Marcucci, Giulia (Eds). 2023. *La donna invisibile. Traduttrici nell'Italia del primo Novecento*. Macerata: Quodlibet.

Bassi, Giulia. 2023. "Natalia Ginzburg (1916-1991)." In *La donna invisibile. Traduttrici nell'Italia del primo Novecento*, edited by Anna Baldini and Giulia Marcucci, Macerata: Quodlibet, 183-195.

Berman, Antoine. 1995. *Pour une critique des traductions: John Donne*. Paris: Gallimard.

Bèghin, Laurent. 2007. "Leone Ginzburg russista." In *Da Gobetti a Ginzburg. Diffusione e ricezione della cultura russa nella Torino del primo dopoguerra*. Brussels-Rome: Istituto storico belga di Roma, 403-446.

Capecelatro, Enrichetta (Carafa Duchessa d'Andria), *Cinque quaderni di memorie autobiografiche*, Sezione «Rari e manoscritti». Naples: Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli (ms XX, 2-16. Reg. n. 535347-535365).

Caratozzolo, Marco. 2011. "Note sull'attività di Enrichetta Carafa d'Andria nell'ambito della russistica italiana." In *Il territorio della parola russa. Immagini*, edited by Rossanna Casari, Ugo Persi, Maria Chiara Pesenti. Salerno: Vereja, 53-70.

Čechov, Anton. 1936. *Novelle*. Translated by Duchessa d'Andria. Milan: Utet.

Chekhov, Anton. 1974 [1958]. "La scommessa." In Id., *Racconti*. Translated by Agostino Villa, 5 vol. Torino: Einaudi, vol. III, 152-160.

Chekhov, Anton. 1977. "Pari." In Id., *Polnoe sobraniye sochineniy i pisem v tridtsati tomach. Tom sed'moy 1888-1891* [Complete Collection of Works and Letters in Thirty Volumes. Volume Seven 1888-1891]. Moskva: Nauka, 229-235.

Chudakov, Aleksandr. 2016 [1971; 1986]. *Poetika Chechova. Mir Chechova: vozniknovenie i utverzhdenie* [Chekhov's Poetics. Chekhov's World: Emergence and Approval]. Sankt-Peterburg: Azbuka.

Čukovskij, Kornej. 2007 [1915]. *O Čechove* [About Chekhov]. Moskva: Russkij put.'

Fantappiè, Irene. 2023. "Autorialità femminile e questione della donna tra Italia e Austria a inizio Novecento." In *La donna invisibile. Traduttrici nell'Italia del primo Novecento*, edited by Anna Baldini and Giulia Marcucci. Macerata: Quodlibet, 19-33.

Ginzburg, Leone. 1928. "Celebrazioni fattive di Lev Tosltoj." *Il Baretti*, V, 12: 57-58, now in Id. (2000), *Scritti*, edited by Domenico Zucàro. Torino: Einaudi, 269-277.

Gogol', Nikolaj. 1937. *Tarass Bulba – Il pastrano*. Translated by Duchessa d'Andria. Milan: Utet.

Grizzuti, Maria Rosaria (Ed.). 1991. "Ricordi fiorentini, romani e napoletani di Enrichetta Capecelatro and Gli anni napoletani." In *Ricordi napoletani. Uomini, scene, tradizioni antiche 1850-1920*, edited by Gaetano Fiorentino. Naples: Electa, 11-24; 25-64.

Lo Gatto, Ettore. 1921. "Letterature straniere in Italia." *L'Italia che scrive* IV, 8: 167-168.

Marcucci, Giulia. 2022. *Čechov in Italia. La duchessa d'Andria e altre traduzioni (1905-1936)*. Macerata: Quodlibet.

Marcucci, Giulia. 2020. "Traduzioni Einaudi di Guerra e pace." *Allegoria*, XXXII, 81: 223-235.

Sisto, Michele. 2023. "Invisibili? Il riconoscimento della figura del traduttore nel campo letterario italiano del primo Novecento." In *La donna invisibile. Traduttrici nell'Italia del primo Novecento*, ed. Anna Baldini and Giulia Marcucci. Macerata: Quodlibet, 19-33.

Sorina, Marina. 2009. *La Russia nello specchio dell'editoria italiana nel ventennio fascista: bibliografie, scelte e strategie*. Tesi di Dottorato di ricerca in letterature straniere e scienza della letteratura, ciclo XX, Università di Verona.

Stepanov, Andrey. 2005. *Problemy kommunikatsii u Chechova* [Chekhov's Communication Problems]. Moskva: Jazyki slavyanskoy kul'tury.

Suchich, Igor'. 2016. *Problemy poetiki Chechova* [Problems of Chekhov's Poetics]. Sankt-Peterburg: Filologicheskiy fakul'tet Sankt- Peterburgskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta [Philological Faculty of St. Petersburg State University].

Conflict of Interests
The author declares no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

Ethical Standards
The author affirms this research did not involve human subjects.

KEY CULTURAL TEXTS AND TRANSLATION AS A CREATIVE ACT OF CULTURAL MEDIATION

LORETA ULVYDIENE HUBER*
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5453-7995
VILNIUS UNIVERSITY

Abstract: The project aimed to underscore the role of language, rhetoric, and semiotics in both textual and non-textual communication, examining these concepts in their "initial expressions" and through their translations and reinterpretations across different languages and mediums. Translating cultural texts is among the most challenging tasks for a translator, as it involves navigating numerous cultural nuances and differences. Poetry, in particular, is the most challenging genre to translate. This research focuses on Antanas Baranauskas's lyrical Romantic poem *Anykščių Šilelis* (Eng. *The Forest of Anykščiai*), chosen because (1) it is a key cultural text written in East High Lithuanian dialect that portrays the former beauty of a pine grove near Baranauskas's village and its destruction under the Russian rule, symbolising Lithuania's struggles under the Tsarist regime and, (2) it is one of the most frequently translated Lithuanian works, with versions in 19 languages. The study delves into two English translations by Nadas Rastenis (1956) and Peter Tempest (1985), highlighting the different strategies each translator employed. The results of the study demonstrate that translation is never neutral; each decision made by the translator reflects both the original culture and the target audience's culture, resulting in a text that serves as a conduit for understanding across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Keywords: key-cultural texts; poetry translation; culture-specific realia; diminutives; dialect; metaphors

1. Introduction

Key cultural texts are works that hold significant cultural, historical, or social value within a particular community, often reflecting its core beliefs, values, traditions, and identity. These texts may include literary works, religious texts, historical documents, folklore, and other forms of artistic or written expression that are essential to understanding the culture's worldview and heritage. These texts serve not only as artistic or literary achievements but also as a means of preserving and sharing cultural legacy across generations and borders. These texts have to be fully understood and

---

* loreta.huber@knf.vu.lt
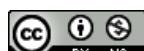
accurately translated to convey as much of the original idea, along with its intellectual and emotional connotations, as possible. It is easier to understand words and their meaning, than to fully grasp the culture from an inside perspective. A translator should be familiar with the customs of the country where the target text was written to avoid making mistakes during translation.

Furthermore, translating poetry demands extensive knowledge and high degree of creativity. Other genres such as drama, novel or fiction have their own structure. They have their own methods and clear ideas while poetry may have deeper meanings. The real emotion of the poetic text may not be clearly expressed as in other genres. The translator must balance fidelity to the literal meaning with preserving the emotional impact, aesthetic qualities, and stylistic nuances.

This study focuses on *Anykščų Šilelis* by Antanas Baranauskas, an exceptional 19th century Lithuanian poem, known for its unique style and fluent language, and regarded as a key cultural text. The poem is translated into nineteen languages including English, German and Italian. The poem consists of 342 lines, which is a difficult task to translate because of plenty of stylistic devices. There are two translations of *Anykščų Šilelis* (Eng. *The Forest of Anykščiai*) one by Nadas Rastenis (1956) and another by Peter Tempest (1985). These two translations were chosen to discuss strategies employed by the translators in their attempts to convey the true beauty of Baranauskas poetry in English.

2. The (Un)Translatability of Culture

A translator is the 'first reader' of the other culture as is shown in the foreign language text and, consequently, has to present *the other* in a primary process. The interest in culture and translation alongside with the attempts to discover (im)possible to find answers has been growing since in the publications by Susan Bassnett & Andre Lefevere (1998), Mona Baker (1998/2011/2018), Peter Newmark (1998), Albrecht Neubert (2000), Michael Cronin (2003), Anna Ginter (2005), Theo Hermans (2007), David Bellos (2008), Marina Tymoczko (2010), Anna Wierzbicka (2016), Susan Bassnett (2018), and Lawrence Venuti (2012 and 2018). These works witness the significance of and 'vulnerability' of the translation of culturally marked lexical items and attention to the semantic translation of culture specific aspects and cultural realia.
Though Bassnett claims that equivalence in translation should not be approached as a search for sameness, since sameness cannot even exist between TL versions of the same text (Bassnett 1980/1991/2002: 29), it becomes clear that it is very difficult to achieve equivalence or sameness between two languages. Some scholars, however, do not treat non-equivalence as a problem. For example, Annie Brisset (1996: 344) states that "although the target language cannot always provide equivalents of the source language, the absence of a target language, the language into which one translates, is not usually cited as a formal translation problem." The translators should find a solution how to convey the source text meaning to the target audience with no loss of meaning or stylistic or emotional effect when the target language lacks the equivalent for the original reference.

Thus, even though Newmark described fourteen methods for translating CSIs — transference, naturalisation, cultural equivalent, functional equivalent, descriptive equivalent, componential analysis, synonymy, through-translation, shift, modulation, accepted standard translation, compensation, paraphrase, couplet and finally notes — this study shows that the translator sometimes cannot find a completely corresponding equivalent for them in the TT. This is related to Roman Jakobson's (1959/2000: 114) idea that in translation "there is ordinarily no full equivalence between code- units." Jakobson (2000: 139) asserts that "all cognitive experience and its classification is conveyable in any existing language," but there is "ordinarily no full equivalence between code units." According to Jakobson (2000) the translator therefore works mostly in messages, not single code units.

Discussing the contexts of situation and culture with regard to translation David Katan (1999: 72 ff) refers to culture-bound meaning. He relies on Edward Sapir's statement that language has a setting and it does not exist apart from culture. Katan continues to discuss the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis in its strong and weak versions. According to the strong version, language dictates thought. This view, however, has been strongly criticised by Katan (1999: 74f) who expresses his doubts by arguing that if this were true, individuals, including translators, would be prisoners of their native language and unable to grasp concepts not present in it [their native language]. Contenders of the weak version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis find that language is a factor that influences our perception of reality, but is not the determining factor. One such way in which language can influence our perception of reality is in the lexica. Lexical and conceptual gaps are also not uncommon in translation. Katan (1999: 81) suggests in this case the following options: "The language can either borrow the language label, do without the concept, or invent its own label." Bilinguals often rely on code-switching in order to fill the conceptual gaps of one language with lexica of another. According to Katan, "…a translation will always be possible. Often circumlocutions or glosses will be necessary." Aside from the connection between culture and lexica, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis mentions grammar and patterns of language which are culturally bound.

Katan's (1999: 86) insight—that language's capacity to convey meaning is closely tied to culture, and that individuals (including translators) may not realise how their perceptions are limited by their own cultural lens—serves as a foundational perspective for exploring culture in translation.

3. Key Cultural Texts in Translation: the Lyrical Romantic Poem *Anykščių Šilelis* and Its Two English Translations

In early 19th-century Lithuania, literature was written in both Lithuanian and Polish, with Polish traditionally regarded as the primary written language. Gradually, however, more authors began to choose Lithuanian. In Lithuanian culture, Romanticism emphasised national concerns over purely aesthetic ideas. Key features of national Romanticism included a focus on the heroic past, folk creativity, the glorification of the native language, and patriotic ideals. These themes were especially prominent in the works of Maironis, Daukantas, and Baranauskas.

Baranauskas was a mid-19th century Lithuanian Romantic poet who studied in Europe, attending universities in Munich, Innsbruck, Leuven, and Rome. He was also a priest, bishop, linguist, translator and mathematician. Baranauskas aimed to prove that the Lithuanian language is also suitable for poetry. In the summers of 1858 - 1859, a hymn to Lithuanian nature was composed - a lyrical romantic poem titled *Anykščių šilelis*.

The poem draws attention by its unique and peaceful countryside views and beautiful nature. Nevertheless, the poem has incomparable names for the nouns which are laborious tasks for the translator. In addition, the poem has an enormous variety of diminutives, symbols, metaphors and dialectical variations which could have more than one translation.

In an attempt to compare the source text and the target text we may see that there are left gaps between two cultures. It is difficult to preserve the original meaning of the text, as diminutives are rarely used in the English language. The translator may not be able to express the folk sayings in a stylistically accurate way, but he strives to preserve Lithuania's national values, including its dialect, metaphors, and diminutives.

Diminutives are frequently used in Baranauskas' poem to evoke the vivid scenery of nature. However, translating the abundance of Lithuanian diminutives into English is a challenging task.

This is illustrated in the following example:

Table 1

ST	TT (Tempest)	TT (Rastenis)
Kur jūsų paukščiai, **paukšteliai[1], paukštytės**, Katrų čiulbančių taip ramu klausytis? Kur jūsų žvėrys, gyvuliai, **žvėreliai**? Kur žvėrių olos, laužai ir **urveliai?**	Where are your **birds and nestlings** to be found Whose chirping such contentment spread all round? Where are your **living creatures large and small**, The burrows and the **lairs that housed them all**?	Where are **the birds**, that built their nests here, Whose happy warbling was sweet to hear? Where are the **beasts and animals** brave: Where are their lairs – cavern and **cave**?

Source: A. Baranauskas (1859: 14) *Anykščių šilelis*; P. Tempest (1985: 1) *The Forest of Anykščiai;* N. Rastenis *The Forest of Anykščiai* (1956: 11).

From the Lithuanian perspective the source text is filled with diminutives to soften the tone, but this effect cannot be achieved in the same way in English. The first line of the ST gives synonyms of the word '*paukščiai*' (Eng. Birds). In the source text synonyms correspond with one another, to express the gender of the birds, but in the target text, this distinction cannot be preserved. Therefore Tempest uses one word '*nestlings*' which in Lithuanian means '*jaunikliai*.' This solution was quite close to the source text and the context in English did not change. According to Newmark's (1988: 84) translation processes, this line reflects a *synonymy* act of translation, as the synonym '*nestlings*' is the closest equivalent in the target text. Moreover, Rastenis uses a concrete word 'the birds,' which has a general meaning in Lithuanian 'paukščiai.'

---

[1] Here and in other examples the emphasis is mine, L. H.

Appealing to Newmark's (1988: 84) processes of translation, Rastenis uses *functional equivalent* procedure, because his version is generalised leaving the line without any diminutives to soften the text. Looking into another line of the source text "*kur jūsų žvėrys, gyvuliai, žvėreliai*" we may notice that in the target text the diminutives were translated by the help of the adjectives "*living creatures large and small*." Tempest tries to stay as close to the source text as possible. Tempest does not use any diminutives in his target text, yet he still preserves the main meaning. Even in the last line of this example he manages to maintain the essence of the original text "*kur žvėrių olos, laužai ir urveliai*" in English: "the burrows and the lairs that housed them all."

In accordance with Newmark's (1988: 91) translation procedures, the last two lines are rendered through *paraphrase*. In the second line the word '*žvėreliai*' is explained into target text as "*living creatures large and small*." The last line also is rendered through paraphrase, as the word '*urveliai*' in the target text is explained as "*the lairs that housed them all*." *Paraphrasing* provides a more detailed explanation of the source text, helping readers better understand its meaning.

Rastenis in his translation uses more general expression for the words "*žvėrys, gyvuliai, žvėreliai*." He abandons the diminutive meaning and leaves only generalised names for the animals, while Tempest strives to remain as faithful to the source text as possible. In the last line Rastenis replaces the diminutive with a more general word. For the word 'urveliai' which is in plural, Rastenis choses only a generalised singular version of it - 'cave.' Referring to Newmark (1988: 83) Rastenis applies the *functional equivalent* procedure in the last two lines by replacing diminutives with generalised terms.

Dialect is another literary device frequently used in this key cultural text.

Table 2 shows that in the source text, given dialectical words such as noun 'mendrės' and adjective 'drūtos' are translated into Tempest version by switching lines with each another.

Table 2

ST	TT (Tempest)	TT (Rastenis)
Liekni augę kaip **mendrės**, žaliavę kaip rūtos, Šaknys, liemenys, šakos ir viršūnės **drūtos**. Švęsti Lietuvos medžiai nejautę **nuogalio** **Rausvasai** žiemos lapas sulaukdavęs žalio.	With mighty roots and branches, trunk and crest The grace of **reeds** and rue's green they possessed. Lithuania's hallowed oaks **no bareness knew: Brown leaves** they bore till spring when green ones grew.	When sturdy, **reed-like**, green as a rue, **Strong-rooted**, hardly young saplings grew: Lithuania's sacred oaks rose serene, **The autumn's red leaf** met springtime's green.

Source: A. Baranauskas (1859: 23) *Anykščių šilelis*; P. Tempest (1985: 18) *The Forest of Anyksciai;* N. Rastenis *The Forest of Anykščiai* (1956: 27).

The dialectical expression here is changed with the help of a functional *equivalent* (Newmark 1988: 83), because the word 'mendrės' is translated as a general noun 'nendrės' (Eng. reeds). The adjective '*drūtos*' is replaced by using the same translational method by Newmark (1988: 82) a *cultural equivalent.* In order to

represent the strength of the trees Tempest changes the adjective with its equivalent in target language '*mighty*.'

Rastenis in his translation applies a *cultural equivalent* strategy (Newmark 1988: 82) for the source text's dialectical noun '*mendrės*' and adjective '*drūtos*.' The translator replaces them with their equivalents in the target text, such as 'reed-like' and 'strong-rooted.' These expressions maintain the meaning of the source text, allowing the reader to feel the real strength of the trees. The last line describes the trees that grow in Lithuania, capable of retaining their red leaves through the winter till spring. Here Tempest uses *paraphrase* (Newmark 1988: 91) as a translation strategy, providing a more detailed explanation for the target audience "brown leaves they bore till spring when green ones grew." Furthermore, Rastenis employs the same translational strategy as Tempest in this case. Therefore, he preserves the original description of the leaf colour "*the autumn's red leaf*," whereas in the Tempest version the colour red found in ST is changed into "*brown leaves*" in the TT. Certainly, the translators retained the main idea of the source text, highlighting the immense power of the Lithuanian forest, which provided strength and peace to our ancestors over the years, although they excluded all dialectical expressions.

Meanwhile metaphors often require a balance between fidelity to the original and adaptation to the target language's cultural and linguistic context, making them a challenging aspect of translation. To employ Venuti's formulation (1995: 61), metaphors are "analogy of translation as clothing in which the foreign author is dressed, or the translated text as the body animated by the foreign writer's soul." In this comparison we may say that translating metaphors requires background knowledge. Translator has to *dress up* in accordance to convey the real meaning of that metaphor in a particular period of time, because all the usage of metaphors is temporal. After some period of time metaphors could be forgotten, therefore the translator has a difficulty while finding the best solution in target text.

Consider the following example:

Table 3

ST	TT (Tempest)	TT (Rastenis)
Miškan, būdavo, eini – tai net **akį veria**; Vat taip **linksmina dūšią, užu širdies tveria**, Kad net, **širdžiai apsalus**, ne kartą dūmojai.	Once walking here you found your **eyes would ache**: The forest would your **soul so merry make**, Your **heart so glad** you wondered in surprise.	Viewing this wood **the eye was appalled,** **The heart and soul were gaily** enthralled; The mind, awakened, moved to surmise.

Source: A. Baranauskas (1859: 14) *Anykščių šilelis*; P. Tempest (1985: 2) *The Forest of Anyksciai;* N. Rastenis *The Forest of Anykščiai* (1956: 11).

This example shows us how the source text could be translated into target culture using *synonymy* (Newmark 1988: 84) act of translation. Nevertheless, metaphors could be differently conceived in each culture because of different understanding. Metaphors should be translated by using their cultural equivalent in the target language to preserve the original meaning. For example, the first line "miškan, būdavo, eini – tai net akį

veria" and its translation show that Tempest found a perfect equivalent in the target text: "once walking here you found your eyes would ache." Misunderstandings could arise if the translation were word-for-word, as the target audience might not fully grasp the author's intended message, and it could sound nonsensical. Rastenis translated the first line differently from Tempest. In Rastenis' translation the metaphor is expressed as "viewing this wood the eye was appalled." In Lithuanian the word 'appall' has a negative connotation, which may suggest that the forest is a negative place. However, the source text portrays the forest as a beautiful and peaceful place for the viewer.

In the next line the metaphor "linksmina dūšią, užu širdies tveria" was clearly altered to a phrase with a similar meaning, making it easier for the target audience to understand. The target audience may not understand the meaning of the phrase "širdžiai apsalus." Thus, Tempest found an equivalent into the target language. The translator perfectly chose a metaphor with a similar meaning "soul so merry make" and "your heart so glad." Conforming to Newmark's (1988: 82) translation strategies, examples were rendered into English employing *cultural equivalent* procedure. The first line "tai net akį veria" is replaced with its equivalent in the target text as "your eyes would ache." Another example "užu širdies tveria" is also translated by a *cultural equivalent* metaphor as "soul so merry make." In this example the Lithuanian word 'heart' is converted into 'soul' for the target readers to understand. The last line "širdžiai apsalus" also is translated according to a *cultural equivalent* strategy as "heart so glad."

Ultimately, in analysing Rastenis' translation, the metaphor in the second and third lines were translated using the *compensation* (Newmark 1988: 90) method. However, Rastenis changes the order of the metaphors and *omits* the phrase "širdžiai apsalus." *Compensation* allows the translator to adjust by merging metaphors into one line and continuing them in another.

The translation by Tempest is closer to the original idea of the poem than Rastenis' variation. Rastenis prefers to leave more general expressions than Tempest does. Unlike Tempest, Rastenis attempts to avoid cultural differences by using more common expressions in his translation, but he adds an additional nineteen lines.

4. Conclusion

Key cultural texts are works that encapsulate the essential values, beliefs and traditions of a culture, such as national poetry, historical narratives and foundational literary works. Translating these texts is not merely a linguistic exercise; it is an act of cultural interpretation and transformation. When approaching these texts translators engage into a process of creative cultural mediation. The role of translator as intercultural mediator has received greater attention in translation studies since the 'cultural turn' of the 1990s. However, some theorists, such as Nabokov (1955/2021) and Jakobson (1959 in Venuti 2000), argue that poetic translation is inherently impossible. They contend that it is not feasible to account for all the nuanced factors and convey every feature of the original text in a way that aligns with the language, form, and cultural traditions of the target audience.

This article attempted to highlight problems of poetry translation, focussing on culture-bound concepts, found in key cultural texts, with particular attention to Lithuanian Romantic poetry and its English translations. The corpus of a larger study comprised over 165 cases, from which culture-bound elements — such as diminutives, dialects and metaphors — were selected for this article.

The analysis of the two English translations of *Anykčių šilelis* by Baranauskas (Eng. *The Forest of Anyksciai)* demonstrated that most frequently employed strategies of translation by Tempest are: *synonymy, paraphrase, functional equivalent, cultural equivalent.* Meanwhile Rastenis is in favour of *functional equivalent, synonymy, transference, reduction & expansion, paraphrase, compensation, cultural equivalent.*

In attempting to compare the source and target texts, we can see the gaps between the two cultures. It is challenging to preserve the original meaning, as the English language rarely uses diminutives. The translators struggle to convey folk expressions in a stylistically accurate way but strives to retain Lithuania's cultural values, including dialect, metaphors, and diminutives.

The main strategies used by Tempest and Rastenis while translating diminutives were *functional equivalent* and *synonymy.* Meanwhile in metaphor translation the main translational strategy used by Tempest was *cultural equivalent*. Nevertheless, Rastenis here was more general and used *synonymy* act of translation. The dialects and examples discussed in the study were mostly translated using *synonymy* and *cultural equivalent* in Tempest's translations, while Ratenis employed *functional equivalent* or *paraphrase* in his translational procedures.

The results of the study demonstrate that translation is never neutral; each decision made by the translator reflects both the original culture and the target audience's culture, resulting in a text that serves as a conduit for understanding across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Acknowledgements

References

Baker, Mona. 1998/2011/2018. *In Other Words*. London: Routledge.
Bassnett, Susan (Ed.). 2018. *Translation and World Literature*. London & New York: Routledge.
Bassnett, Susan. 1980/1991/2002. *Translation Studies*. London and New York: Routledge.
Bassnett, Susan, and Lefevere, Andre. 1998. *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Lliterary Translation*. Multilingual Matters.

---

[2] More information is available at https://www.bbk.ac.uk/news/ahrc-funded-research-project-translating-cultures.

Bellos, David. 2008. "On Translating Ismail Kadare." *Translation Review*, 76 (1): 17–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/07374836.2008.10523977

Brisset, Annie. 1996. *A Sociocritique of Translation: Theatre and Alterity in Quebec 1968-1988.* Translated by Gill, Rosalind and Gannon, Roger. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Cronin, Michael. 2003. *Translation and Globalization*. Routledge.

Hermans, Theo. 2007. *The Conference of the Tongues*. Manchester & Kinderhook: St Jerome Publishing.

Ginter, Anna. 2002. "Cultural Issues in Translation." *Studies About Language,* 3: 27-31.

Jakobson, Roman. 2000. "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation." In *The Translation Studies Reader*. Edited by Lawrence Venuti. London, 113-19.

Katan, David. 1999. *Translating Cultures, An Introduction for Translators, Interpreters and Mediators.* Manchester: St. Jerome publishing.

Nabokov, Vladimir. 1955/2021. Problems of Translation: "Onegin in English." *The Translation Studies Reader*. Routledge.

Neubert, Albrecht. 2000. "Competence in Language, in Languages, and in Translation." *Benjamins Translation Library*, 38: 3-18. https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.38.03neu

Newmark, Peter. 1998. *More Paragraphs on Translation*. Clevedon: British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data.

Nida, Eugene Albert, and Taber, Charles Russel. 2003. *The Theories and Practice of Translation*. BRILL.

Robinson, Peter. 2010. *Poetry and Translation: the Art of the Impossible.* Liverpool University

Tymoczko, Marina. 2010. *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators*. Manchester: St. Jerome.

Venuti, Lawrence. 2018. *The Translator's Invisibility*. Routledge.

Venuti, Lawrence. 2012. *Translation Changes Everything*. Routledge.

Wierzbicka, Anna. 2016. "Two Levels of Verbal Communication, Universal and Culture-Specific." *Verbal Communication*, de Gruyter, 447-481.

Sources

Baranauskas, Antanas. 1859/1959. *Anykščių šilelis*. Valstybinė grožinės literatūros leidykla. Accessed May 1, 2024. http://antologija.lt/text/antanas-baranauskas-anyksciu-silelis

Rastenis, Nadas. 1965. *The Forest of Anykščiai by Baranauskas*. Accessed January 11, 2024. https://blog.lnb.lt/lituanistika/tag/the-forest-of-anyksciai/

Tempest, Peter. 1985. *The Forest of Anykščiai*. Anykščiai: A. Baranausko ir A. Žukausko-Vienuolio memorialinis muziejus.

Conflict of Interests
The author declares no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

Ethical Standards
The author affirms this research did not involve human subjects.

SELF-TRANSLATION AND THE TRANSLATOR'S (IN)VISIBILITY
in Nabokov's *Pnin* (1957)

MICHELE RUSSO*
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2834-9824
UNIVERSITY OF FOGGIA

Abstract: Nabokovian scholarship has consistently emphasised the plurilingual aspects in Nabokov's oeuvre. His American novels frequently include numerous sentences in Russian and French, which are often translated or discussed from a metalinguistic angle by the author. A remarkable example in this regard is the autobiography *Speak, Memory. An Autobiography Revisited* (1966), which conjures up various places where Nabokov spent different periods of his life, along with the languages overlapping in his European memoirs. Considering that the coexistence of foreign terms and expressions is common in Nabokov's works, this article aims to analyse the linguistic architecture and aspects of self-translation in one of his American novels, *Pnin*. While this study dwells on the numerous grammatical and phonetic inaccuracies that feature in the protagonist's dialogues, it also means to examine the issue pertaining to the translator's (in)visibility in the text. The analysis will be carried out in light of Venuti's (2018) theories, which foreground the crucial yet often overlooked role of the translator, particularly in contexts where translation is domesticated. By quoting various examples of self-translated expressions from the novel, as well as grammatical and phonetic mistakes, the article traces the linguistic borders in the story, shedding light on the work of the translator, whose presence becomes discernible through the foreignizing effect generated by the numerous non-English words, mistakes and inaccuracies. The work thus engages with the issue of Nabokov's (in)visibility in the story, since the translator's presence is not always detectable as the storyline progresses. The alternation of domestication and foreignization, linguistic adaptation and estrangement, is infused with the writer's investigation into his linguistic past which, in Cronin's (2013: 19) words, sheds light on the "historical sense" of the languages employed. The exploration of Nabokov's linguistic past, expressed through numerous foreignisms, paves the way for an analysis of the writer's double, thereby providing a more nuanced illustration of Nabokov's linguistic transition.

Keywords: Nabokov; Pnin; self-translation; the (in)visible translator; linguistic identity

---

* michele.russo@unifg.it

1. Introduction

Self-translation has often been relegated to a marginal domain and considered an occasional practice, often limited to specific cases (Anselmi 2012). To non-experts, self-translation may appear similar to canonical translation or, to use Jakobson's (1959) words, to interlingual translation. In recent years, this form of translation has received more detailed attention, particularly after a research group from the University of Barcelona, called 'autotrad', set out to analyse a corpus of self-translated texts (Desideri 2012: 11). There are several reasons why self-translation can be distinguished from traditional, or ordinary translation. First and foremost, the concept of self-translation lends itself to different perspectives of analysis, as the author of the text and the translator are the same person, which significantly impacts the translated text. Although self-translation originates from the same principles as canonical translation, it often results in re-writing or even re-creating the source text, with remarkable changes in the target text, as the translator re-explores the source text in light of new emotional, semantic and lexical elements. This is particularly true for the self-translation of autobiographical texts, characterised by memories and events that are re-shaped as they are processed and re-processed through the author-translator's associative and cognitive lens. In view of the fact that self-translation has often been investigated from a literary perspective (Anselmi 2012), the present study analyses a work by Nabokov, characterised by an unusual plurilingual context, in which the writer devises various approaches to self-translation.

As is well known, Nabokov's oeuvre, like that of other émigré writers, offers numerous examples of autobiographical texts, that he self-translated during his linguistic transition (Russo 2021). Studies have extensively focused, for instance, on Nabokov's self-translation of his autobiography *Conclusive Evidence: A Memoir* (1951), first translated into Russian as *Drugie berega* in 1954 and then re-translated as *Speak, Memory: An Autobiography Revisited* in 1966 (Russo 2020a). This process of autobiographical re-writing, which encompassed several years, involved more than merely translating the source text. The writer re-examined his personal experiences, with inevitable changes in the versions written after *Conclusive Evidence*. Nabokov refers to the final version of his autobiography as a "re-Englishing of a Russian re-version of what had been an English re-telling of Russian memories" (Nabokov 1966: 12-13; Gorski 2010). Considering the various linguistic phases that characterised the composition of Nabokov's autobiography, the author unearthed different biographical events experienced in diverse linguistic contexts. Self-translation is, therefore, the means the author employs to access his memories (García de la Puente 2015). It is a process that expands the writer's memories, since it engages him in the exploration of his deepest thoughts and in the evocation of more detailed biographical events. Nabokov thus re-writes the later versions of his autobiography, embedding the additional information recollected through his cognitive and linguistic processes and adding emotionally charged overtones, as he retrieves his past through the language of his childhood. The biographical references in Nabokov's works emerge as the writer plays with his linguistic identities, portraying characters who recall his biographical events or introducing himself into his narratives *in medias res*. The circularity of the stories, the presence of double characters often merging into one, and the *mise en*

abyme of the author's selves are Nabokov's typical literary devices. Moreover, bilingualism and plurilingualism are the means that the Russian-American author employs to deal with the motif of doubleness, often using puns, wordplay, and self-translated words and expressions (Letka-Spychała 2020). Nabokov's fiction is characterised by the frequent translation of words, phrases and short sentences from English into Russian and from Russian into English, with the purpose of drawing the reader into the maze of plurilingual and translation issues. The steady passage from one language to another engages the reader in a process of estrangement and linguistic reflection, paving the way for a discussion on decision-making in translation and on specular and idiosyncratic relationships between the writer's source language and target language. As a result, one might take for granted that Nabokov's readers should have a sound knowledge of Russian to understand the foreign expressions that feature in his texts. This does not mean that monolingual readers are excluded, but the interference of Russian - and sometimes of French - in his English texts raises issues regarding translation approaches, particularly in relation to the cultural references involved. The author's shifting between his native language and his adopted language highlights the presence of the translator, who can be regarded as a visible translator[1]. As such, his purpose is to mark his presence in the text through non-English expressions. The translator's visibility, to recall Venuti's theory (2018), is emphasised by the linguistic boundaries that foreign words and expressions generate in the text. As the author often dwells on specific Russian and French words and expressions, readers are engaged in translation and linguistic issues.

Set against this background, *Pnin*, like other novels written by Nabokov after his emigration to the USA, includes numerous examples of self-translation, which aim to compare English and Russian from a metalinguistic perspective. What makes this novel particularly interesting is that the writer carries out a comparative analysis of the two languages with the omniscient glance of a perfect bilingual scholar, often using his irony to highlight the protagonist's linguistic mistakes. As Casmier (2004: 75) notes, "*Pnin* overflows with self-conscious instances of translation. For example, there are Pnin's own struggles with language and bizarre, verbal transliterations. These spring from the smug and quirky eye-dialect that the narrator uses to render Pnin's speech. This enables him to transform Pnin's thick accent in English into burlesque, visual malapropism".

2. Self-Translation as a Tool of Comparative Analysis

In one of his most famous works on Nabokov, Boyd (1990: 271) claims that "Of all Nabokov's novels, Pnin seems the most amusing, the most poignant, the most straightforward: a portrait of a Russian émigré whose difficulties with English and with America make him a comic legend throughout the campus, somewhere in New York State, where he teaches Russian". Known as a "campus novel", but also as a "Novel of character, roman à clef, […], epiphanic short story, postmodernist metafiction" (Lodge

---

[1] For further analysis on Nabokov's self-translation, in particular in *Speak. Memory: an Autobiography Revisited* (1966), see Russo 2020b.

in Nabokov 2004, xx)[2], *Pnin* describes the life of a Russian Professor, named after the title of the book, who teaches at Waindell College, in the USA, a fictional college inspired by Cornell University and Wellesley College, where Nabokov taught. The protagonist of the story is depicted as an inept and displaced person, whose awkwardness in everyday situations and interactions with others stem from his inability to adapt to a new country.

Like other American works by the author, *Pnin* can be considered an example of plurilingual text due to the numerous references to Nabokov's mother tongue, Russian, and his transitory language, French. The book narrates the difficult situations that Pnin has to deal with and contains numerous words and expressions in Russian and in French. At first glance, the frequent instances of self-translation might baffle readers, who will possibly perceive that such translated words and expressions are neither necessary nor relevant to the progress of the storyline. This story is not the author's first experiment in English and discloses his linguistic and cultural duality. As Nafisi (2019: 128) claims, "As the novel progresses, the problems that Pnin faces in exile become more familiar: his apparently never-ending conflict with a foreign environment, his so-called second homeland, and his struggles with all manner of objects, with language, and with alien customs and practices". The linguistic problems and issues of communication stand out in the first pages, bringing to light the protagonist's difficulties with his adopted language, English, while the use of Russian words stresses Pnin's bond with his native country. At the beginning of the story, the narrator reveals Pnin's unawareness of having boarded the wrong train to go to Cremona, USA, to deliver a lecture, and points out that "A special danger area in Pnin's case was the English language. Except for such not very helpful odds and ends […], he had no English at all at the time he left France for the States. […] by 1950 his English was still full of flaws" (8). Pnin's uncertain English, known in the text as Pninian, namely Pnin's mispronounced English, a language in between different linguistic realities, is explicitly revealed when the protagonist deals with predicaments and stressful situations. The narrator, for example, describes the moment in which Pnin asks for information about the bus to Cremona: "'Information, please,' […]. 'Where stops four-o'clock bus to Cremona?' […] 'And where possible to leave baggage?' […] 'Quittance' queried Pnin, Englishing the Russian for 'receipt' (*kvitantsiya*). 'What's that?' 'Number?' tried Pnin. 'You don't need a number,' said the fellow, and resumed his writing" (11). The narrator quotes Pnin's ungrammatical sentences in English and dwells on his use of the word "quittance" (an archaic term for "payment" which more closely resembles the Russian equivalent), instead of "receipt". In addition, some sentences are entirely in Russian, due to the fact that many characters in the story are Russian émigrés. When Pnin is introduced to Professor Entwistle from Goldwin University at the house of Laurence Clements, a faculty member at Waindell, Entwistle says, "*Zdrastvuyte kak pozhivaete horosho spasibo*" ("Hi, how are you, well, thanks", my translation, 24). At the same time, an ironic attitude towards Pnin is maintained throughout the novel, as well as mockery of his English mispronunciation and his grammatical and phonetic inaccuracies. When Pnin falls into desperation in front of his

---

[2] Hereafter, all quotations from the novel (2004 edition, with an introduction by Lodge) will refer to this edition. Page numbers are indicated in parentheses.

landlord's wife, Joan Clements, because his ex-wife, Liza, came to see him only to ask for some money for her son, he says: "I search, John, for the viscous and sawdust" (42). Pnin, who mispronounces Joan's name as "John", actually means whisky and soda. In another dialogue, Pnin's anguished words are quoted, as Liza has deserted him, and his overuse of the labiodental "f" is ironically highlighted: "I haf nofing […] I haf nofing left, nofing, nofing!" (43). With regard to Pninian, Besemeres (2000: 396) claims:

> Because Nabokov cannot reach his reading audience through Russian, he is forced constantly to translate himself, a process which, however appealing to the literary chameleon in him, in the case of *Pnin* involves a self-parody. Our access to his [Pnin's] Russian is largely through 'Pninian' English. The effect is that of a muted Russian-speaking voice echoing, or shadowing, the narrator's English.

Nabokov quotes ungrammatical expressions and mispronounced words through the narrator's voice to conjure up the foreignness and displacement endured by the protagonist (Russo 2021). Cases of self-translation are more frequent from the second chapter of the novel and provide the Russian subtext of the characters' actions and thoughts. The narrator sometimes mentions parenthetically the Russian translations of the characters' thoughts and words, as when Pnin goes to the Waindell bus stop to meet Liza who, as previously explained, intends to see Pnin to manipulate him: "Suddenly he heard her sonorous voice (*'Timofey, zdrastvuy!'*) ["Hi, Timofey", my translation] behind him" (37). In this case, by using parentheses, Nabokov places the Russian words uttered by the character in the background, thereby avoiding a slowdown in the narrative while providing the Russian subtext of the story. Numerous sentences portray the bilingual context of the story, as they suddenly switch from English to Russian. When Liza visits Pnin at the Clements', for example, she says "What a gruesome place, *kakoy zhutkiy dom*" (38). Here, as in other parts of the narrative, the translation into Russian of an English sentence enhances its meaning. The narrator foregrounds, therefore, the coexistence of the characters' Russianness and Americanness, sharing with the reader the translation of certain words and expressions into Russian.

As previously mentioned, Nabokov dwells on metalinguistic remarks resulting from a linguistic reflection on the comparison between the Russian world and the American world. Such remarks represent relevant moments in the storyline. They offer insights into different linguistic worlds and encompass the author's comments on the features of Russian and English. They include comparisons with other European languages, like French and German, which were familiar to Nabokov. The third chapter, in this regard, offers an engaging description of the phonetic features of English, along with Pnin's common mistakes in English.

> The organs concerned in the production of English speech sounds are the larynx, the velum, the lips, the tongue […], and, last but not least, the lower jaw; mainly upon its overenergetic and somewhat ruminant motion did Pnin rely when translating in class passages in the Russian grammar or some poem by Pushkin. If his Russian was music, his English was murder. He had enormous difficulty ('dzeefeecooltsee' in Pninian English) with depalatization, never managing to remove the extra Russian moisture from *t'*s and *d'*s before the vowels he so quaintly softened. His explosive 'hat' ('I never go in

a hat even in winter') differed from the common American pronunciation of 'hot' […] only by its briefer duration, and thus sounded very much like the German verb *hat* (has). Long *o*'s with him inevitably became short ones: his 'no' sounded positively Italian, and this was accentuated by his trick of triplicating the simple negative ('May I give you a lift, Mr. Pnin?' 'No-no-no, I have only two paces from here'). He did not possess (nor was he aware of this lack) any long *oo*: all he could muster when called upon to utter 'noon' was the lax vowel of the German '*nun*'. ('I have no classes in after*nun* on Tuesday. Today is Tuesday.') (47).

This is one of the most significant passages in the novel, as it addresses the linguistic challenges the protagonist faces in the American setting. It explains Pnin's difficulty in pronouncing English sounds, often overusing certain parts of his mouth. The quotation of the Pninian word "dzeefeecooltsee" in parentheses reveals how Pnin's background permeates his English with Russian sounds. Russian and Pninian words mark linguistic boundaries in the text and evoke Pnin's Russian subtext. By citing the Russian and Pninian expressions, the narrator, and thus the author, questions himself and listens to his own voice in a foreign language. He splits himself and delves into his linguistic universe by comparing his source language and his target language. The steady dialogue between English and Russian results from the author's inner linguistic journey, enabling him to test and experience translation. The pages of the novel, therefore, represent Nabokov's laboratory, a mirror that he employs to investigate his language skills. The pages become specular spaces of an*other* linguistic reality, a bilingual, or even trilingual reality, in which the author's voice echoes, splits itself and negotiates the different meanings that the process of self-translation entails (Desideri 2012). As self-translation encompasses Nabokov's linguistic and cultural background, it engages the author in a dialogue with his *ego*, which is reflected in the mirror of his bilingual universe. The author thus interacts with his linguistic ubiquity, with his *other* that enables him to translate linguistic fragments of his bilingual conscience. In addition to metalinguistic remarks, the story contains different passages which underscore Pnin's obsession with the articulation and the pronunciation of sounds. In particular, this obsession sometimes turns out to be an egocentric attitude, especially when the protagonist points out the exact pronunciation of his name. In chapter four, Pnin meets Victor, his former wife's son, at Waindell bus station. When the protagonist introduces himself, he says: "My name is Timofey, […] second syllable pronounced as 'muff', ahksent on last syllable, 'ey' as in 'prey' but a little more protracted. 'Timofey Pavlovich Pnin', which means 'Timothy the son of Paul'. The pahtronymic has the ahksent on the first syllable and the rest is sloored – Timofey Pahlch" (76). The narrator reproduces Pnin's foreign accent by misspelling certain words. Self-translation, along with phonetic and lexical inaccuracies, is thus the tool the narrator employs to carry out a linguistic analysis from a comparative perspective.

3. Nabokov's (In)visibility through Self-Translation

On a theoretical level, the use of different languages in the work conveys the coexistence of different cultural spaces. In particular, the phonetic and lexical

comparisons between English, French and Russian (the languages that, as is known, represent Nabokov's linguistic identity during his transition towards the English-speaking world) trace specific floating territories throughout the work, namely linguistic areas that interact with one another in the author's conscience (Boyd 1990). These areas are separated, as previously noted, by linguistic boundaries that mark the presence of the translator, who is thus a visible translator. Following Venuti's (2018) theory, the translator is invisible when the translated text is domesticated and fluent and, therefore, effectively conceals any foreignizing expression, word and nuance. However, in Nabokov's work, the numerous foreign expressions increase the foreignization of the text, making the author a visible translator who emphasises the sense of foreignness in a plurilingual context. The author stresses his presence throughout the text by having his characters self-translate some of the words and sentences they utter. In other cases, he directly translates his characters' words and expressions. This visibility reminds the reader of the coexistence of different linguistic subtexts, thus highlighting the importance of such subtexts in the narrative as a means to communicate with other linguistic realities. As Venuti (2018: 7) writes, "The translator's invisibility is [...] a weird self-annihilation, a way of conceiving and practicing translation that undoubtedly reinforces its marginal status". In contrast, the translator's visibility in *Pnin* helps to maintain contact with other linguistic contexts, preventing their marginalisation or suppression. His visibility also emphasises the vital role of the translator (who, as Venuti argues, is overlooked when the translator is invisible) as a mediator in a plurilingual context. Thus, Nabokov creates a foreignizing text to counteract the "ethnocentric violence" (Venuti 2018: 16) inherent in domesticating translation, which would otherwise erase valuable relationships between different cultures by recognizing only a single, predominant culture.

However, as the storyline progresses, it becomes increasingly evident that the linguistic boundaries are gradually blurred and re-designed as a consequence of the constant interaction and negotiation between different linguistic territories. This generates an osmotic process that merges the linguistic and cultural fragments of the author's background. As the examples show, various dialogues and passages in the story mingle phrases and words in Russian and French, engaging the reader in a plurilingual context. The effects of plurilingual dialogues in the text emerge in the misspelling of some English words, as in 'pahtronymic' and 'ahksent', which clearly convey the foreign interference. Examples of self-translation are so frequent that the occurrence of Russian and French words becomes progressively less alienating from the reader's perspective and less disruptive to the readability of the narrative. Self-translation in the text thus gradually sounds like an intralingual translation more than an interlingual translation, since the narrator involves the reader in his linguistic entanglements, thereby familiarising them with translation issues and language switching. Pnin's assertion, during his conversation with Victor, is emblematic in this regard: "I speak in French with much more facility than in English, [...] but you – *vous comprenez le français? Bien? Assez bien? Un peu?*" (77). Pnin, like other émigré characters in the novel, embodies the author's visibility, whose constant foreignizing presence gradually fades, reducing the reader's alienation through the regular language switching in the text. The linguistic spaces are thus constantly marked in the text and,

as they gradually fade, they are, at the same time, re-marked and redefined through the plurilingual dialogues, re-designing the boundaries of different cultural realities. The author plays with the reader and with the characters, stressing his presence through foreign words. Such a presence becomes less perceptible as the reader familiarises with the plurilingual context; as a result, the author and, therefore, the translator, becomes more invisible. After mapping specific linguistic territories and highlighting his visibility and the sense of foreignness, as previously explained, the translator gradually decreases his visibility as the interlinguistic dialogue becomes more frequent and the linguistic boundaries fade and are re-designed. The reader becomes accustomed to the constant code-switching and the writer's intrusions into linguistic remarks, causing the translator's presence to be perceived as less persistent. At the same time, the passage from the translator's visibility to his gradual invisibility does not affect the cultural values of the single realities represented in the novel. If the translator's invisibility, generated by a domesticating approach to translation, leads to the dominance of the target culture over the source culture, as Venuti argues, paving the way for an ethnocentric violence, Nabokov preserves the presence of various cultural voices, even when his visibility appears to be less perceptible. The translator lets the characters talk, he listens to them, he mediates their plurilingual dialogues and ensures the coexistence of different cultural backgrounds. The continuous alternation between the translator's visibility and invisibility does not undermine the existence of alien cultures; instead, it enables the writer to focus on various aspects of the languages employed in the text. To use Cronin's (2013) words, the translator adopts both a horizontal and a vertical stance in the numerous plurilingual dialogues. Following this interpretation, as a writer and traveller, Nabokov horizontally explores, through his characters' dialogues, the languages used in the novel by traversing different geographical areas. His geographical route throughout western Europe and the USA traces a horizontal space which leads the writer to be in contact with different linguistic contexts of his time (Russo 2020b: 74-75). His vertical linguistic exploration, metaphorically evoking a descent into the depths of the past, simultaneously reveals a retrospective view, enhancing his awareness of the "historical sense" (Cronin 2013: 19) of the languages examined in the novel, which he partially practised during his passage from East to West. The vertical investigation allows the author to retrace his European past, his linguistic transition from his motherland to the English-speaking world, using in the text the languages he engaged with during this transition. Pnin embodies the writer's linguistic experience and his thoughts are, therefore, refracted through the facets of his plurilingual prism, unearthing his memories and the languages of his past.

     In addition to the numerous plurilingual passages in the text which, as explained, gradually make the reader accustomed to the steady language switching, Pnin's English, flawed by frequent mistakes and inaccuracies, undergoes stylistic changes. Such changes occur in the fifth chapter, in which Pnin's English suddenly sounds more proficient. When he visits his friend at the Pines, a country mansion, Pnin discusses some issues in *Anna Karenina* with Bolotov, a Professor of history and philosophy. A long passage features Pnin's proficient English, as he points out some details of the plot during his conversation with Bolotov:

> The action of the novel starts in the beginning of 1872, namely on Friday, February the twenty-third by the New Style. In his morning paper Oblonski reads that Beust is rumored to have proceeded to Wiesbaden. […] After presenting his credentials, Beust had gone to the continent for a rather protracted Christmas vacation – had spent there two months with his family, and was now returning to London, where, according to his own memoirs in two volumes, preparations were under way for the thanksgiving service to be held in St. Paul's on February the twenty-seventh for the recovering from typhoid fever of the Prince of Wales (90).

Pnin's description reads like an encyclopaedic analysis, characterised by accurate grammar and an elevated style. To use Boyd's (1990: 275) words, "His language becomes graceful, dignified, and witty, and the pedantry he shares here with his peers no longer seems misplaced fussiness but rather the index of a well-stocked mind with a passion for accuracy". If Pnin's English is faltering and incorrect in everyday dialogues, the protagonist proves his accurate mastery of his adopted language when he discusses literary issues with his compatriots. This suggests that Pnin's uncertain English stands out in everyday situations when he interacts with the American people around him who "insist on imposing their own reality on him" as, "What torments Pnin in exile is not only his separation and distance from his heritage, […], but how trivial and unimportant this separation and distance is from any perspective other than his own" (Nafisi 2019: 131-132). Pnin's lack of adaptation to the physical and social environment impairs his proficiency in English. This difficulty abates when he engages in discussions on literary issues with his Russian friends, a domain in which he feels most at ease. In addition to showcasing his correct English, the protagonist draws the reader into his linguistic entanglements as he interrupts his description of Tolstoy's novel. Expressing his enthusiasm for being at his friend's house, he implicitly discloses his Russian vocabulary in the following lines: "However (*odnako*), it really is hot here (*i zharko zhe u vas*)! I think I shall now present myself before the most luminous orbs (*presvetlïe ochi*, jocular) of Alexandr Petrovich and then go for a dip (*okupnutsya*, also jocular) in the river he so vividly describes in his letter" (90). Despite not debating literature, Pnin's English does not falter, as he is surrounded by his compatriots in this circumstance. The parenthetical translation of some words of the dialogue into Russian, sometimes followed by a comment ("jocular"), echoes Pnin's Russian side[3]. While he talks to the hosts in English, the protagonist never stops thinking in Russian, adding the Russian translation of certain words as a paratextual resource for bilingual readers. The translation of some words into Russian seems to remain concealed in the secret corners of the protagonist's linguistic universe. In this passage, Pnin's English is correct, whereas, throughout the novel, the protagonist lets the readers into his Russian thoughts through his ungrammatical and mispronounced English. The words translated parenthetically into Russian are not uttered by the character, since the dialogue takes place in English. As paratextual elements of the story, the translated words illustrate Pnin's schemata relating to concepts previously learnt in Russian. The Russian words

---

[3] The double use of "jocular" in parentheses highlights, among other things, Nabokov's playful use of words. As he claims in an interview (Boyd and Tolstoy 2019, 370), "I let words play. I allow them to gambol with each other. Some of my characters have fun catching a phrase unawares, because one could define a pun as two words caught *in flagrante*".

included in parentheses in some passages underline that the writer, while expressing certain concepts or referring to specific things in English, looks back on his Russian past and retrieves special moments in his past associated with those words. The use of Russian in the novel thus brings to light crucial parts of the narrative, as it provides clues pertaining to memories that the character and, therefore, the writer, experienced in this language (García de la Puente 2015). The parenthetic translation of certain words foregrounds the translator's gradual alternation between visibility and invisibility.

As self-translation is a central element in *Pnin*, it is necessary to bear in mind the long-standing debate on self-translation – whether it is a creative re-writing of the source text or a translation constrained by the conventions of standard translation (Anselmi 2012). First and foremost, the frequently "subtitled" self-translation in the novel reinforces the foreignizing effect of the text, even though such an effect fades, as previously explained. Nabokov composed the entire work in English, carrying out an unconscious self-translation from Russian. By quoting certain words and expressions in Russian, he underscores his fidelity to the concepts originally conceived in Russian and aims to both ensure and share with the reader the effectiveness of his decision-making as a translator. However, this process does not entail any form of constraint on the translation, neither does it impose specific conventions. The interplay between English and Russian, the translator's visibility and invisibility, the linguistic blending and the protagonist's linguistic uncertainties are clues to the author's creative process while he re-writes his text in the target language (Shvabrin 2019). The translator, as the author of the work, confirms his sensitivity to new linguistic contexts, adding his creative nuances in the plurilingual world that he creates and re-creates. The translator thus re-shapes his target text by re-translating his memories and evoking the most relevant moments of his linguistic journey. At the same time, the use of French words does not serve the same purpose, likely due to his lesser confidence in the language, and may instead reflect an echo of his time in Paris[4].

Although the protagonist's confidence in English emerges in the fifth chapter, it fades in the pages that follow, once again conveying the creativity of linguistic interference which, through mistakes and inaccuracies, characterises the protagonist's linguistic universe (Boyd 2011). The environment of the Pines (his friend's mansion), whose name recalls that of the protagonist and, therefore, his subjective sphere, is the only place where Pnin feels truly at ease, surrounded by other Russian émigrés. Towards the end of the novel, Pnin finds himself isolated and excluded from the academic community in which he had hoped to secure a tenured professorship. When Pnin learns that his job position is insecure, he realises that he must "face a future more homeless than ever" (Boyd 1990: 276). This renewed sense of exile is further exacerbated by ironic remarks about his English. As Clements notes: "Our friend […] employs a nomenclature all his own. His verbal vagaries add a new thrill to life. His

---

[4] In this regard, Cornwell (2005: 153) writes that "French had always been regarded as the third string to his bow" and Boyd (1990: 432) claims that "Though his [Nabokov's] French was first-rate, he never felt it as supple or secure as his English. Apart from his memoir 'Mademoiselle O' and his Pushkin essay, he had composed nothing in French". Some interviews with Nabokov show his proficient use of English and his British pronunciation (Nabokov 2023).

mispronunciations are mythopeic. His slips of the tongue are oracular" (123). The (in)visible writer views himself through the lens of a mature bilingual, portraying a linguistic context in which he mixes mockery of the immigrant's frustrations with sympathy.

4. The Double in the Process of Linguistic Transition

The double is a paradigm in Nabokov's works (Boyd 1990; Nafisi 2019; Sweeney 2005; Schadewaldt 2023; Shvabrin 2019). As argued in the previous paragraph, self-translation is used by the author to split his linguistic world and his persona. Nabokov uses elements of both the Russian world and the American world to build images of an ideal plurilingual country, viewing this reality through the eyes of both an insider and an outsider or, better, of someone living between borders. As Sweeney (2005: 68) suggests, "His [Nabokov's] American works constantly correlate the two countries […] by depicting distorted reflections, scrambled pictures, unfinished maps, visionary paintings, or miniature models of one world inside another". The image of the double clearly emerges in the final part, as Nabokov reveals further memories of Pnin, providing interesting details on his life as an émigré. Meanwhile, the relationship between the author, the narrator and the protagonist becomes more ambiguous. In light of this, it is necessary to provide some plot-related information from the final chapter to better understand the linguistic architecture of the novel. The narrator now switches to the first person and informs the reader that he has known Pnin since they were both boys in Russia. He also confirms that his name is Vladimir Vladimirovich, he is an Anglo-Russian novelist and an American academic; he is Nabokov. The final chapter is also the section in which the narrator, becoming a character of the story, interacts with Pnin. The reader loses track of the storyline and is astounded to learn that the narrator had an affair with Liza before she married Pnin. The narrator accepts a position at Waindell and he arrives at the college on the day Pnin has to leave, exacerbating the ongoing disagreements with him. Pnin, who is about to be dismissed, seems to consider Nabokov a threat, the ouster of his job. The narrator thus turns out to be a character, specifically Pnin's antagonist in love, social life and work. Pnin's mispronounced English arises again when he falsely denies being at home during a phone call from the narrator and Jack Cockerell, the head of the English department. As the narrator writes, "none save my old friend, not even his best imitator, could rhyme so emphatically 'at' with the German 'hat', 'home' with the French 'homme', and 'gone' with the head of 'Goneril'" (141). As Pnin drives away in his small car, the narrator pursues him in an attempt to catch up, but Pnin vanishes on the horizon. The final lines of the novel echo the opening ones, as Cockerell is about to recount the story of Pnin, explaining that he left for Cremona to deliver a lecture only to realise he had brought the wrong one with him. The circular structure of the novel brings the reader back to the beginning and leaves them with unresolved questions. While maintaining his plurilingual narrative style, the narrator engages in a temporal interaction with his counterpart, Pnin, evoking past moments of their meetings and exposing their difficult relationship. In light of this narrative information pertaining to the final part, Nabokov's transition from Russian to

English is here analysed not only from a spatial perspective, but also from a psycho-linguistic angle, which pervades the writer's complex relationship with his linguistic *alter ego*. The conclusion provides additional details about the past, resulting from the author's self-translation and re-self-translation. The plurilingual dialogues are re-writings of memories that retrace and disclose past events through the process of self-translation.

By depicting the idiosyncratic relationship between the narrator and the protagonist, the author represents the problems pertaining to his linguistic transition. The double identity of the author is developed through a game of visibility and invisibility played out by the narrator-translator. The translator's visibility becomes apparent in various passages through the estrangement created by the use of foreign words. In the final section, the translator's *other*, his double, embodied by the protagonist, becomes metaphorically invisible as Pnin departs. The protagonist's escape reflects his need to return to his linguistic world and deliver a fluent, linear story to the reader. At the same time, the depiction of the narrator pursuing Pnin stands for the writer's attempt to capture, appropriate and maintain a dialogue with his *alter ego*. In this regard, it is worth quoting what Casmier (2004: 72) writes about the protagonist: "[…] Pnin […] seems like a horrible translation, presented by a translator with a dubious relationship to his subject. Nevertheless, amid such upheaval and devious instability, something about Pnin endures – and, whatever it is, it remains resistant to translation, misreading, and misrepresentation". In the wake of the binary path outlined throughout the novel, characterised by the opposing concepts of alienation and integration, foreignness and Americanness, visibility and invisibility, the author questions his ontological duality and, by interacting with his two halves, overcomes this duality, placing himself between multiple realities. In particular, if the final description of Pnin leaving in his car seems to symbolise the author's permanent duality and linguistic alienation, with the protagonist striving to abandon his state of frustration, the circular structure outlined in the concluding lines of the work reopens the dialogue with Pnin, creating a dynamic interplay between the translator's visibility and invisibility. By returning to the opening pages of the story, the author seeks to overcome his schizophrenic relationship with his *alter ego* through the narrator's voice. The circular structure of the story thus re-maps the writer's geographies of emigration and linguistic boundaries, enabling him to re-cross and re-explore the migrant's endless itineraries, thus maintaining the dialogue between his two linguistic identities. The linguistic and cultural schizophrenia gradually dissipates as the protagonist once again retraces his route to Cremona. Thus, the narrator's effort to appropriate the untranslated aspect of Pnin - the part of the protagonist that remains concealed - further catalyses the author's linguistic transition, although, as Boyd (1990: 271) claims, Pnin remains "an object of pathos as an exile, an ex-husband, a man alone, mocked and misunderstood".

5. Conclusion

The self-translated expressions and words in the novel represent the linguistic and cultural cartographies populating the author's memories. Translating and self-

translating entail re-mapping itineraries and unknown lands, as well as uprooting the émigré from his 'comfort zones' to confront exile, estrangement and language loss (Zaccaria 2017). Bilingualism is the means that Nabokov employs to facilitate the dialogue between the past and present, since Russian recalls the writer's past, while English is the language of the writer's present. Nabokov not only draws and translates the borders between these languages, but he also discovers a space of communication between the past and the present, a concept that permeates much of his autobiography (Trubikhina 2015). In this interplay between past and present, languages of the past and present, alienation and integration, self-translation and re-self-translation, the translator reveals both his visibility and invisibility through a game of doubles and mirrors, tracing his own linguistic route. In this game of doubles, characterised by the translator's visible and invisible presence, Nabokov leads the reader through the endless spaces of translation. The writer navigates the nuances of cultural displacement, creating a narrative that bridges his past experiences with his present identity, ultimately crafting a multifaceted self that transcends the borders of a single linguistic dimension.

References

Anselmi, Simona. 2012. *On Self-Translation. An Exploration in Self-Translators' Teloi and Strategies*. LED.

Besemeres, Mary. 2000. "Self-Translation in Vladimir Nabokov's *Pnin*". *The Russian Review* 59: 390-407. https://doi.org/10.1111/0036-0341.00129.

Boyd, Brian. 1990. Vladimir Nabokov. *The Russian Years*. Princeton University Press.

Boyd, Brian. 2011. *Stalking Nabokov. Selected Essays.* Columbia University Press.

Boyd, Brian, and Anastasia Tolstoy (Eds.). 2019. *Vladimir Nabokov. Think, Write, Speak. Uncollected Essays, Reviews, Interviews and Letters to the Editor*. Penguin Classics.

Casmier, Stephen. 2004. "A Speck of Coal Dust: Vladimir Nabokov's *Pnin* and the Possibility of Translation". *Nabokov Studies* 8: 71-86. https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/nab.2004.0005.

Cornwell, Neil. 2005. "From Sirin to Nabokov: the transition to English". In *The Cambridge Companion to Nabokov*, edited by Julian W. Connolly. Cambridge University Press.

Cronin, Michael. 2013. *Across the Lines. Travel, Language, Translation.* Cork University Press.

Desideri, Paola. 2012. "L'operazione autotraduttiva, ovvero la seduzione delle lingue allo specchio". In *Autotraduzione. Teoria ed esempi fra Italia e Spagna (e oltre)*, a cura di Marcial Rubio Árquez e Nicola D'Antuono. LED.

García de la Puente, Inés. 2015. "Bilingual Nabokov: Memories and Memoirs in Self-Translation". *SEEJ* 59 (4): 585-608. DOI:10.30851/59.4.005.

Gorski, Bradley. 2010. "Nabokov vs. Набоков: A Literary Investigation of Linguistic Relativity". *Museum Studies Abroad*, October 19. https://museumstudiesabroad.org/nabokov-linguistic-relativity/.

Jakobson, Roman. 1959. "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation". In *On Translation*, edited by Reubern Arthur Browen. Harvard University Press.

Letka-Spychała, Olga. 2020. "'World in Vladimir Nabokov's Words': On Polish and Russian Translations of Wordplay in the Novel *Pnin*". *SKASE Journal of Translation & Interpretation* 13 (2): 108-128. http://www.skase.sk/Volumes/-JTI19/pdf_doc/08.pdf.

Nabokov, Vladimir. 1966. *Speak, Memory. An Autobiography Revisited*. Capricorn Books.

Nabokov, Vladimir. 2004. *Pnin*. Introduction by David Lodge. Everyman's Library.

Nabokov, Vladimir. 2023. "Nabokov in Montreux: 1965 Interview". Interview by Robert Hughes. *YouTube*, May 3. Video, 28:25. https://www.youtube.com/-watch?v=V8OwyqvSh2g.

Nafisi, Azar. 2019. *That Other World. Nabokov and the Puzzle of Exile.* Yale University Press.

Russo, Michele. 2020a. "Self-Translation in Nabokov's Fiction: Three Paradigmatic Cases". *Oltreoceano* 16: 69-83. DOI: 10.1400/278731.

Russo, Michele. 2020b. *A Plurilingual Analysis of Four Russian-American Autobiographies*. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Russo, Michele. 2021. "*Nemo Profeta in Patria*: Linguistic and Cultural Patterns in Maxim D. Shrayer's *Waiting for America: a Story of Emigration* (2007) and *A Russian Immigrant: Three Novellas* (2019)". *Oltreoceano*, 17: 117-128. DOI: https://doi.org/10.53154/Oltreoceano7.

Schadewaldt, Annika, M. 2023. "Imitation, Mimicry, and the Performance of Americanness in Nabokov's *Pnin*". *European Journal of American Studies* 18 (4): 1-13. https://doi.org/10.4000/ejas.21164.

Shvabrin, Stanislav. 2019. *Between Rhyme and Reason. Vladimir Nabokov, Translation, and Dialogue*. University of Toronto Press.

Sweeney, Susan, Elizabeth. 2005. " 'By Some Sleight of *Land*': How Nabokov Rewrote America". In *The Cambridge Companion to Nabokov*, edited by Julian W. Connolly. Cambridge University Press.

Trubikhina, Julia. 2015. *The Translator's Doubts. Vladimir Nabokov and the Ambiguity of Translation.* Academic Studies Press.

Venuti, Lawrence. 2018. *The Translator's Invisibility. A History of Translation*. Routledge.

Zaccaria, Paola. 2017. *La lingua che ospita. Poetiche. Politiche. Traduzioni.* Meltemi.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

Ethical Standards

The author affirms this research did not involve human subjects.

TRANS-CULTURAL TRANSLATION AND RISK MANAGEMENT

MUHAMMAD ZAYYANU ZAKI*
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3785-2488
USMANU DANFODIYO UNIVERSITY

CHUKWUNONYE ANTHONY NWANJOKU**
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0189-3010
UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

SANI ATIKU***
https://orcid.org/0009-0004-7237-2564
SOKOTO STATE UNIVERSITY

Abstract: This research investigates the intricacies of trans-cultural translation and risk management within the Nigerian linguistic and cultural landscape. The research outlines the multifaceted risks in translation processes, ranging from linguistic accuracy to cultural appropriateness, and proposes strategies for their mitigation with a focus on the diverse languages and cultural influences present in Nigeria. The research highlights the critical role of translators' understanding and conveying cultural nuances, emphasising the necessity for comprehensive training in cultural awareness, ethical considerations, and risk management strategies. This study provides valuable insights into achieving effective communication across cultural gaps, through examining various types of translation risks including uncertainty, credibility, communication, and mitigation, and discussing effective risk management practices such as the use of CAT tools, revision systems, and pre-translation planning. Additionally, the research acknowledges the importance of technology and translator decision-making in ameliorating translation risks, while highlighting the often-overlooked aspect of cultural awareness. This research contributes significantly to the field of trans-cultural translation studies by exploring the specific challenges and opportunities in the Nigerian context, such as translation precision, aesthetic considerations, and the logistical concerns of payment and ongoing skill enhancement. The research offers recommendations for translators and outlines areas for further research within the Nigerian and broader linguistic contexts.

Keywords: trans-cultural; risk management; translation studies; equivalence; interpretation

---

* muhammad.zayyanu@uudusok.edu.ng
** anthony.nwanjoku@unn.edu.ng
*** atiku.sani@ssu.edu.ng

1. Introduction

Within the Nigerian context, trans-cultural translation presents a unique challenge due to the nation's rich tapestry of over 250 ethnicities and languages. This necessitates a nuanced approach that goes beyond mere linguistic proficiency to navigate the complexities of cultural contexts. The fundamental goal of translation is to convey the intended message from the source text to the target audience without altering its meaning or essence. However, achieving true equivalence and/or correspondence in trans-cultural translation becomes intricate when dealing with diverse cultural backgrounds like in Nigeria.

Direct translation between Nigerian languages can be insufficient. This is because of nuances, proverbs, and humor often rely heavily on the specific cultural context within each ethnicity. Facial expressions, gestures, and body language vary significantly across Nigerian cultures. Misinterpretations in these areas can lead to misunderstandings and offense as religious beliefs and social norms differ greatly across the country. Translators must be aware of potential taboos and sensitive topics to avoid causing unintended harm. To mitigate the inherent risks associated with trans-cultural translation in Nigeria, a robust risk management approach is crucial. This involves risk Management strategies for accurate translation:

- Target audience identification by clearly defining the intended audience for the translated material is paramount. Tailoring the language and cultural references to their specific background minimises the risk of miscommunication.
- Dual expertise in utilising translators with not only linguistic proficiency but also a deep understanding of the cultural context of both source and target languages is essential.
- Sensitivity training through equipping translators with cultural sensitivity training helps them identify potential pitfalls and navigate the complexities of diverse cultural nuances.
- Collaboration and back-translation by working with native speakers of the target language for feedback and back-translation helps ensure accuracy and cultural appropriateness.

Addressing the issue of untrained translators, Nwanjoku et al. (2021: 50) aptly highlight the importance of trained translators, emphasising the complexities involved in achieving equivalence and/or correspondence due to the cultural dimension inherent in different languages. Untrained individuals often underestimate the challenges involved, assuming a simplistic approach that disregards the diverse approaches, processes, procedures, and ethical considerations crucial for successful translation.

Moreso, equivalence in translation, as (ibid. 51) further explain, refers to establishing a term or text in the target language that conveys the same meaning as its source language counterpart. This necessitates a nuanced understanding of both languages and their cultural contexts to ensure that the translated text retains the intended message and impact on the target audience. Trans-cultural translation in Nigeria can be a powerful tool for communication, collaboration, and knowledge exchange while ensuring accurate and culturally appropriate representation of the

source text by acknowledging the multifaceted nature of cultural nuances and implementing effective risk management strategies.

Nigeria's complex linguistic and cultural landscape, characterised by over 250 indigenous languages alongside English and French, presents unique challenges for trans-cultural translation. While French was adopted as a second official language in 1996 to promote cultural unity, the primary languages spoken by Nigerians remain their native languages and English with approximately 10% of speakers. Additionally, the three major indigenous languages: Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo – play a significant role in national development and have been extensively utilised in translation endeavors.

However, the sheer diversity of languages and their dialects within Nigeria introduces inherent translation difficulties, particularly regarding trans-translation across various cultures. This necessitates careful consideration of the risks involved, including:

- The transfer of text from one language to another inherently carries the risk of miscommunication due to cultural nuances and linguistic complexities,
- Inaccurate translation can significantly alter the intended message, potentially leading to misunderstandings or unintended consequences. This emphasises the importance of prioritising the preservation of the source text's meaning during translation, and
- Insufficient attention to the various stages of the translation process, including decisions regarding what to translate and what to adapt, can further increase the risk of inaccuracies.

Therefore, effective risk management strategies are crucial for ensuring accurate and culturally appropriate translation within Nigeria's context. This includes:

- Proactive identification of potential issues before they arise allows for the implementation of preventative measures,
- Classifying risks into various categories, such as strategic, financial, compliance, and operational risks, facilitates targeted mitigation strategies, and
- Expanding the risk management framework to encompass factors beyond the standard categories, such as people, facility, process, and technology risks, provides a more comprehensive approach.

Zaki et al. (2024: 9) rightly highlight the importance of translation in bridging communication gaps and achieving accuracy and equivalence in message transfer. This study further emphasises the need to identify and manage the inherent risks involved in translation through targeted training and risk mitigation strategies. Trans-cultural translation in Nigeria can be a powerful tool for fostering communication, collaboration, and knowledge exchange while ensuring the integrity and cultural appropriateness of the translated message, acknowledging the multifaceted nature of linguistic diversity, and implementing robust risk management practices.

Within the field of communication, risk refers to the possibility of failure, with such failure jeopardising the entire communication process. In translation, this translates to the potential for inaccurate or misleading information transfer, ultimately falling short of the success expectations placed on translators. While risk management is a well-established concept in various domains like politics and business, its full application

within Translation Studies remains under development. Hui (2013: 36) emphasises the need for a comprehensive risk management approach in translation, encompassing not only the actions of translators but also the broader range of issues faced by language professionals and clients. Communication risk arises when the meaning conveyed in the translated text falls short of the original message. As Hopkin (2017: 2) aptly states, "evaluating the range of risk responses available and deciding the most appropriate one in each case is at the heart of risk management". One key challenge in translation risk management lies in the absence of definitive rules or guidelines governing the process. Sedano (2020: 6) further highlights that translation risk extends beyond the initial client-translator selection and the text itself, encompassing the inherent uncertainties within the translation process.

This study aims to elucidate the intricate links between risk and translation. Some key areas of focus through balancing the pursuit of literal accuracy (precision) with the preservation of the overall aesthetic quality of the translated text present a significant translation risk. The potential for omitting crucial phrases or segments during translation poses a substantial risk to the accuracy and completeness of the message. The awkward reality of financial considerations for translators can also be a source of translation risk. The risk of losing language proficiency over time underscores the need for continuous learning and engagement with the languages involved. Additionally, inadequate cultural awareness can lead to significant misinterpretations and communication breakdowns.

This research tends to contribute to the development of robust risk management strategies by acknowledging the multifaceted nature of translation risk and advocating for its comprehensive integration within Translation Studies. This, in turn, will enable translators to navigate the inherent complexities of the field and deliver accurate, culturally appropriate translations that effectively bridge communication gaps (Sajo et al. 2023: 75). Within the field of translation, the concept of risk carries a specific weight. According to (Akbari 2021: 13), risk is an event with an uncertain outcome, potentially leading to either positive or negative consequences. This uncertainty surrounding the translation process, where the "actual outcome may deviate from the expected outcome" (ibid. 19), necessitates a critical approach to risk management.

Interpretations, as Akbari further notes, can be subject to both positive and negative evaluations. However, both definitions of risk and desired outcomes emphasise the inherent uncertainty in translation, where potential 'bad results' can arise. Stern (1996: 11) highlights the importance of choosing appropriate risk analysis measures, particularly when comparing different risks. He emphasises that a fundamental understanding of the underlying risk processes is crucial, as quantitative estimates alone can lead to obfuscation.

Several scholars have recognised the growing significance of risk management in translation. Matsushita (2014) applies Pym's concept of "Risk Management" to analyse new translation strategies. He argues that this framework can be valuable in understanding the decision-making processes behind specific strategies, such as omission in news translation. Pym (2015) himself delves deeper into the various types of risks inherent in translation. These include:

- Credibility Risk refers to the potential for the translator to lose trust and credibility due to inaccuracies or misinterpretations.
- Uncertainty Risk encompasses the inherent uncertainty in decision-making during the translation process, where choices can lead to unintended consequences.
- Communicative Risk arises when the translation fails to fulfill its intended communicative function, potentially leading to misunderstandings or miscommunication.

Pym further emphasises that some elements within a translation carry higher risks than others, as they are crucial for successful communication. However, these levels of risk analysis are not always clear-cut, and their interactions offer a nuanced perspective on translation as a social activity, a product, and a model for decision-making. Akbari (2016) confirms the increasing adoption of risk management practices within translation companies. His research identifies common industry risks and the methods companies employ to mitigate them. This highlights the growing recognition of translation as a purposeful activity requiring constant decision-making and risk-management strategies.

The concept of risk management has gained significant traction in Translation Studies. As research by Pym and Matsushita demonstrates, it offers a valuable framework for analysing translation strategies and decision-making processes. Practitioners can minimise potential pitfalls and ensure the accuracy, effectiveness, and cultural appropriateness of their work by actively implementing risk management strategies within the translation process.

2. Literature Review: Translation Studies in Nigeria

Translation Studies in Nigeria presents a unique and dynamic field shaped by the nation's rich linguistic tapestry and historical context. This overview highlights several key areas of focus on literary translingualism. Scholars like Toyin (2022) have explored the concept of literary translingualism, emphasising the necessity of linguistic diversity in Nigerian literature. Works by prominent authors like Soyinka, Achebe, and Adichie exemplify this approach, showcasing the ethical translation of postcolonial narratives.

Studies by (Acheoah et al. 2019) delve into the relationship between French and Nigerian languages in literary translation, highlighting how French serves as a tool for cultural exchange and collaboration between the two nations. Translation Studies in Nigeria is intricately linked with history and nationalism. Research explores how translation shapes national consciousness, from precolonial traditions to postcolonial anti-imperialist discourse, reflecting diverse cultural sensibilities. The field encompasses various domains beyond literary translation, biomedical translation plays a crucial role in sharing medical research internationally (Teibowei 2022). The study of French translation in Nigerian universities, with its emphasis on Translation Quality Assessment (TQA), empowers youth and contributes to national development (ibid.). The proposal to translate school subjects into Nigerian Pidgin and utilise it as a

medium of instruction aims to enhance national cohesion and develop human resources proficient in the language.

The emergence of the Nigerian Association of Translators and Interpreters (NATI) in 1978, currently the Nigerian Institute of Translators and Interpreters (NITI) marked a significant development in the field. This organisation played a pivotal role in raising awareness among language educators and fostering the growth of Translation Studies within Nigerian universities. This demonstrates that the field of Translation Studies in Nigeria is multifaceted and dynamic, encompassing diverse areas of research and practice. It actively engages with the nation's linguistic diversity, historical context, and evolving cultural landscape, contributing significantly to knowledge sharing, national development, and the preservation of cultural identity.

Translation Studies has witnessed significant growth within Nigerian universities throughout the 21st century. This discipline has nurtured renowned writers in the French language and boasts numerous professors who have made substantial contributions to the field within the Nigerian context. As Iloh (2019: 161) notes, "translation studies in most departments of French, Foreign or Modern European languages have figured in both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes". However, examining the trajectory of Translation Studies in Nigeria necessitates acknowledging the constraints and challenges encountered.

Despite the presence of postgraduate programmes in Translation Studies within many departments, a critical challenge lies in the lack of qualified faculty to adequately handle the demands of the discipline. This shortage of qualified instructors can hinder the quality and depth of instruction offered. While Translation Studies has undoubtedly flourished in Nigerian universities, addressing the issue of faculty shortage is crucial for its continued advancement and the training of future generations of skilled translators.

3. The Interplay of Trans-Cultural Translation and Risk Management

Trans-cultural translation is crucial for effective risk management within various sectors in Nigeria, especially the banking industry. Studies by Pere (2017) explore how cultural factors like religion and social class influence risk perceptions of Nigerian parents sending their children abroad, such as concerns about cultural assimilation or religious freedom. This highlights the importance of understanding cultural nuances when assessing risk. Similarly, research by Alphonsus (2016) on non-performing loans, like defaults on small business loans, underscores the link between risk management measures and the sustainability of financial institutions. Furthermore, studies on the United Bank for Africa (UBA) demonstrate the benefits of tailoring risk management practices to Nigeria's specific cultural context, with a strong risk culture enhancing their ability to manage risk. This emphasises the crucial role of understanding and incorporating trans-cultural nuances within risk management frameworks to achieve successful mitigation and ensure sustainable operations in Nigeria's diverse socio-cultural landscape. Various sectors in Nigeria can achieve greater success in mitigating

risks and fostering sustainable growth by prioritising trans-cultural translation in risk management strategies.

The concept of "Trans-Cultural Translation" extends beyond the mere transfer of words from one language to another. As Robinson (2001: 193) notes, the increasingly complex translation marketplace necessitates robust risk management strategies. The modern world, with its rapid globalisation, has introduced new and complex risks, particularly with the increased reliance on digital technology. Zaki et al., (2024: 32) highlight the potential for uncertainty in translation when the original written text is solely replaced by its translated counterpart in the target language. Robinson (2001: 28) further emphasises the subjective nature of translation, where even the most skilled translators can be influenced by the "text situation" beyond their initial expectations. This dynamic nature underscores the constant evolution of risk management within translation. Löescher (1991: 8) defines translation procedures and strategies as "conscious procedures adopted by translators to deal with the different types of problems they encounter while rendering the text or part of it from one language into another". As Hopkin (2017: 8) suggests, managing risk in today's environment requires a dynamic approach, utilising various tools and techniques while adapting governance structures to ensure successful implementation.

This research highlights the importance of integrating cultural sensitivity into risk management strategies, by acknowledging the intricate relationship between trans-cultural translation and risk management within the Nigerian context. It is crucial to mitigate potential misinterpretations and communication breakdowns. The dynamic nature of the globalised world necessitates continuous adaptation of risk management practices to address emerging challenges like the increased use of digital technology in translation. A qualified workforce of translators equipped to navigate the complexities of trans-cultural communication is essential for effective risk management. Trans-cultural translation plays a critical role in various sectors within Nigeria, and its success is intricately linked to effective risk management strategies that account for the nation's diverse socio-cultural landscape and the evolving nature of risk in the globalised world.

Risk management plays a crucial role in various domains, including the translation process. Stern (1996: 33) defines it as the process of identifying and evaluating alternative regulatory options, ultimately selecting the most suitable one. This involves considering broad social, economic, ethical, and political factors while utilising the results of risk assessments and a comprehensive understanding of the broader context. Zaki et al. (2024: 34) highlight the inherent challenges within translation, emphasising the complexities faced by both the translator and the translation process itself. These challenges include:

- Translators require expertise in the source and target languages, including their grammar, vocabulary, and cultural nuances.
- Accurately conveying the intended meaning of the source text in the target language is a constant struggle for translators,
- Finding natural equivalents for certain lexical items across languages can be particularly challenging. And,

- Lack of familiarity with the cultural context of both languages can lead to significant misinterpretations.

Nwanjoku (2021: 33) further emphasises the critical role of accurate language in ensuring clear communication and avoiding negative consequences. This resonates with the translation risk of understanding the intended meaning and conveying it effectively in the target language. Nida (2001: 37) adds that perfect equivalence between languages is often unattainable due to inherent differences in meaning and sentence structure. This necessitates a nuanced approach to translation, acknowledging the inherent risk of potential inaccuracies due to the lack of absolute correspondence between languages. Beyond the realm of translation, Hopkin (2017: 25) defines risk management in business as encompassing issues like health and safety, fire prevention, and product liability.

Risk management in translation is a multifaceted process that involves identifying, assessing, and analysing various risks inherent to the translation process. These risks encompass challenges related to translator competence, achieving accurate meaning, identifying natural equivalence, cultural awareness, and the inherent limitations of achieving perfect equivalence between languages. Translators can strive to deliver accurate, culturally appropriate translations that minimise potential negative consequences by acknowledging these complexities and implementing effective risk management strategies.

4. Methodology

This study explores the various risks inherent in the translation process, such as inaccuracies, cultural misunderstandings, and potential biases. This research investigates how translators manage risks associated with translation, employing an interpretative approach and analytical theory of translation as frameworks.

5. Risk Management and Decision-Making in Translation

Pym's definition of translation risk emphasises the potential failure to achieve the intended purpose of the translation. This approach highlights the importance of identifying elements within the translation process that carry high or low risk, allowing for strategic risk distribution. As Sedano (2020: 6) further emphasises that translation risk extends beyond the initial client-translator interaction, permeating the entire translation process itself. This part delves into several translation risks identified by Pym and others, beyond the core risk of failing to meet the translation's purpose:

5.1. Precision versus Aesthetics

One central risk lies in the inherent tension between precision and aesthetics. Pym (2020: 11) argues that prioritising precision often compromises the aesthetic experience of the translated text, while focusing solely on aesthetics may lead to

significant deviations from the original. This creates a delicate balancing act: excessive precision can render the text clumsy and unreadable, while overemphasising aesthetics may result in a translation that strays too far from the source material. The specific context, such as literary translations demanding aesthetic considerations, influences the appropriate balance between these two aspects.

5.2. Lost Phrases

Another significant risk involves the omission of phrases or sections during the translation process. This can occur due to time constraints leading to translation overload, resulting in a substandard final product. Mitigating this risk requires implementing strategies like segmented translation using Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT) tools or establishing a thorough revision/proofreading system.

5.3. Payment Risk

Translators often face the risk of delayed or withheld payment, with clients holding back payment until final revisions are complete or exceeding payment deadlines. To minimise this risk, establishing a clear payment timeline upfront, potentially with a 50% down payment structure, is crucial.

5.4. Maintaining Language Skills

Translators face the constant risk of language skill deterioration. Mitigating this risk involves continuous efforts such as:
- Regular reading, writing, and conversation in the relevant languages are essential for maintaining language proficiency,
- Translators working in specialised fields should actively seek knowledge within those domains to enhance their subject matter expertise alongside language skills,
- A lack of cultural and transcultural awareness can lead to subtle translation errors. Translators should strive to improve their cultural sensitivity to minimise such risks.

Pym's framework provides a valuable lens for understanding and managing various translation risks.

Translators can strive to deliver accurate, culturally appropriate translations that fulfill their intended purpose and minimise potential negative consequences, by identifying high-risk elements and implementing appropriate strategies. Translation inherently involves a complex decision-making process. Obdržálková (2016: 307) highlights this aspect, defining translation as "a communication process in terms of its goal and a decision process in terms of the translator's working situation." This decision-making process often involves choosing between multiple possible scenarios and requires careful effort allocation. Zaki et al., (2024: 20) further emphasise the role of creativity in this process, stating that translators utilise creativity "to transform messages into cross-cultural communication situations and solve problems by searching for correspondence and/or equivalence and the use of the right words".

Pym (2015: 13) offers a valuable framework for understanding risk management in translation. He suggests that "one always works hard when there is high risk and works less when there is low risk". He categorises problems as high-risk or low-risk, and solutions as well, viewing risk management as a lens for analysing translation strategies. Essentially, different translation strategies represent varying levels of effort expended to manage risk, and the translator's effort should ideally correlate with the perceived level of risk associated with each decision. Shojaee et al., (2021: 5) define risk-taking as "an ability to be enthusiastic to try out new information wisely and intelligently not considering embarrassment". This characteristic plays a crucial role in translation training, as students actively seek out and experiment with various strategies to hone their skills. It is a vital part of the learning process, distinct from simply expecting success or failure.

The focus in translation should not solely be on achieving perfect outcomes, but rather on the willingness to experiment and adapt strategies. This aligns with the principle of "equivalent effect" emphasised by Nida, Venuti, Pym, and Nwanjoku et al., which acknowledges the challenges of finding perfect cross-cultural and linguistic equivalence. The goal becomes achieving a level of correspondence that effectively conveys the intended meaning within the target cultural context.

Furthermore, Hopkin (2017: 31) highlights that successful risk management in translation involves "ensuring that strategic decisions that appear to be high risk are taken with all of the information available". This emphasises the importance of comprehensive analysis and informed decision-making to minimise potential risks at all stages of the translation process. Translation is a decision-driven process where risk management plays a critical role., translators can strategically allocate effort, cultivate a risk-taking approach, and utilise various translation strategies to achieve the desired level of equivalence and minimise the potential for negative consequences, by acknowledging the inherent risks involved.

Pym (2015: 123) identifies three key types of risk inherent to the translation process:

1. **Uncertainty Risk** arises from the inherent uncertainty in translation decisions. Kunzli associates uncertainty with situations where translators make educated guesses due to a limited understanding of the source text. He further suggests that collaborating with the client throughout the process can help mitigate this risk.
2. **Credibility Risk** is crucial in translation, as it directly impacts the trust and confidence of those involved. A translator's expertise in the source language and knowledge of the subject matter can significantly reduce credibility risk.
3. **Communicative Risk is a r**isk management that extends beyond simply avoiding negative consequences. It involves maximising communication effectiveness. This means that the effort invested in translating a specific text segment should be proportionate to the potential communicative risk involved. For instance, if a specific section requires minimal effort for clear communication, involving a mediator might be unnecessary. The unequal distribution of communicative risk across different texts and situations highlights the need for strategic effort allocation based on the perceived risk level, while also considering uncertainty and maintaining credibility.

Beyond the three core risks, Pym et al. (2018: 1) introduce the concept of risk mitigation. This refers to situations where a translator deliberately accepts one type of risk to potentially mitigate another. They explain that "risk mitigation" involves "accepting one kind of risk while attempting to protect against the possible negative consequences of that risk by incurring a second risk" (ibid., 2). However, this approach often presents challenges and may not always be a feasible option for translators. Pym's framework provides a valuable lens for understanding and managing various risks inherent in translation. Translators can make informed decisions, allocate effort strategically, and strive to achieve effective communication while minimising potential negative consequences by acknowledging these distinct risk categories and the potential for mitigation strategies.

According to Zaki et al. (2024: 21) the inherent challenge of gap-filling in translation, highlights the translators' role as bridge-builders who must align the skills and knowledge of both languages to achieve a sense of equivalence. This 'equal value' in both languages becomes crucial, as all translations are inherently reoriented towards the target audience and context. Understanding the intended meaning and context of the source text is, therefore, paramount in effective risk management. Various types of risks can significantly impact a translation project. These types of risks include:

- Compliance Risk refers to the risk of failing to adhere to legal or regulatory requirements, potentially leading to legal repercussions.
- Hasard Risk encompasses unforeseen events or circumstances that can negatively impact the translation process, such as technical failures or natural disasters.
- Control Risk relates to the risk of internal inefficiencies or errors in the translation process, such as missed deadlines or inaccurate translations due to human error or inadequate quality control.
- Uncertainty Risk refers to the inherent uncertainty associated with translation decisions, especially when dealing with ambiguous or culturally specific elements in the source text.
- Opportunity Risk involves the potential to miss out on beneficial opportunities due to a conservative approach to risk management, such as losing a client due to excessive risk aversion.

Effective risk management in translation organisations plays a vital role in ensuring smooth operations and high-quality service delivery. As Hopkin (2017: 4) emphasises, risk management inputs are crucial not only for strategic decision-making but also for the successful execution of projects and the overall functioning of the organisation. This is achieved through acknowledging the various types of risks involved in translation and implementing appropriate risk management strategies, organisations can:

- Enhance the quality and accuracy of translations.
- Mitigate potential negative consequences, such as legal issues or reputational damage.
- Improve operational efficiency and productivity.
- Increase client satisfaction and trust.

Therefore, a robust risk management framework is essential for translation organisations to navigate the complexities of the translation process and achieve successful outcomes.

6. Translation Risk: Specific Instances and Risk Assessment

This part delves into specific instances of translation risk and the importance of risk assessment in mitigating them:

6.1 Certification Risk

Mistakes in translating official documents like birth certificates can have severe legal consequences, potentially leading to charges of forgery. This highlights the crucial role of translator certification and the risk associated with inaccurate translations in sensitive domains.

6.2 Rush Translation Risks

Translations made urgently considering the demand of the client, or urgent translation demands often carry inherent risks. As Sedano (2020: 3) points out, the pressure to deliver translations quickly can lead to; translators resorting to machine translation, which can introduce significant errors due to its limitations in accurately capturing nuances and context. Overworked translators are more prone to errors, and rushed translations often lack proper polishing, potentially resulting in omitted sections or phrases. To mitigate these risks, clients should:
- Plan translation projects to allow sufficient time for accurate and high-quality translation.
- Recognise the limitations of machine translation and prioritise human expertise for crucial projects.

6.3. Original Text Quality

The quality of the original text significantly impacts translation risk. Grammatical errors, overly long sentences, and poor structure can make the translation process more challenging and potentially lead to a subpar final product. Ideally, clients should provide clean and polished original texts to minimise translation difficulties. If necessary, professional proofreading or editing of the original text can be beneficial.

6.4. Localisation and Cultural Awareness

Localisation, the adaptation of a text to a specific audience, presents its own set of translation risks. Pym (2004) defines localisation as "the adaptation and translation of a text to suit a particular reception situation". This process goes beyond pure linguistic translation and requires deep cultural understanding.

- **Blind Translation** is failing to consider the target audience's cultural context can lead to a translation that misses the mark or even carries unintended connotations.
- **Airbrushing** is directly translating a text without cultural adaptation, often referred to as "airbrushing", which can result in a translation that lacks local context and fails to resonate with the target audience.

To mitigate these risks, it is crucial to involve translators with strong cultural awareness and knowledge of the target audience's specific context.

7. Risk Assessment and Analysis

Risk assessment plays a vital role in translation by providing a framework for identifying, analysing, and managing potential risks. As Aven (2012: 1649) states, it is a tool for "obtaining consensus on what are good concepts, principles, and methods" for risk management. Moschandreas et al. (2005: 169) further define risk analysis as "a systematic modus operandi explaining the steps and rationale of estimating, managing and communicating the risks with all the stakeholders". Also, risk assessment is a crucial aspect in various Nigerian contexts, as evidenced by research. Weng (2022) explores risk assessment techniques associated with naval ship operations in the Niger Delta. Madueke (2019) analyses how gender and class distinctions influence risk perception and decision-making processes within the context of migration deterrence in Nigeria. Similar to Weng's (2022) exploration of risk assessment in naval operations, and Madueke's (2019) analysis of risk perception in migration, translators can benefit from applying risk assessment principles to their work. Translators can develop strategies to mitigate them and ultimately deliver high-quality translations that ensure the translated message is accurate, culturally appropriate, and avoids unintentional offense by proactively identifying potential risks, such as inaccuracies, cultural misunderstandings, or bias.

This part delves deeper into the distinction between risk assessment and risk management, highlighting their importance in translation. Stern (1996: 33) emphasises the clear separation between risk assessment and risk management in the decision-making process. He defines risk assessment as "understanding the true nature of the risk", while risk management focuses on taking action based on that understanding. This understanding equips the translator with the knowledge and tools necessary to address potential risks effectively. However, Stern acknowledges that risk assessment is not entirely objective. He mentions that "choices about whether and to what extent to include worst-case assumptions" can be influenced by the purpose of the assessment, such as regulatory compliance versus project planning.

Implementing a robust risk management framework offers several benefits:
- Risk management fosters a more vigilant organisational culture, ensuring potential risks are identified and addressed proactively.
- organisations can improve their chances of achieving their objectives and goals by factoring risk into strategic planning,

- Risk management helps ensure consistent adherence to regulatory and internal compliance mandates.
- Standardised risk management processes and controls lead to smoother operations and increased efficiency.
- A focus on risk mitigation enhances safety and security for both employees and customers.
- Effective risk management can set an organisation apart from its competitors.

Despite the benefits, implementing risk management also presents challenges:

- Risk management programmes often require investments in software and specialised services, leading to initial financial outlays.
- Implementing robust governance structures necessitates additional time and resources from various business units.
- Reaching agreement on the severity of risks and appropriate mitigation strategies can be a complex and time-consuming process.
- Quantifying the benefits of risk management to executives can be difficult, especially without concrete data.

Pym utilises risk analysis to argue that translators do not solely strive for perfect equivalence in their work. Instead, they prioritise managing the risk of failing to achieve their core objectives. He further analyses how translators manage uncertainties regarding equivalence, particularly in challenging situations involving factors like style, terminology, syntax, comprehension, pragmatic aspects, cultural considerations, adherence to function, translation method, and the quality of the original text. Translators can make informed decisions, mitigate potential negative consequences, and ultimately deliver high-quality translations that fulfill their intended purpose by acknowledging the inherent risks involved in translation and employing effective risk assessment and management strategies.

8. Recommendations for Translators

From the research, some recommendations made for translators are:

- Implement a systematic approach to identifying, analysing, and mitigating potential risks in your translation projects. This will help translators make informed decisions and avoid costly mistakes,
- Familiarise oneself with the various types of risks inherent in translation, such as certification risks, rush translation risks, original text quality issues, and localisation challenges, and
- Employ risk assessment tools and techniques to gain a clear understanding of the potential risks involved in each project. This will guide your risk management strategies.

Considering some general best practices, translators need to:

- Continuously update your knowledge of both source and target languages. Read widely, immerse yourself in the latest trends and cultural nuances, and stay informed about advancements in translation technology,

- Develop strong research skills to effectively navigate complex terminology, cultural references, and background information specific to your projects,
- Cultivate a deep understanding of both the source and target cultures to ensure accurate and culturally appropriate translations. This includes recognition of subtle differences in tone, humor, and social norms,
- Always strive to deliver high-quality translations that are accurate, fluent, and stylistically appropriate for the target audience. Proofread meticulously and consider using translation memory tools to ensure consistency,
- Build relationships with other translators, join professional organisations, and seek mentorship from experienced individuals. Collaboration can enhance your skills and provide valuable insights,
- While machine translation continues to evolve, prioritise human expertise for crucial projects. However, stay informed about the potential benefits of using technology to assist your workflow,
- Discuss project expectations, deadlines, potential risks, and risk management strategies with your clients upfront. This fosters transparency and builds trust,
- Never stop learning and expanding your knowledge base. Attend workshops, and conferences, and pursue professional development opportunities to stay ahead of the curve, and
- Consider specialising in specific fields or industries to develop deeper subject matter knowledge and cater to niche markets.

Translators can effectively manage risks, deliver high-quality work, and thrive in the ever-evolving translation landscape.

9. Conclusion

This research offers critical insights into the challenges and strategies related to trans-cultural translation and risk management in the Nigerian context. Through a thorough examination of the inherent risks in translation work - ranging from cultural sensitivities and linguistic nuances to practical concerns such as managing timelines and ensuring payment. It draws attention to the essential role of precision, continuous learning, and ethical considerations in translation practice. The research underscores the need for a rigorous approach to risk assessment and analysis, emphasising the benefits of such practices in enhancing the quality, reliability, and effectiveness of translation services. Focusing on achieving core objectives rather than unattainable perfection, by integrating Pym's model, the study advocates for a pragmatic approach to risk management. The call for further research and the development of training programmes based on the findings highlight an ongoing commitment to improving the field of translation in Nigeria. Overall, this research contributes substantially to our understanding of the complexities involved in trans-cultural translation, providing valuable frameworks for managing the associated risks and improving intercultural communication in a multicultural nation like Nigeria.

References

Acheoah J. E., et al. 2019. "Translation, Nigerian Pidgin and Pedagogy: Critical Perspectives." *Scholars International Journal of Linguistics and Literature. Scholars Middle East Publishers, Dubai, United Arab Emirates* 2(7): 160-166.

Ajayi, Olumayowa Francis. 2018. *Translation and national consciousness in Nigeria: A Socio-historical Study*. Diss. Concordia University.

Akbari, Mahmoud. 2021. *Risk Management in Translation*. Universiti Sains Malaysia.

Akbari, Mahmoud. 2016. *Exploring Common Risks in the Management and Operations of Translation Companies*. Thes. Universiti Sains Malaysia.

Aven, Terje, and Zio, Enrico. 2012. "Foundational Issues in Risk Assessment and Risk Management." *Risk Analysis: An International Journal,* vol. 32(10): 1647-1656.

Ayling, Pere. 2017. "The Three Rs: Parental Risk Management Strategies in the International Secondary Education Market." *Curriculum Inquiry*, vol. 47(3): 290-309.

Bermann, Sandra et al. 2005. "Nation, Language, and the Ethics of Translation (Translation/Transnation)." Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Carrel, Philippe. 2010. *The Handbook of Risk Management: Implementing a Post-Crisis Corporate Culture*. West Sussex: John Wiley and Sons, Ltd. Accessed via Web.

Cooper, Dale F., et al. 2005. *Project Risk Management Guidelines: Managing Risk in Large Projects and Complex Procurements*. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons Ltd. Accessed via Web.

Falola, Toyin. 2022. "Nigerian Translingualism: Negotiation and Desirability of Language in Nigerian Literature." *Yoruba Studies Review* 7(1): 1–18.

Heath, Robert L., et al. 2009. *Handbook of Risk and Crisis Communication*. London: Routledge – Taylor and Francis Group. Accessed via Web.

Hopkin, Paul. 2017. *Fundamentals of Risk Management: Understanding, Evaluating, and Implementing Effective Risk Management*. Fourth Edition. Croydon: CPI Group (UK) Ltd.

Hui, Mei-Tai. 2013. "Risk Management by Trainee Translators: A Study of Translation Procedures and Justifications in Peer-group Interaction." *New Voices in Translation Studies* 10(1): PhD Diss.

Iloh, Nneka O. 2019. "French Language and Translation Studies in Nigerian Universities in the 21st Century: Retrospection and Prospection." *Journal of West African Institute of Translators and Interpreters* 1(1): 161–181.

Löescher, Wolfgang. 1991. *Translation Performance, Translation Process and Translation Strategies: A Psycholinguistic Investigation*. Tübingen: Guten Narr. Accessed via Web.

Madueke, Stanley I. C. 2019. "The Place of Translation in Nigerian Cultural Diplomacy and its Impact on Translation Exchanges." *TTR* 32(1): 81–112.

Moschandreas, Demetrios, et al. 2005. "Risk Uncertainty Matters: An Engineer's View." *International Journal of Risk Assessment and Management* 5(2/3/4): 167–192.

Nida, Eugene A. 2001. *Context in Translating*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company. Accessed via Web.

Nkoro, Ifeoma O. 2018. "La traduction littéraire au Nigeria: le français et deux langues autochtones." *Journal of Modern European Languages and Literatures* 10: 82–97.

Nwanjoku, Alfred, et al. 2021. "Achieving Correspondence and/or Equivalence in Translation: An Evaluation of the Translation of Ekwensi's *Burning Grass* into French as *La Brousse Ardente* by Françoise Balogun." *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science* 9(5): 50–55.

Obdržálková, Veronika. 2016. "Translation as a Decision-making Process: An Application of the Model Proposed by Jiří Levý to Translation into a Non-mother Tongue." *Mutatis Mutandis* 9(2): 306–327.

Opaluwah, Andrew. 2021. "Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) of Food and Drugs: The Role of the Student Translator in National Development." *Interdisciplinary Journal of Education Research* 3(2): 40–47.

Pym, Anthony. 2004. *The Moving Text: Localization, Translation and Distribution*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Pym, Anthony. 2015. "Translating as Risk Management." *Journal of Pragmatics* 85: 67–80.

Pym, Anthony. 2014. *Translating between Languages*. London: Routledge Handbook of Linguistics. Accessed via Web.

Pym, Anthony. 2014. *Exploring Translation Theories*. 2nd Edition. London: Routledge – Taylor and Francis Group. Accessed via Web.

Pym, Anthony, and Matsushita, Kayo. 2028. "Risk Mitigation in Translator Decisions." Across Languages and Cultures 19(1): 1-18.

Pym, Anthony. 2020. "Translation, Risk Management and Cognition." In *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Cognition,* 445–458. Routledge.

Reghezza-Zitt, Magali, et al. 2015. *Resilience Imperative: Uncertainty, Risks, and Disasters*. London – Oxford: ISTE Press Ltd and Elsevier Ltd.

Robinson, Douglas. 2001. *Who Translates? Translator Subjectivities beyond Reason*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Sajo, Muhammad A., et al. 2023. "A Study of Communication Miscarriage in News Translations." *Translation Studies: Theory and Practice* 3(2): 70–79.

Sedano, Isabel. 2020. "Translation Risk: Do's and Don'ts." February 28, 2020.

Shojaee, Fatemeh, et al. 2012. *The Effect of Risk-Taking on Translation Quality of English Translation Students*. Fars Science and Research University.

Singandhupe, Ravi B., et al. 2016. "Risk Management in Nigerian Banks." *Imperial Journal of Interdisciplinary Research* 2(11): 300–311.

Stern, Paul C., et al. 1996. *Understanding Risk: Informing Decisions in a Democratic Society*. Washington: National Academy Press.

Teibowei, M. T. 2022. "Exploring Language Education for Sustainable Biomedical Translation in Nigeria." *Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences* 10(10): 22–26.

Venuti, Lawrence. 2013. *Translation Changes Everything: Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge – Taylor and Francis Group. Accessed via Web.

Weng,   Zheng.   2022.   "Risk   Assessment."   DOI:
     10.7591/Cornell/9781501763526.003.0005.

Zaki, Musa Z., et al. 2024. "Multimodal and Multimedia: An Evaluation of Revoicing
     in Agent Raghav TV Series of Hausa in Arewa24." *Journal of Translation and
     Language Studies* 5(1): 22–31.

Zaki, Muhammad Zayyanu. 2022. "Evaluation des aspects linguistiques et
     métalinguistiques dans la traduction de *Burning Grass* de Cyprian Ekwensi."
     Faculty of Arts, Imo State University, Owerri 11(3): 1–14.

Zaki, Muhammad Zayyanu; Sajo, Muhammad Aliyu, and Ogboji, John. 2021. "Role of
     Translator as a Gap Filler in Communication with Reference to Françoise
     Balogun." *Cognizance Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies* 1(11): 9–21.

Zaki, Muhammad Zayyanu; Kachep, Maxim; Yakubu, Yunusa, and Atiku, Sani. 2021.
     "Media and Translation of Terminologies Associated with Coronavirus: A Case
     Study of Arewa24's English-Hausa Translation." *Journal of Research in
     Humanities and Social Science* 9(10): 32–40.

Zaki, Muhammad Zayyanu, and Nwanjoku, Anthony. 2021. "Terrorism and
     Translation: An Appraisal of English Subtitles in Shekau's Video Clips." *Global
     Scientific Journal* 9(6): 1387–1398.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

Ethical Standards

     The authors affirm this research did not involve human subjects.

Im Wald, im Holzhaus by Michael Krüger and Its Polish Translation: Translation as Intervention

Paweł Marcinkiewicz [*]
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7086-1805
University of Opole

Abstract: This article deals with the Polish translation of the poetry volume by the German poet Michael Krüger, *Im Wald, im Holzhaus*. German translations, although present in Poland since the Middle Ages, have been characterized by a certain foreignness since the Romantic era. This resulted from the fact that German culture was perceived as hostile and threatening in Poland, which reflected numerous wars and conflicts between the two states. It seems that in recent years this attitude has been changing, as evidenced by the Polish edition of Krüger's collection of poems. Moreover, publishing the book in 2023 might be seen as an intervention against the political situation in Poland where the conservative government tried to escalate Polish-German animosities.

Keywords: translations of German literature into Polish; 21st-century European poetry; Michael Krüger's poetry; translation as intervention

1. Introduction

German literature has always been present in Polish translations, which is due to the fact that German states, such as Prussia and later the united Germany, were Poland's most economically developed neighbor. Moreover, German cultural influence was marked by the popularity of the German language in Polish diplomacy at the royal court. Germans sat on the royal throne in Poland several times, including Augustus II the Strong of Saxony, who ruled from 1697 to 1733, and his son Augustus III, who held the Polish sceptre from 1733 to 1766.

The first translations from German appeared in Poland as early as the Middle Ages as adaptations. These were "Rozmowy, które miał król Salomon mądry z Marchołtem grubym a sprośnym" (Conversations between King Solomon the Wise and the fat and lewd Marcholt, 1521) translated by Jan of Koszyczki (date unknown), and the anonymous "Sowizrzał krotochwilny i śmieszny" (The Witty and Funny Sowiżrzał, c.1530). The latter was the first Polish translation of the adventures of Till Eulenspiegel, a character from folk-tale type German romances of the Middle Ag (Tabakowska 503). Moreover, several works by Mikolaj Rej (1505-69), known as the

---

[*] pmarcinkiewicz@uni.opole.pl

father of Polish literature, draw heavily on foreign sources, among them Paligenius, a Lutheran author by the name of Thomas Naogeorg (Tabakowska 504).

However, in later reception of German literature in Poland – especially after the partitions of the Polish state by Prussia, Austria, and Russia (1772-1795) – there was certain reluctance towards German literary patterns as well as the Russian ones. According to Andrzej Lam, a distinguished Polish translator of German literature,

> [i]n the historical picture of Polish culture's European ties, Italy, France, Hungary and the Czech Republic are prominently featured. About the dialogue with its neighbors to the west, science informs less comprehensively, suggesting the silence of the Muses when Mars speaks. Thus, in the popular consciousness, the perception of remoteness from the cultures of the German language has been perpetuated, and knowledge of literature does not seem to be widespread (Lam after Czaplejewicz 13).[1]

My contention is that the above distrust to the German language manifested itself in the 19th and 20th centuries by a particular type of translation. Its most characteristic features were semantic and grammatical literariness based on foreignization as the dominating translation strategy, which proves the translator's resistance against cultural values propagated by the original text. As Lawrence Venuti points out, the term foreignization indicates a fundamentally ethical attitude towards a foreign text and culture, but also "ethical effects produced by the choice of a text for translation and by the strategy devised to translate it" (Venuti 2008: 19).

Until the end of the 20th century, with the exception of the translations of Goethe and Schiller from the Romantic period, Polish translators of German literature ethically evaluated the semantic content of German original texts they were translating. Very often, as it seems, German texts were found unsuitable for domestication, because of their Germanness – references to German history, culture, and generally the German way of life – which always aroused suspicion in Polish readers. In my translations of Michael Krüger's poems, I decided to break with this tradition.

2. The Significance of Krüger's Poetry

Michael Krüger is one of the most important European poets of the turn of the millennium, not only because of the artistic significance of his works, but above all because he unites in his work several traditions that are decisive for the literature of the old continent. On the one hand, there is the classical tradition, which includes the poetry of Greek and Roman antiquity and the poetry of the Renaissance; on the other hand, Krüger's work reflects the tradition of European poetry of the 20th century, including Polish poetry. The third important inspiration is the Anglo-American poetry of the 20th century. While the first of these traditions goes back to Krüger's school days at a German grammar school, he only became acquainted with Polish and Anglo-Saxon poetry later, thanks to numerous (also personal) contacts with the poets of these countries – Zbigniew Herbert and Tadeusz Różewicz or Stuart Friebert and W.S. Merwin.

---

[1] All translation from Polish and German by the author, unless indicated otherwise.

Krüger's own voice can already be heard in the volume *Brief nach Hause* (A Letter Home, 1993), for example in short meditations, such as "Bei klarem Wetter" (In Clear Weather) or "Im Sommer" (In Summer). I would describe this voice as an 'autonomous poem': It is a lyric form typical of late 20th- and early 21th-century Western poetry, a fusion of what Charles Altieri calls 'scenic poem' (scenic style) and a mode of expression that Marjorie Perloff calls the 'poetics of indeterminacy.' The scenic poem (popularized by Baudelaire), worn out by decades of reproduction, represented a lyrical evocation of transcendental reality that ultimately made use of the effect of the sublime. In addition to its realistic level, the autonomous poem also contains elements of linguistic aporia. These cannot be defined by traditional literary-critical means, but are pure play, an expression of the 'autonomy' of the work and its independence from the reader's interpretative efforts or even the author's intentions. A good example of such a work is the aforementioned poem "Im Sommer":

> Eine Fledermaus bekritzelt das Wasser,
> ein Hund liegt gottverlassen still im Staub.
> Was noch? Eine Schnur von Tagen,
> licht, offen, leicht und weit. Am Hals
> in Druck, im Hals ein schweres Kratzen.
> Und eine Hand in meinem Auge,
> die schreibt: Nachtschatten, unentschlossen.
>
> [A bat scribbles on the water,
> a dog lies godforsaken still in the dust.
> What else? A string of days,
> light, open, light and wide. On my throat,
> a pressure, in my throat, a heavy scratching.
> And a hand in my eye, writing: Nightshade, undecided]. (*Archive des Zweifels* 103)

The description of summer in the snapshot is atypical: the bat 'scribbling on the water' suggests vacation attractions, while the 'godforsaken,' soiled dog is not associated with a vacation resort, but with an extinct or wild place. It is also surprising that these are the only images of summer in a long series of days evoked by the speaker. The 'pressure' and 'scratching' in the speaker's throat suggest an inability to speak (or perhaps to write), but the writing 'hand' that the narrator feels in his eye cannot be fitted into the plan of the stage poem. It is an aporia that resists interpretation. This is the moment when readers or critics who think in the spirit of post-Romantic poetry based on a voice have to give up. Here, the poem manifests its autonomy: it cannot be interpreted allegorically because the "hand" erases the realistic plan of the poem and brings it to the level of a postmodern game.

3. *Im Wald, im Holzhaus* (In the Forest, in the Wooden House) and Its Style

Krüger's poetry collection *Im Wald, im Holzhaus*, which was published in spring 2021, belongs to the category of autonomous poetry. Krüger describes a year of the narrator's life in enforced seclusion caused by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 – a seclusion to

which his illness, leukemia, also contributed, forcing him to massively restrict his social and public life. The volume consists of seventy poems and is divided into two parts: The first, which bears the same title as the book, consists of fifty numbered poems that are more or less the same length, around 30 lines (with some exceptions), and mostly written in broad verse, similar to hexameter. The second part is entitled "Was sonst geschah" (What Else Happened) and comprises twenty unnumbered but titled poems, with titles that vary in length and form. The first part has a clear chronology, from early spring to late summer, while the second part has no such chronology (e.g. the poem "September, Regen" is placed after the poem "Allerheiligen"), although autumn clearly dominates in the titles and descriptions of nature.

The style of Krüger's poems in the first part of the volume, which contains numbered poems, is hybrid. It is more uniform in the second part. The style is subordinated to the construction of a metaphor, which is often hinted at by the title and developed as a gesture of closure.

Krüger's hybridity involves the alternating use of single- or multi-sentence fragments from different areas. The most important of these seems to be nature, which concerns two subjects – as an object of admiration, but also of scientific research (here we might distinguish descriptions of birds, insects and trees); the next is history (including autobiography); yet another is literature (including the Bible) / music / art; and finally politics (in the quotation of the poem below, I use exactly the same types of underlining as here to identify the fragments).

Writing the poem, the author switches quite freely between these registers – sometimes on the basis of free association, sometimes completely out of context. He begins with one, adds one or two sentences from another and then another, and sometimes returns to the first motif. Each subject area has its own register: Direct descriptions of nature are poetic and often witty, while speculations on the laws of nature are scientific and dry; autobiographical fragments are self-deprecating and descriptions of history are synthetic; we will find much pathos in the descriptions of literature, art and especially music; the descriptions of politics, on the other hand, are mocking. All this makes Krüger's works from this part of the volume stylistically very complex – hybrid.

A good example of this style is poem "17":

Grauer Himmel, wir können das Meer hören, wenn wir die Ohren aufsperren.
Das Gras auf der Wiese gegenüber steht jetzt so hoch, dass zwei Pferde
nicht ausreichen. Manchmal taucht aus den grünschäumenden Wellen
der Kopf einer Amsel auf wie damals auf Martha's Vineyard die Köpfe der Robben.
Wo sich junge Robben zeigen, ist der Hai nicht weit, sagte Ronnie,
unser Gastgeber, der an seinem Computer Platon lesen konnte und las.
Später kam Ward Just vorbei, der beste Reporter des Vietnamkriegs,
für die Washington Post. Wir saßen auf der Terrasse von Ronnies Haus,
tranken Gin Tonic und schauten dem Otter im Pond zu,
der Thoreau und Emerson noch persönlich gekannt hatte, »Walden or
Life in the Woods« war sein Lieblingsbuch. Thoreaus Hütte
sah etwa so aus wie das Holzhaus, in dem ich jetzt schreibe.
Jedes Jahr am 4. Juli haben wir auf Ronnies und Renis Terrasse

die Unabhängigkeitserklärung der Vereinigten Staaten gelesen und gefeiert.
Ich schaue jeden Tag auf das Bismarckdenkmal zur Erinnerung
an die deutsche Vereinigung von 1871: Ewig das gleiche Bild,
das nie dasselbe ist. Oben auf dem Bismarckdenkmal steht ein Adler
mit geöffneten Schwingen aus Metall, der bei trübem Wetter gerne
eine Runde dreht, aber wenn es aufklart, ist er pünktlich zurück.
Die Krähen haben vergeblich versucht, ihn vom Sockel zu stürzen.
Pünktlich zum 4. Juli kam auch Bob Silvers aus New York herüber,
der hatte viertausend Bücher im Kopf und das erste Exemplar
seiner Zeitschrift dabei, das außer uns noch keiner gelesen hatte.
Gut, dass sie alle den 45. Präsidenten nicht mehr erleben mussten,
der übrigens drei Jahre jünger ist als ich. Auch um mich herum
liegen haufenweise Bücher, das Leben selbst hat sie ins Haus geschickt
in undurchsichtigen Kisten. Die trübe Masse des Denkbaren,
auf handliche Formate getrimmt. Arbeit sollte mehr sein, sagt Thoreau,
als nur die Sicherung des Lebensunterhalts. Deshalb will Herr Diess (VW)
noch etwas Extra-Steuergeld auf seinen Bonus. Jetzt hängt alles
am Tropf, da kann man ruhig einmal über die Stränge schlagen, oder wie?
Kein schönes Land in dieser Zeit. Als ich heute früh die Linde begrüßte,
raunte sie (ja wirklich, sie raunte) mir zu: Wenn du erst meine Wurzeln
kennen würdest, würdest du mich ganz anders preisen. Aber dann bin ich
doch tot! Gib mir Zeit! Nun Brüder eine gute Nacht, der Herr
im hohen Himmel wacht, in seiner Güten, uns zu behüten, ist er bedacht.

[Gray sky, we can hear the sea if we listen closely.
The grass in the meadow across the way is so tall now that two horses
are not enough. Sometimes, a blackbird's head emerges from the green-foaming
waves, like the heads of seals on Martha's Vineyard back in old days.
Where young seals show themselves, the shark is not far away, said Ronnie,
our host, who could read Plato on his computer, and he did.
Ward Just, the best Vietnam War reporter for the Washington Post,
came by later. We sat on the terrace of Ronnie's house,
drank gin and tonic and watched the otter in the pond,
who had personally known Thoreau and Emerson, "Walden or
Life in the Woods" was his favorite book. Thoreau's hut
looked a bit like the wooden house in which I am now writing.
Every year on July 4, we read the United States
Declaration of Independence on Ronnie and Reni's terrace and celebrated.
Every day I look at the Bismarck Monument in memory
of the German unification of 1871: the same image forever,
but never the same. At the top of the Bismarck Monument stands an eagle
with open wings made of metal, which likes to take a turn when the weather
is cloudy, but when it clears up, it is back on time.
The crows tried in vain to topple him from the pedestal.
Just in time for the 4th of July, Bob Silvers came over from New York,
he had four thousand books in his head and the first copy
of his magazine, which no one except us had read yet.
It's a good thing that they all didn't have to live to see the 45th President,
who, by the way, is three years younger than me. There are also
heaps of books around me; life itself has sent them to the house
in opaque boxes. The murky mass of the conceivable,

> trimmed to handy formats. Work should be more than just
> a means of making a living, said Thoreau. That's why Mr. Diess (VW) wants
> some extra tax money on top of his bonus. Now everything is
> dependent on it, so it's okay to go a little overboard, right?
> Not a beautiful country in this day and age. When I greeted the linden tree this morning,
> it whispered to me (yes, really, it whispered): If only you knew my roots
> you would praise me quite differently. But then I'm
> dead! Give me time! Now brothers, have a good night, the Lord
> in the heavens above watches over us, in his kindness, he is mindfull. (*Im Wald, im Holzhaus* 33-34)

Individual fragments often overlap and belong to two thematic areas at the same time. For example, the opening gesture of the poem is not only a recollection of the speaker's stay in the USA on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean, but also a loose paraphrase of the folk song "Kein schöneres Land in dieser Zeit." The description of Thoreau's cabin is a reference to literary history, but it is also part of the poet's autobiography. This composition gives Krüger's works a very wide stylistic range: from the language of solemn songs ("Nun Brüder eine gute Nacht") to the colloquial style of the tabloid press ("Jetzt hängt alles am Tropf hängen, da kann man ruhig einmal über die Stränge schlagen, oder wie?").

An important feature of Krüger's style are poetic devices: mostly the use of metaphors or similes, and the rhythmic structure of his works. Many poems are metrically similar to hexameter and contain six stressed syllables per line, which is probably an allusion to the authors of Greek and Roman antiquity that the poet often refers to. This can be clearly seen in prose poem "17" quoted above.

4. Intertextuality

Perhaps the greatest challenge for the translator of Krüger's volume into Polish was the intertextuality of his poems. It fulfills two important functions in the volume: Firstly, it represents a link to literary history, i.e. to a world based on values and hierarchical order. Secondly, it is a form of implementing the poetics of an autonomous poem, as quotations and paraphrases often create aporias in the text that make a linear reading difficult or even impossible. It is important to note that in most cases quotations and allusions were not marked and I had to recognize them myself, which was possible due to the stylistic changes of the text. However, it must be assumed that not all quotations were recognized in my translation. In order to compensate for this shortcoming, I have decided to equip my translation with surplus meanings and created my own references, e.g. by using the Silesian dialect from the Opole region or Germanisms as well as references to Polish literature.

The first group of quotations are quotations from the Bible and biblical. A certain problem could be the fact that Krüger relies on the Protestant version of the Holy Scriptures, which rejects the deuterocanonical books (called apocrypha by Protestants). The differences in the way Catholic and Protestant Bibles are translated are minor. Since Catholic Bibles must have official church approval, Catholic Bible translations are in most cases semantically stricter, but of course they are also interpretations. In my

translation of Kruger's poems I have used the Millennium Bible, one of the most popular editions of the Bible in Poland. The second group of quotations are classics of German literature (Hölderlin, Nietzsche, van Hoddis) and world literature, including Polish literature (Hesiod, Plath, Hughes, Thoreau, Whitehead, Eliot, Herbert).

The third group of quotations and references included authors less well-known in Polish literature, such as Jakob von Hodden or Anton Wilhelm von Zuccalmaglio. In their case, I could not rely on existing translations and tried to create my own translations into Polish to match Krüger's texts.

The last group consists of quotations that appear in the German text of the book in their original languages – English, French, or Italian. I have not translated them, nor have I included them in the "Notes" at the end of the book, on the assumption that any interested reader can easily look them up on the Internet and translate them if necessary.

The following table shows examples of strategies for translating intertextuality in Krüger's volume:

Quotations from the Bible and Biblical References	Quotations from World and German Classics and Literary References	Quotations from Less Known German Authors and Paraphrases of Their Works	Quotation from Different Works in Original Languages
Aber womit soll man salzen, wenn das Salz nicht mehr salzt… es ist zu nichts mehr nütze, sagt als dass man es wegschüttet und lässt es zertreten [But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot] (Mt 5, 13) (*Im Wald, im Holzhaus* 106) Strategy used in translation: Replacing the passage with the corresponding passage from the Millennium Bible.	Eigentlich war Hölderlin der Dichter des Donners, jetzt hat Corona ihn und uns um die große Feier seines Jahrestags gebracht. „Entfernt dagegen ist zur Frühlingszeit die Klage", schrieb ihm Scardanelli am 3. März 1648 ins Merkbuch, daran wollen wir uns halten. Thomas, der poetische Chinese, schreibt gerade, er läse auf dem Balkon „Brod und Wein", „es ertrug keener das Leben allein; ausgetheilet erfreut solch Gut und getauscht, mit Fremden, wirds ein Jubel, es wächst schlafend des Wortes Gewalt."	Du gehörst zur Geschichte, rufe ich dem Vogel zu, und Geschichte kann man nicht anfassen, hat uns Robert gelehrt, also verschwinde! (*Im Wald, im Holzhaus* 70) Robert Spaemann (1927–2018), German Catholic philosopher, member of the liberal-conservative Ritterschule, professor of philosophy at the universities of Stuttgart, Heidelberg and Munich, honorary doctor of the Catholic University of Lublin (2012) Strategy used in translation: These authors were not translated into Polish, so I translated them myself, trying to preserve the	Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnberger See /with a shower of rain. (*Im Wald, im Holzhaus* 167) The eighth and ninth lines of T. S. Eliot's poem "The Waste Land." According to Wikipedia, Lake Starnberg (today's spelling) was called Lake Würm until 1962, so the question of the name Eliot used in 1922 remains somewhat puzzling Strategy used in translation: I leave this quotation untranslated

	[Actually, Hölderlin was the poet of thunder, now Covid has deprived him and us of the great celebration of his anniversary. "On the other hand, lamentation is distant in springtime," Scardanelli wrote in his notebook on March 3, 1648, and we will stick to that. Thomas, the poetic Chinese, is currently writing that he is reading "Bread and Wine" on the balcony, "no one could endure life alone; when shared out, such goods bring joy and exchanged with strangers, it becomes a rejoicing, the power of the word grows while sleeping." (*Im Wald, im Holzhaus* 98) The fragment of the poem "16" contains the following reference to Hölderlin's poems: „Entfernt dagegen ist / zur Frühlingszeit die Klage" „Frühling III" „es ertrug keiner / das Leben allein; ausgetheilet erfreut solch Gut / und getauscht, mit Fremden, wirds ein	language of the period in which they wrote.	because it sounds foreign also to the German reader.

	Jubel, es wächst / schlafend des Wortes Gewalt" „Brot und Wein" „die ganze Zeit und fern noch / tönet der Donner" „Wie wenn am Feiertage..." „Das ist der Gipfel der Gedanken / und Freuden, das ist die heilige Bergeshöh, der Ort / der ewigen Ruhe, wo der Mittag seine Schwüle und / der Donner seine Stimme verliert" „Hyperion an Bellarmin" Strategy used in the translation: I used relevant passages from the existing and renowned translations of the best-known authors. In the absence of ready translations (as in the last fragment), I translated the passages myself.		
Das Stück hieß "Das eherne Meer". Es begann, als die Sonne im Zenit stand und die Dinge ihren Schatten verloren, im hellen Mittagslicht, das senkrecht auf den Schuppen fiel [The play was called "The Sea of Bronze." It began when the sun was at its zenith and things were losing their shadows, in the	Glücklich müsste ich sein, weil ich täglich auf den Vogelflug / achte und Übertretungen meide [I should be happy / because I pay attention to the flight of birds every day and avoid transgressions] (*Im Wald, im Holzhaus* 114) Hesiod, "Works and days"	Dem Bürger springt aus spitzem Mund der böse Satz [The citizen leaps out of a pointed mouth with an angry sentence] (*Im Wald, im Holzhaus* 110) An allusion to the first line of the poem "Weltende" [End of the world] by the German expressionist poet Jakob van Hodden (1887-1942). The original reads: "Dem Bürger	Mi congedo dai versi, forse dalla vita. Addio, addio... [I say goodbye to the poem, perhaps to life. Farewell, farewell...] (*Im Wald, im Holzhaus* 117) Lina Fritschi (1919-2016), Swiss-Italian women poetess from Piedmont

bright midday light that fell vertically on the shed] (*Im Wald, im Holzhaus* 158) An allusion to the first book of Kings: "And he made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other: it was round all about, and his height was five cubits: and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about" 1 Kings 7:23, King James Version. Strategy used in translation: as above	Strategy used in translation: as above	fliegt vom spitzen Kopf der Hut" [The citizen's hat flies off his pointed head] Strategy used in translation: as above	Strategy used in translation: as above
	Im Menachot heißt es: „Es ist ein Mann, der am Ende vieler Generationen sein wird, namens Akiva ben Joseph; er wird dereinst über jedes Häkchen Haufen und Haufen von Lehren vortragen." Ich suche verzweifelt nach Worten [In the Menachot it says: "There is a man who will be at the end of many generations, named Akiva ben Joseph; he will one day recite heaps and heaps of teachings about every hook." I search desperately for words.] (*Im Wald, im Holzhaus* 88) The Tractate Menachot (hebrew מְנָחוֹת מַסֶּכֶת *Masechet menachot*) comes	Und während ich hochschaue, flüstert mir Peter Huchel ins Ohr, es richtet / sich auf das Gras / wie eine Wahrheit, und plötzlich ist die Fläche leer, als wäre da lange ein Stück Wäsche gelegen [Und während ich hochschaue, flüstert mir Peter Huchel ins Ohr, es richtet / sich auf das Gras / wie eine Wahrheit, und plötzlich ist die Fläche leer, als wäre da lange ein Stück Wäsche gelegen] (*Im Wald, im Holzhaus* 170) Fragment of the first verse of the poem "Alkaios" by the German poet and editor Peter Huchel (1903-1981). The original reads: "Die Spur verlischt. Es richtet / sich auf das Gras wie eine Wahrheit [The trace	Anderswo wird dieses Tier in heißem Fett gebraten und gegessen, jamais plus qu'un litre de vin [never more than one liter of wine]. (*Im Wald, im Holzhaus* 172) French proverb, used humorously here. An allusion to the debate about the harmfulness of alcohol. Strategy used in translation: as above

	from the phrase "flour offering" (hebrew מִנְחָה "gift, present") and is a tractate of the order Qodashim קָדָשִׁים סֵדֶר from the Mishnah. The tractate has 13 chapters and deals with regulations concerning the sacrifices prepared from flour at the temple. Strategy used in translation: as above	disappears. It is directed / towards the grass like a truth]. Strategy used in translation: as above	
	Der Mittag schläft auf Raum und Zeit. (*Im Wald, im Holzhaus* 140) Fragment of Friedrich Nietzsche's poem "After new seas", in: "The Gay Science" Strategy used in translation: as above	Was du gesungen, ist dir gelungen [You have succeeded in what you sang]. (*Im Wald, im Holzhaus* 120) A quotation from Hoffmann von Fallersleben's poem „Frühlingsbotschaft" [Spring message]: Kuckuck, Kuckuck ruft aus dem Wald: Lasset uns singen, Tanzen und springen! Frühling, Frühling wird es nun bald. Kuckuck, Kuckuck lässt nicht sein Schrei'n: Kommt in die Felder, Wiesen und Wälder! Frühling, Frühling, stelle dich ein! Kuckuck, Kuckuck, trefflicher Held! Was du gesungen, Ist dir gelungen: Winter, Winter räumet das Feld [Cuckoo, cuckoo calls from the forest: Let's sing, dance and jump! Spring, spring will soon be here. Cuckoo, cuckoo does not leave his cry: Come to the fields,	

| | | meadows and forests! Spring, spring, come on in! Cuckoo, cuckoo, splendid hero! You have succeeded in what sang: Winter, winter clears the field.] | |
| | | Strategy used in translation: as above | |

Since intertextuality in Krüger's volume was extremely complex and I probably overlooked many references (some of which I am only now finding, as I reread the book a year after its publication), I decided to do some compensatory work, i.e. to add my own references to the translations. In my opinion, such a procedure was justified. In this way, the translations fit better into the polysystem of Polish literature (I am using Itamar Even-Zohar's term here) and their phatic function is more attractive to the Polish reader (I am using a term from the paradigm of functional translation, the most important researcher of which is the German translator Christiane Nord).

The compensatory measures used in the Polish translation of *Im Wald, im Holzhaus* can be divided into several groups:

1. Adding allusions to Polish writers whom Krüger frequently knew and published (Zbigniew Herbert, Czesław Miłosz, Tadeusz Różewicz, Bolesław Leśmian);

2. Adding lexical and syntactic elements of Silesian and German;

3. Lowering the register of the text through idiomatization.

The following table contains examples of compensation measures:

Adding Allusions to Polish Writers	**Adding Lexical and Syntactic Elements of Silesian and German**	**Lowering the Register of the Text by Idiomatizing and Politicizing the Language**
Die Herrgottsfrühe ist schon längst vorüber, das helle Leuchten auf der Unterseite der Pappeln [The early morning has long since passed, the bright glow on the underside of the poplars] (*Im Wald, im Holzhaus* 51) Tranalation: Dawno już minął niebiański zaranek, jasny blask u dołu topoli. [Long gone is the heavenly dawn, the bright glow at the bottom of the poplar trees] (*W lesie, w drewnianym domku* 133)	Sonnenheiße Brennnesseln, wie warmes Brot und überreife Brombeeren, um bei den B-Wörtern zu bleiben [Sun-hot nettles, like warm bread and overripe blackberries, to stay with the B-words] (*Im Wald, im Holzhaus* 37) Translation: Bury bagniak w bulgoczącej bryi i brzemienne brombery, by pozostać przy rzeczownikach na „b" [A marshmallow in a swirling breeze and a pregnant blackberry, to stick with the "b" nouns] (*W lesie, w drewnianym domku* 107)	Aber ich gehe ins Offene, lege mich auf die Wiese, den Hölderlin in der Tasche, und höre den Käfern zu, den unschuldigen Wanderern, die keine Tabletten brauchen auf ihrem holprigen Weg in den Schnabel eines Vogels [But I go out into the open, lie down on the meadow, Hölderlin in my pocket, and listen to the beetles, the innocent wanderers, who don't need any pills on their bumpy path into the beak of a bird.] (*Im Wald, im Holzhaus* 19) Translation: Ale wychodzę na dwór, kładę się na łące z Hölderlinem w kieszeni i słucham żuków, niewinnych wędrowniczków, którzy nie muszą

Strategy used in translation: Adding an allusion to Czesław Miłosz's poem "Hymn o perle" [Hymn to the Pearl], mainly because Miłosz uses the noun "zaranek" [early morning], which seems to be a good equivalent of the German noun "Herrgottsfrühe" [lit.: God's earliness]	Strategy used in translation: Lexical stylization into the Silesian dialect by the use of the noun "brombery" [blackberries].	łykać pigułek na swej wyboistej drodze w dziób jakiegoś ptaka [But I go outside, lie down in the meadow with Hölderlin in my pocket and listen to the beetles, innocent wanderers who don't have to swallow pills on their bumpy road in the beak of some bird] (*W lesie, w drewnianym domku* 73) Strategy used in translation: Introduction of a pun based on a colloquial expression "żuczek-wędrowniczek" [lit.: wandering beetle, a person who cannot stay long in one place]
Am Abend habe ich eine Kerze angezündet, weil mich das Dunkel anfiel und zu ersticken drohte [In the evening I lit a candle, because I was attacked by darkness and threatened with choking] (*Im Wald, im Holzhaus* 28) Translation: Wieczorem zapaliłem świecę, bo napadł mnie dusiołek ciemności i groził pomroką [In the evening I lit a candle, because I was attacked by the Strangler Spirit and threatened with darkness] (*W lesie, w drewnianym domku* 91) Strategy used in translation: Allusion to the poem "Dusiołek" ["The Strangler Spirit"] by Bolesław Leśmian (1877-1937): Rzekł Bajdała do Boga: O, rety — olaboga! Nie dość ci, żeś potworzył mnie, szkapę i wołka, Jeszcześ musiał takiego zmajstrować Dusiołka? [Bajdala said to God: Oh my! Isn't it enough for you	Man muss Umwege nehmen, viele, nicht alle, um das Ziel nicht zu schnell zu erreichen. […] Eine Schnecke überholt mich, ein Falter, ein Esel, eine Kiepe saumseliger Begriffe auf dem Rücken, und zu guter Letzt eine Kröte, es kann also nichts schiefgehen – oder? [You have to take detours - many, not all of them - to avoid reaching your destination too quickly. [...] A snail overtakes me, a butterfly, a donkey, a pannier of saumseliger terms on my back, and finally a toad, so nothing can go wrong - can it?] (*Im Wald, im Holzhaus* 116) Translation: Trzeba wędrować objazdami, wieloma, nie wszystkimi, żeby zbyt szybko nie dotrzeć do celu. […] Wyprzedził mnie ślimak, ćma, osioł, kosz z ospałymi wyrażeniami na plecach i wreszcie ropucha, więc nie może się nie udać – albo? [One has to wander by detours, many, not all, so as not to reach the destination too quickly. I was overtaken by a snail, a moth, a donkey, a	Mit einer Musik jedenfalls ist nicht zu rechnen [In any case, music is not to be expected]. (*Im Wald, im Holzhaus* 24) Translation: W każdym razie jeśli chodzi o muzykę guzik z pętelką [lit.: In any case, when it comes to music a button with a loop] (*W lesie, w drewnianym domku* 83) Strategy used in translation: Use of the idiomatic expression "guzik z pętelką," meaning in Polish "nothing" (nought, nada, nil)

that you created me, the shepherd and the ox, but you had to create such a strangler?] The Strangler Spirit comes from Polish folklore	basket with sluggish expressions on its back and, finally, a toad, so it can't fail – or?] (*W lesie, w drewnianym domku* 241) Strategy used in translation: Use of a syntax characteristic of Silesian and German, in which the conjunction "or" is placed at the end of a sentence	

5. Conclusion

In his groundbreaking work *The Translator's Invisibility* (2008), the American translation theorist Lawrence Venuti notes that in Western culture, translation has usually – and wrongly – been regarded as a subordinate text to the original (265). We must not forget, however, that there was also an alternative tradition of translation, initiated by Luther and continued by Hölderlin and Stefan George, which saw translation as a work that extended the boundaries of the translator's mother tongue – in their case, German (266). Ultimately, as Venuti concludes,

> "Translation is a double writing, a rewriting of the foreign text according to values in the receiving culture, any translation requires a double reading – as both communication and interpretive inscription (see Venuti 2004). Reading a translation as a translation means not just processing its meaning but reflecting on its conditions – formal features like the dialects and registers, styles and discourses in which it is written, but also seemingly external factors like the cultural situation in which it is read but which had a decisive (even if unwitting) influence on the translator's choices. This reading is historicizing: it draws a distinction between the (foreign) past and the (receiving) present. Evaluating a translation as a translation means assessing it as an intervention into a present situation" (276).

My translation of Michael Krüger's volume is to be understood as an intervention: It was written at a very unfavorable time for German-Polish relations, namely in the last years of the rule of the right-wing Law and Justice party (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość), when Poles were afraid of the political threat from Berlin and German culture was ridiculed. By providing his works – very sparingly, by the way – with references to the most important works of Polish modernism and the idiom of the contemporary Polish language, I wanted to show the Polish reader that Krüger's poetry is a part of our common European heritage, just as Germanness and Silesianness are part of Polish culture – and the Polish language.

References

Czaplajewicz, Eugeniusz. 2009. "Z perspektywy dialogu. Przekłady niemieckie Andrzeja Lama" [From the Perspective of Dialogue. German Translations by Andrzej Lam]. In *Literatura niemiecka w Polsce. Przekład i recepcja* [German Literature in Poland. Translation and Reception], edited by Eugeniusz Czaplajewicz and Janusz Rohoziński. Pułtusk: Akademia Humanistyczna imienia Aleksandra Geysztora, 11-29.

Krüger, Michael. 2017 *Archive des Zweifels*. Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag.

Krüger, Michael. 2021. *Im Wald, im Holzhaus*. Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag.

Krüger, Michael. 2023. *W lesie, w drewnianym domku* [In the Forest, in the Wooden House]. Translated by Paweł Marcinkiewicz. Mikołów: Instytut Mikołowski.

Tabakowska, Elżbieta. 1998. "Polish Tradition." In *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, edited by Mona Baker. London & New York: Routledge, 523-531.

Venuti, Lawrence. 2008. *The Translator's Invisibility. A History of Translation. 2nd Edition*. London & New York: Routledge.

Conflict of Interests
The author declares no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

Ethical Standards
The author affirms this research did not involve human subjects.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Andriana Ivanova
PhD in Translation Studies; Associate Professor of the Department of English Philology, Uzhhorod National University, Ukraine; consecutive and simultaneous interpreter. Her interests are mainly focused on translation of fiction, genre peculiarities of horror literature and eco-translation.
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1733-4416

Artur Gudmanian
D.Sc., Professor; Head of the Department of English for Engineering at National Technical University of Ukraine 'Igor Sikorsky Polytechnic Institute', Kyiv, Ukraine; expert in NAQA (National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance); editor-in-chief of the International scientific journal 'Advanced Linguistics; member of doctoral council at the Ivan Franko University of Lviv (Ukraine). His research interests primarily cover technical and literary translation, FLT methods, general issues of translation studies.
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4196-2279

Chukwunonye Nwanjoku Anthony
Associate Professor in French Language (Translation Studies); translator; lecturer of translation studies and comparative literature at the Department of Foreign Languages and Literary Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Nigeria. He majored in French, English and Igbo Translation as well as Interpretation. He has attended more than twenty international and national academic conferences and seminars and has published widely in Igbo, English, and French in reputable journals locally and internationally with impact factors (many of which are in translation studies and comparative literature). His research interests include translation studies and linguistics.
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0189-3010

Daniel Pietrek
PhD, Dlitt.; Associate Professor at the University of Opole; Head of the Department of German Literature at the Institute of Literatures, UO. His main fields of research include German literature and culture of the 20th century, Polish-German literary and cultural relations, German-language Silesian literature and comparative literary studies. Multiple scholarships holder (between 2010 and 2011 and in 2015 and 2022) of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation ("Humboldt Research Fellowship for Experienced Researchers"). Between 2002 and 2011, he compiled the legacy of Horst Bienek in the Archives of Horst Bienek, which resulted in a 562-page monograph entitled *Ich erschreibe mich selbst. (Author) Biografisches Schreiben bei Horst Bienek*, published in 2012 by "Thelem Verlag" Publishing House in Dresden, for which he received the 2014 Horst Bienek Award from the Bavarian Academy of Arts.
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1582-6070

Giulia Marcucci
Ph.D., Associate Professor of Russian Language and Translation at the University for Foreigners of Siena, where she directs the Translation Studies Center (CeST) and coordinates the PhD program in Translation Studies. Her research primarily focuses on literary translation and inter-semiotic translation between Russian cinema and literature. She has translated novels and short stories (including "Sickle without Hammer: Post- Soviet Stories" Stilo 2017 and "The Girl from the Metropole Hotel" by Lyudmila S. Petrushevskaya, with C. Zonghetti, Brioschi 2019). Her latest book is titled "Chekhov in Italy: The Duchess of Andria and Other Translations" (Quodlibet 2023).
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5945-6430

Loreta Ulvydiene Huber
D.Sc., Full Professor of Intercultural communication and Translation Studies at Vilnius University, Lithuania; former chair of "Audiovisual Translation" programme at Vilnius University Kaunas Faculty, Institute of Languages, Literature and Translation Studies; 29 years of teaching experience at various universities and training institutions in Lithuania, United Kingdom, Israel and Germany with academic positions in the areas of Cross-cultural Communication, Audiovisual Translation (AVT), Media Accessibility and Literary Studies.
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5453-7995

Michele Russo
Ph.D in English and Anglo-American Studies from the "G. d'Annunzio" University of Chieti-Pescara, Italy. Assistant Professor of English Language and Translation at the University of Foggia, Italy. Formerly taught Italian Language and Literature as a Visiting Professor at the Nazareth College of Rochester, New York, U.S.A. Author of three monographs and of several articles and book chapters on translation, bilingualism and self-translation. Member of numerous scientific associations, such as the Italian Association for the Study of English (Associazione Italiana di Anglistica, AIA) and the American Studies Association of Italy (Associazione Italiana di Studi Nord-Americani, AISNA). His research interests include translation studies, discourse analysis, English language teaching and lexicography.
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2539-626X

Muhammad Zayyanu Zaki
PhD in French Language (Translation Studies); translator; senior lecturer of Translation Studies at the Department of French, Faculty of Arts, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Nigeria. He majored in French, English, Hausa and Arabic translation and interpretation. He has attended more than twenty international and national academic conferences and seminars, and has published widely in Hausa, English, and French in reputable journals locally and internationally with impact factors (many of which are translation studies, translation technology and language technology). His research interests include translation studies, translation technology, linguistics, language

technology and cultural shifts (with a passion for French, English, Arabic, and Hausa translations).
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3785-2488

Paweł Marcinkiewicz
PhD, Dlitt., Associate Professor and Director of the Institute of Literary Studies at the University of Opole. His interests focus on American literature and translation theory. He published three monographs: *The Rhetoric of the City: Robinson Jeffers and A.R. Ammons* (Peter Lang 2009), *'Colored Alphabets' Flutter'. John Ashbery and the Twentieth Century American Avant-Gardes* (University of Opole Press 2012), and recently *Literature, Translation, and the Politics of Meaning. Polish, American, and German Literary Traditions* (V & R unipress, 2024). He received grants from the DAAD (2020) and the Goethe Institute (2023). He is also a poet and translator, recipient of the prestigious Czesław Miłosz Prize, author of 10 collections of poetry and several volumes of translations from English and German.
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7086-1805

Sani Atiku
Researcher and Lecturer at the Department of English Language and Linguistics, Sokoto State University, Nigeria; holder of a BA degree in English Language at Usmanu Danfodiyo University where he is currently studying M.A. in the same field; a member of the English Scholars' Association of Nigeria (ESAN).
https://orcid.org/0009-0004-7237-2564

UBMISSION GUIDELINES

These instructions should, wherever there is doubt about the standard to be used in issues not considered here, be supplemented by the Chicago Manual of Style, available at http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html.

Please supply the files in Word format. In the case of photographs/figures/tables that need to be placed in a separate section please include these in a separate file, ensuring that images are labelled with captions that are consistently positioned and formatted (see more details below). All in-text material must be included in the main files of the manuscript.

To help you, a sample is provided at the end of this document.

Key Formatting Issues

1. Document Margins
Header: 15mm, Top of main body: 25mm Bottom: 15mm Left: 21mm Right: 21mm, Footer: 0.

2. Styles
a. **Title:** Times New Roman, 16 pt., centred, single-spaced, small capitals. Leave one blank line (TNR 10 pt., single-spaced) after the title (before the author's name).
b. **Author's Name:** Times New Roman, 16 pt., centred, single-spaced, small capitals. Leave 3 blank lines (TNR 10 pt., single-spaced) after the author's name (before the beginning of the text).
c. **Abstract**: Times New Roman, 10 point and justified, single-spacing, up to 10 lines of text, 4-5 key words.
d. **Main text:** Times New Roman, 12 pt., justified, single-spaced. Indent the first line of each paragraph by 5mm (left).
   N.B. Texts in Aremnian should be in Sylfaen.
e. **Subheadings:** Times New Roman, 12 pt., centred, bold. Leave two blank lines (TNR 10 pt., single spaced) before and one after.
f. **Quotations** (to be used for quotations longer than 2 lines or other texts which you think should stand out): Times New Roman 10 pt., indented by 5mm (left and right). Leave one blank line (TNR 10 pt., single-spaced) before and after.
g. **Footnotes:** Times New Roman, 10 pt., justified.

3. Text
a. No full stop at the end of titles or subheadings
b. Use **double quotation** marks for all quotations including single words (e.g. As argued by Smith (2003:26), "metaphor is...").
c. Use **single quotation** marks for meanings/definitions of words.
d. To ensure that there are **no extra spaces** in the document, use your software's Find and Replace command to substitute all double spaces for single spaces. Repeat this procedure until no double spaces are found.
e. Do not use **non-standard fonts**. Times New Roman (and other Unicode fonts) now supports most special characters, so it should not be necessary. If you think an

exception needs to be made in your case, please contact the editors.

f. The text should contain between **20 000 and 24 000 characters** including spaces.

4. References

Use the author-date system (Whoever 2007: 144–58) of the Chicago Manual of Style (see http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html).

Use a negative indentation of 0.5 cm (left) for the list of references.

Non-Latin alphabets are not used in the reference list, so the references need to be transliterated and the English translation should be provided in square brackets.

5. Images

a. Make sure that you have the right to publish the image. If you did not create the image yourself, you will need to provide proof that you have obtained the permission to publish the image.

b. It is recommended that you use TIFF files for producing images or photographs, and EPS files for vector graphics (illustrations). All images including photographs must be included in the main Word or other files submitted.

c. Take into account the size of CSP pages (148 x 210 mm) when including images. Your image will have to be resized if it is too large or too small, and this can prove problematic in certain cases.

d. Call your pictures or illustrations Fig. 1, Fig. 2, etc. in the order of their appearance.

e. Images should not be inserted into Word at more than 100% of their original size because this will cause a loss of quality.

f. Images for printing should always have at least a resolution of 300 dpi at the size in which they are going to be printed.

g. The size in which images are intended for printing and resolution (300 dpi) is the minimum required for the original scan or photograph: images cannot be recalculated to a larger size at the same resolution or else they will lose quality. 7. The quality of an image cannot be checked by looking at it on a screen (which often shows images at a resolution of 72 or 96 dpi in contrast to high quality print where they are usually printed at 360 dpi).

h. Colour images for printing should always be saved in the CMYK mode (not in the RGB mode).

6. Tables

a. It is recommended that you use some sort of background colour like light grey for the title row or column of a table, and ensure that the text of titles is in bold. This can be achieved by clicking on the relevant cells of your table, and then clicking on Table, Table Properties, Borders and Shading, and then selecting a colour (preferably 20%-grey).

b. Do not use different types of formatting for different rows or columns unless you would like to differentiate between headings and body text.

c. Entitle your table in the same way that you entitled your image (Table 1, Table 2, etc.)

d. Leave a blank 10 pt. TNR line before and after the table.

ABOUT THE PUBLISHING HOUSE OF YEREVAN STATE UNIVERSITY

The Publishing House of Yerevan State University works closely with the academic community to publish high quality academic journals, monographs and textbooks, and provides services to promote teaching and research. Our main mission is to internationalize, make open, accessible and transparent the scientific work of the Armenian scientific community.

Our publications include digital, print and open access content spanning the humanities and social sciences, natural sciences and technology. In cooperation with authors, we distribute the best academic materials in the region and in the world.

Publish your journal and book with The Publishing House of Yerevan State University and you will join the scientific community of distinguished authors whose published work has helped shape and influence learning in the region and around the world.

- Should you need information on applying to publish a book, refer to our guide.
- For guidance on writing for a scientific journal, visit our journal author page.

Open Research

As a university press and not-for-profit publisher, we are committed to the advancement of open research, exploring and innovating new models that will ensure sustainability and quality, while maximising the benefits that openness can offer.

Author Services

In order to continue to publish the best local, regional and international researchers, it is important that we support researchers preparing their research for publication in our journals. In order to help prospective authors to prepare for submission and to reach their publication goals, we offer a range of high-quality manuscript preparation services - including language editing and video abstract creation.

The director of the Publishing House of Yerevan State University is Dr. Karen Grigoryan
E-mail: publishing@ysu.am

YEREVAN STATE
UNIVERSITY
PUBLISHING HOUSE