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Textual multilingualism,
or inscribing a place.
Regionalism, policulturalism,
and multilingualism in the new
Central-European literature

Keywords: Upper Silesia, Cieszyn Silesia, Szczepan Twardoch, Jan Vrak, textual multilingualism, translation of multilingual text, strangeness, Drach, borderland

The term “multilingualism” or “multilingualism of literature” is most commonly associated with authors writing in two or more languages either in various literary genres or in different phases of their artistic activity or life. With regard to Polish literature, we may easily enlist the most renowned ones: Stanisław Przybyszewski, Tadeusz Rittner, later also Stefan Themerson, Gustaw Heling-Grudziński, and at the beginning of the 21st century Sokrat Janowicz, Ewa Kuryluk, and Dariusz Muszer. The change of a language is often caused by (forced or voluntary) emigration, which is the most frequently noted circumstance, but also by the multicultural space, in which such authors grow into by their biographies. This is the case of e.g. Tadeusz Rittner and Sokrat Janowicz. While the decision to change the language (or to expand the variety of languages) is always individual, it is supported by the ubiquity of migratory flows and the so-called social multilingualism [Gesellschaftliche Mehrsprachigkeit, see: Kremnitz 1990]. Social multilingualism, that is multilingualism characterising not individuals but entire groups or social strata, concerns, on the one hand, historical multicultural superpowers (like Austria-Hungary and Galicia located in it) or the today’s multilingual countries (Canada or

Switzerland), and on the other, frontier regions (like the Cieszyn/Těšín Silesia and the Land of Białystok). The lingual biographies of the inhabitants of such multicultural and multilingual regions may, of course, have a different course but Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari indicate, following Henri Gobard, a four-part model that appears to be helpful in describing such biographies. While the first tongue (vernacular) is the local and indigenous language that an individual acquires at the very beginning (it is the language of the childhood), and the next one (vehicular) is related to an outward movement and migration (it is the language of education), the third language (referential) refers to a broader cultural circle, and the fourth one (mythic) is connected with one's religious tradition [see: Deleuze, Guattari, p. 23]. This model, although more appropriate in discussing the societies of the long 19th century than the beginning of the 21st century, may also be useful in today's studies because it rejects for good the notion of one native language.

Writers brought up in multilingual countries or regions are in no way forced to use this multilingualism for artistic purposes, but they can become bilingual writers or, if writing in one language, introduce other tongues, dialects, or cants in their texts (under different conditions and with different aims). Following a Prague culture expert Petr Mareš, I call this latter phenomenon, discussed in this paper, the “textual multilingualism” (textová vícejazyčnost) [see: Mareš 2003]. Despite this phenomenon being described in the recent decades by numerous scholars of various backgrounds and consequently being named and defined in many different ways, I chose Mareš's term in order to emphasise the parallelism of both tendencies: the multilingual writing (multilingual writers) and the textual multilingualism (multilingual texts).

While this phenomenon is nothing new in Polish culture (I should remind e.g. the macaronic or mixed-script trend in the Baroque and the “enlightened” Poles' fight against it), the studies concerning its presence in the literature of the 20th and 21st centuries are very scarce. Yet in the 1930s, Stefania Skwarczyńska encouraged to conduct such research and her text appears to be the last one so decidedly supporting multilingualism (or maybe rather macaronism/mixed script) [see: Skwarczyńska]. This lack of scholarly attention may be a result of cultural and linguistic homogenisation of Poland after 1945: multilingualism is, first and foremost, multiculturalism and multiethnicity. This homogenisation was not only brought by the Holocaust and the ejection (both of Germans, and—with regard to Poland—the population of Kresy, the eastern borderlands¹), but also by the restrictive policy concerning minorities in many countries of the Eastern Block. At that time, Poland was described in terms of nationality as “pure as a glass of water” [Łodziński 2005]: monocultura-

¹ Until 1949, ca. 3.2 mln Germans were ejected from the Polish People's Republic, while in the “repatriation” of 1944—1946, a major group of Ukrainians (ca. 500.000) and Belarussians (36.000) were displaced to the Soviet republics. Cf.: Łodziński 2010.

lism became the socially desired model and the term “national minority” did not even appear in the constitution. Since 1989, Poland has been undergoing the process of the return to multiculturalism or the new mixing of cultures: emphasising the multiculturalism of entire regions or individual biographies. This process involves, among other things, literature characterised by textual multilingualism.

This multilingualism may have different functions; in texts presented here (Vrak 1998; Twardoch 2014) it is either the expression of a protest against an official monolingual culture (and the automatism of language) or a way to “record” a specific (multicultural) place [see: Dutka 2011]. In my analysis, I focus not only on examples from Polish literature, but also from Czech literature, in order to demonstrate that this phenomenon may be typical of the whole Central-Eastern Europe at the beginning of the 21st century. Czech literature uses it as a way to linguistically “record” its northern border, above all: it is the Cieszyn/Těšín Silesia, the Hlučín Region or the Golden Mountains [see: Fridrich 2001; Fridrich 2011; Vrak 1998; Čichoň 2011], polska – wschodnią (the Polish-Belarussian borderland: [see: Janowicz 1973; Janowicz 2001; Androsiuk 2010; Karpowicz 2014] and Polish-Ukrainian [see: Tkaczyszyn-Dycki 2011; Thaczyszyn-Dycki 2014]) and southern [see: Szymutko 2001; Nawarecki 2011; Twardoch 2014].

I. From social multilingualism to textual multilingualism

In the recent decades, intercultural literary studies (German studies, Romance studies, English studies) are ever more interested in multilingual or hybrid literature: several languages within one work are mostly combined in the literature of the previously colonial regions or migratory literature (also known as inter- or transcultural). It is not a new phenomenon: in its history, it has gone through different stages of acceptance or consistent rejection—barbarisms (in the Antique) or the later mixed scripts/macaronisms (in the Middle Ages and Baroque) did not enjoy good opinion; linguistic purity was regarded a superior value. However, “textual multilingualism” does not have to be necessarily related to today’s migrations or globalisation. It may refer to social multilingualism, typical of certain regions (which is, naturally, a result of previous migrations and linguistic contacts).

In Galicia during the Austria-Hungary period, the prototype of multilingual writing and textual multilingualism was the literature of the small cultures, and particularly Jewish literature. Its usually multilingual representatives could choose languages in which they wanted to write and they were often translator too [see: Deleuze, Guattari; Makarska 2013; Lamping; cf. Pollack].

Today, textual multilingualism is promoted by the so-called new regionalism², which is evident in the increasing interest in regional history, cultural geography, local dialects, and—multilingualism. Such regionalist thinking may be exemplified by literary texts or literature-scientific concepts, like the supralingual canon of “Silesian literature” [see: Kadłubek]. Representatives of the “new regionalism” include authors active in the borderlands but also moving between languages, e.g. Michał Androsiu, Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki, or recently Szczepan Twardoch.

Extracting the local multilingualism on the literary surface may also be observed in the Czech literature of the last decades. In Czechia, this phenomenon has a much longer tradition and it not only concerns emphasising the artistic value of subdialects or dialects, the so-called local colour, but the regional identity expressed in language, among other means. Such literary activity has a precursor (and the most important representative) in the person of Óndra Łysohorsky (1905—1989; born Erwín Goj, who in his propagation of “Silesianess” in literature introduced the so-called Lachian language [see: Makarska 2012a]. Łysohorsky is to date the Central-European guru followed by multilingual Silesian writers [see: Makarska 2014]. A circle of modern Czech authors referring to the multilingualism of the regions described is rather fair-sized. It includes, among others, the above mentioned Jan Vrak (or Tomáš Koudela), Petr Čichoň, Radek Fridrich, or the author of the script for a “graphic novel” *Alois Nebel* Jaroslav Rudiš [Polish editions, see: Rudiš 2007]. It is often Czech-German multilingualism, e.g. on the areas inhabited before 1945 by Sudeten Germans (in Fridrich’s poetry), but also the multilingualism of the Cieszyn/Těšín Silesia (Vrak), the Hlučín Region (Hlučínsko; Čichoň) or the Jeseníky region (Jeseníky; Rudiš). In this context the author going by the name of Ostravak Ostravski, who since 2004 runs an extremely popular blog in the local Ostravian dialect, is a separate phenomenon³.

II. The studies on textual multilingualism

Studies concerning “textual multilingualism” are today conducted parallelly by scholars of different backgrounds, hence the multitude of academic per-

² Cf. a series published by the Universitas publishing house “Nowy Regionalizm w Badaniach Literackich” (new regionalism in literary studies) and a project directed by Małgorzata Mikołajczyk and Elżbieta Rybicka, <http://nowyregionalizm.com.pl/> [accessed on: 29 Feb. 2016].

³ As yet, the identity of the person hiding behind this pseudonym remains unknown. The blog, however, enjoyed such immense popularity that its fragments were published in several books issued at the end of the 2000s [the first of them, see: Ostravak Ostravski].

spectives and names of this phenomenon. In this paper, I shall mostly focus on the state of the art in Germany and Central-Eastern Europe. In 2002, a German Germanist, Monika Schmitz-Emans, wrote about “multilingual literature” (“multilinguale Literatur”; see: Schmeling, Schmitz-Emans), probably under the influence of English-speaking scholars [see: Grutman 1998; Grutman 2009]. Two years later, the Schmitz-Emans proposed the term “multilingualism of literature” (“Vielsprachigkeit der Literatur”; Schmitz-Emans 2004). In the introduction to an issue of *Zeitschrift für interkulturelle Germanistik* dedicated to multilingualism, Esther Kilchmann introduces the term “heterolingual writing” (“heterolinguales Schreiben”; Kilchmann 2012a, cf. Kilchmann 2012b). Petr Mareš analyses “textual multilingualism” (“textová vícejazyčnost”; Mareš 2003) using the example of the 21st-century Czech literature, while the comparatist Dieter Lamping, when referring to Jewish literature from Central-Eastern Europe, uses the term “mixture of languages” (“Sprachmischung”; Lamping 2000). Johann Strutz and Peter Zima, who study not migratory but regional literature (in Istria), use the term “literary polyphony” (literarische Polyphonie”; Strutz, Zima 1996). Arndt, Naguschewski and Stockhammer create the notion of “otherlanguageness” (“Anderssprachigkeit”) and “exophony” (“Exophonie”), whereby they not only mean the simultaneous presence of several languages in one text but rather relations between them. Therefore, scholars write about “sprachliche Gemengelagen, Gemengelsprachen, gebrochenen Sprachen, Palimpsesten, translinguale Schreibweisen und Kreolisierungen” (“linguistic mixtures, entanglements, communication with a pidgin language, linguistic palimpsests, translingual writing, and creolization”; Arndt, Naguschewski, Stockhammer, p. 27).

It is also worthy of consideration what functions may be fulfilled by thus understood “textual multilingualism” or “otherlanguageness”. In the introduction to *Literatur und Mehrsprachigkeit*, Monika Schmitz-Emans distinguished e.g. the ludic and the socio-critical function. The scholar also deliberates whether thus understood multilingualism may be a form of protest against “cultural hegemonies” [Schmitz-Emans 2004, p. 13]. Numerous texts from the literary canon of the Central-Eastern Europe use mixtures of languages precisely in the context of cultural criticism. It is enough to enlist novels related to world war I: *The Good Soldier Švejk* (1921—1923) by Jaroslav Hašek or *Salt of the Earth* by Józef Wittlin (1935). Sometimes, this is how literary works imply the multiculturalism of a particular space (they “record” it), where the action takes place, which determines the character of the space: Frequently, multilingualism is simply an element of the characters’ features. A Hungarian-Swiss literary scholar András Horn also points out the “aesthetic functions of lingual mixtures” [see: Horn 1981]. Furthermore, the comparatist Elke Sturm-Trigonakis suggests that multilingual texts may tend to delexicalize widespread phrases and linguistic images, which in turn leads to a break in the language automation [Sturm-Trigonakis 2007, p. 144]. A similar diagnosis was made

as early as in 1937 by Stefania Skwarczyńska in her paper on the aesthetics of macaronism, which she described as a “refined form of protest against the unbearable [...] linguistic affability” [Skwarczyńska, p. 324].

The same also happens in the novels analysed by me: they try to restrain the automation of language. Their textual multilingualism, however, is a manner of “recording places”. In my opinion, it also expresses the critical attitude to the culture: it is a protest against “homogeneity” and “monolingualism” of the centre.

III. Textual multilingualism in Polish and Czech literature of the last decades

1. Jan Vrak, *Obyčejné věci* (1998)

This (auto?)biographical novel features the following mixture: „*Kochana ciocha Pauli umierala, meine liebe Tante stirbt, milovaná teta Pauli umírá*” (p. 39). All three languages (Polish, German and Czech) are present in the Cieszyn/Těšín Silesia, where the action of the novel takes place. It is here

insignificant whether phrases from foreign languages are grammatically (or orthographically) correct or not;⁴ it seems most important for the reader to recognize the linguistic parallelism characterising this region. The novel written in 1967 by Tomáš Koudela (Jan Vrak is a pseudonym used only in the case of this book) born in Karviná, situated near the border in the Cieszyn/Těšín Silesia is to me a perfect instance of a half-imagined description⁵ of the Silesian world together with its language.

While German fragments of Vrak’s novel are immediately identified as German precisely because the reader has a problem with the novel’s Polish language: it is provided with Czech spelling and frequently in Czech phonetic version. It is Polish spoken (or rather listened to by) an inhabitant of the borderland: „*Jako wszystkie domy jej żyła, jako wszystkie domy, które się na Śląsku w ten czas przestoły w wygórzone groby, w jelitach których można było zobać odbłaski autentycznych zawartości i miar*” (As all the houses in her life, as all the houses that at that time in Silesia were transforming into graves, in whose intestines one could have seen the reflections of authentic contents

⁴ The Polish phrase is not the only one to contain errors, since the German one is also incorrect; the latter should take the following form: “*meine liebe Tante stirbt*”.

⁵ Karviná was also the birth place of another renown Polish writer, Gustaw Morcinek (1891—1963).

and measures) [p. 29]⁶, says a character of the novel, Janusz Rosito, about his aunt. For a Czech reader who does not know the Silesian-Moravian land this may be a local dialect in which they operate only by intuition. The play with a language and with languages conducted by Vrak in his novel even when he allows incorrect spelling of phonetic scripture, surely relativizes the linguistic consequences [see: Mareš 2012, p. 162], but most of all forces the reader to read actively.

How does such a reader deal with the multilingualism of the novel? Sometimes, *Obyčejné věci* feature linguistic doublets that facilitate the understanding of at least single words: „rychle [se] učila rozumět, a tak věděla, že *korkencijer* je vývrtka, *šraubencijer* je šroubovák” [p. 81; „She learned fast and knew that *korkencijer* is a corkscrew, while *šraubencijer* is a screw driver”]. The same happens with the word “cherbatka” [the correct spelling in Polish is “herbatka”—KS], which is explained as “čaj”, while “baječka o červonym kapturku” is, of course, “pohádka o červené karkulce” [see: Mareš 2012]. This coexistence and contact of languages appear to be the subject of the novel just as the borderland itself and the family history—this phenomenon is discernible not only in the narrative (riddled with repetitions and explanations), but also in plentiful footnotes addressed to a Czech reader (which raises the question of whether they are part of the novel or an accompanying paratext).

Although at the beginning of the novel Polish phrases are fully translated into Czech, usually in footnotes, in further parts the narrator puts the reader to a test and leaves him to his own devices: „Kur-va mač, kogo šviňa něše, co to ma značič, chlopě, co tu robiš. Zabijym čie, něměcka šviňo, nerušaj šie, celujym v čebě, ruš šie i ustřele či tvojum gupium morde” (Fucking hell, who carries the devil, don’t move, I’m aiming at you, move and I’ll shoot your foolish muzzle”) [p. 113]. Working through such a mixture of languages becomes a significant challenge for the reader. Precisely in such situations the “translation directive” postulated by Edward Balcerzan works best [Balcerzan, p. 102]: the reader does not receive ready solutions—they have to search for them themselves.

Obyčejné věci may also be read as a polyphonic novel, whose author consciously employed various stylistic registers, including varieties of Czech: “Here, the equivalent of literary language is sometimes spoken Czech [obecná čeština], sometimes the Silesian dialect from central Moravia or the local dialect” [Mareš 2012, p. 101]. This plurality of languages and their variants makes it difficult to assign fragments of the narrative to specific (one’s own or someone else’s) voices. Textual multilingualism “records” a specific region and defines its inhabitants who, similarly, have plural identities. This mixture

⁶ For a Czech reader the text is immediately translated in a footnote.

or even confusion of languages makes the narrator's questions more comprehensible: "who am I, what is my language, where is the city where I was born and will die?" [p. 162]. This question does not have a simple answer.

2. Szczepan Twardoch, *Drach* (2014)

The tendency to textual multilingualism also characterises Polish literature, not only in the recent years. I have already mentioned the multilingual literature of Galicia, whose classic examples include the prose of Stanisław Vincenz (*Na wysokiej połoninie*, 1936—1979), Józef Wittlin (*Salt of the Earth*, 1935), or Zygmunt Haupt (e.g. short stories from the collection *Baskijski diabeł*, 2007). In 2014, the circle of writers using textual multilingualism was joined by Szczepan Twardoch: his *Drach*, similarly to Vrak's *Obyčejné věci*, is written in three languages⁷, but in a very considerate manner, caring about the correct spelling and resigning from preferential treatment for the reader, providing no explanations of either Silesian or German passages. Dariusz Nowacki even says, that this is why *Drach* "is not reader-friendly" [Nowacki 2014]. Interestingly, among books nominated to the Nike Literary Award [one of the most prestigious literary awards in Poland—KS] in 2015, there was *Drach* on the one hand and on the other *Sońka* by Ignacy Karpowicz, who in turn explains every Belarussian word, even "Hospadzi" [Karpowicz 2014, p. 8, 201]. Twardoch commented upon his courageous solution in an interview, saying: "The lack of footnotes in *Drach* contributes to the sense of strangeness. Various languages resonate in this novel because various languages resonate in the world depicted in it. It has to be so" [Sobolewska, Twardoch 2014]. What is more, a reviewer, Janusz Cyran, concludes: "[the reader] is confronted not only with the strangeness of the lexis, but also with orthographical intricacy (the Silesian *o* alone is here decorated with four different diacritic marks)" [Cyran 2015]. Dariusz Nowacki, on the other hand, points out that Silesian appears here "in several varieties (archaic «wasserpolnisch» and newer versions of a dialect close to the writer's heart)». Despite these «impediments» in the reading, *Drach* was well received by Polish readers and appeared also in German translation [see: Twardoch 2016].

In the narrative of *Drach*, Twardoch uses not only single German or Silesian words and names (Wilhelmstraße, ōma, kołōcz, mannschaft, frelka, mammas, masōrz), whose meanings may be guessed, but also entire fragments in foreign languages that leave the reader baffled. Seldom in this text do lingual parallelisms appear to aid the understanding of foreign phrases, such as: „Nur keinen Fußbreit Boden freiwillig räumen«, says a rule established in the Gen-

⁷ Or, as some critics put it, two languages and the Silesian dialect. In this paper, I will consistently write of three languages.

eral Staff. Not a foot of land voluntarily” [p. 2104]. However, Twardoch does not suggest that all characters in the novel are bi- or trilingual. Some of them (like Josef Magnor) are, and others are not, which is why the narrative sometimes provides a translation demonstrating that not only the reader faces the feeling of strangeness here:

- Ihr bleibt hier nicht einmal drei Tage am Leben, Schweinehunde – says gefreiter Piskula, who commenced the war on the very day of mobilization [...].
- Co 6n g6d6? – Kaczmarek asks the musketeer Josef, because he does not speak German very well.
- Niy przeżijecie sam trzech dni, pier6ny zatracone, gizdy, mamlasy – says gefreiter Piskula, having heard Kaczmarek’s whisper. [p.212—213]

Some characters are not fluent in any language, like the “volkssturmist” Hans Burek: „Hans Burek. Speaks little German. And no Polish. Has alright Silesian, but uses it reluctantly and not very well either. He spent all his life cultivating twelve morgues of field in the village of Lubomia, regularly flooded by the Odra river” (p. 385). But Josef Magnor is marked by the multilingualism of Sielisia; on the way to the front, he almost literally repeats the words of old Pindur, a local madman: „Str6m a cz6lowiek, a s6rnik s6m jedno. Takie je to nasze żywobyci na tyj zymie” (p. 16). But with Caroline, Josef speaks German using “decent German, despite clear Silesian traces, with vibrating ‘r’ and indistinct ‘äu’ [like in Fräulein—R.M.]” [69].

While the author of *Obyčejné věci* did not pay attention to the notation of multilingualism (since the language of the borderland is usually spoken), in *Drach* Twardoch attaches much importance to it, but his characters frequently use mixtures of languages, speaking or writing in Silesian, another time in Polish, yet another time in German (or using single words from all the three languages), often in one sentence. This is the case e.g. of the letter sent by Josef from the front in France to his parents:

Liebe Eltern. Ociec, Mamulka a Braciki. Przyslom mie Patentknopfen piync dwa-cišcia a Tuste w putnie, Cygaretow abo Tabak do Fifki, yno dobry. Przyslom mie tysz jaki Handtuch, Fuzekle. Mlyka. Käse. Litewka moźno by mie kupyli, yno kaj kupić, niy wiym. Piynidzy mi pszyslom choby 10 Marek. U mie wszisko dobrze. Widzioł zech englischer Panzer. Srogi boł a szczyłoł. Jezech zdrow. Napiszom, co Doma.
Z Bogiem
Die besten Grüße
Euer Josef. [p. 229]

The German words (liebe Eltern, Handtuch, Käse) come next to Polish (litewka); sentences began in the dialect are ended in German („Widzioł zech

englischer Panzer”), but the narrative is here evidently conducted in Silesian; German (more often) and Polish (more seldom) are languages of terminology (Panzer, Tabak, Käse, litewka) or fixed phrases (liebe Eltern, z Bogiem)⁸.

This letter is one of the passages that will not be understood in every detail by a Polish (non-Silesian) reader, but such a reader may follow the “translation directive” and learn that “Käse” means cheese and “fuzekle” mean socks, although even without these elements the message conveyed in the letter seems clear.

In *Drach*, textual multilingualism evidently records a specific place but also Silesian people connected with this place and with the land. Critics in different ways assign this multilingualism with particular functions. Cyran points out the peripheral character of the space and the separateness of its inhabitants: “it reveals an image of a separate and particular tribe, squeezed among the nations of Germans, Poles and Czechs” [Cyran 2015]. Ryszard Koziółek underlines that here the dialect is a “trace of a human voice facing the inhumanly pure beast of the Polish language” [Koziółek 2014]; this inhumanly pure Polish is also the language of the centre, the language of (great) history ignorant of the fate of the province,—it is the language of the majority. Silesian also appears here as a language unrecognized by this majority; let us recall that in 2005 only Kashubian was granted the status of a “regional language”, which is why Koziółek writes: “In this contention about the status of the Silesian language the author does the single just thing demonstrating its literary power.”

IV. Between the impossibility and necessity of translation

But what happens with the multilingual texts in translation? Are they kept in their original form or is this multilingualism somehow translated? Do the publishers of the translation have enough courage to motivate the reader to contact the strangeness always entailed by multilingualism? The question of multilingualism in translation has already gained its theoreticians. The Czech translologist Jiří Levý stated that a foreign language used in a literary text is usually typical of a given area of literature and thus it is also comprehensible, but for the reader of the translation it may be completely strange, which is why it is impossible to keep multilingualism in it [see: Levý 1958]⁹. The question of translating multilingualism was also raised by Jacques Derrida: “How to

⁸ I do not mention here the “orthographical” option of the notation that is supposed to characterize Josef Magnor.

⁹ Cf. :”The foreign language, commonplace in the environment for which the original work was written, is frequently quite unintelligible to readers of the translation, so it is not possible to preserve it”. Levý 2011, p. 97

translate a text written in several languages at once? How is the effect of plurality to be »rendered«? [Derrida, p. 196]. The problem of the feasibility of translating “textual multilingualism” partly resembles the old contention concerning two methods of translating described by Friedrich Schleiermacher: we either come closer to the reader of the text (confronting him with the strangeness), or bring the text closer to them and their culture (and then we resign from all elements of strangeness) [see: Schleiermacher 1973]. This now historical controversy is today treated as part of the theory of contacting a stranger; the subject is currently covered by xenology. In this context, the German Anglicist and translator Klaus Reichert indicated the “political dimension of the act of translation” [Reichert, p. 172], while the Germanist Norbert Mecklenburg argued that adjusting the text of the translation to the requirements of the target culture (and hence the resignation from strangeness) is a “form of cultural violence” [Mecklenburg, p. 292]. In his opinion, the cultural difference should be consciously maintained in the text and the translation needs to be equally easy/difficult to understand for the new readers as the original was to its primary audience.¹⁰ Despit Levý’s wish, not always is the original fully comprehensible (language-wise) for the reader from the same culture. *Drach* is evidence of this.

There are enough translations which proved that the effect of plurality may be reproduced (although many resign from it); I will only provide her two titles, related with each other in terms of subject and times: the German translation of *Schwejk*, rendered by Grete Reiner, a Prague inhabitant of Jewish origin (*Abenteuer des braven Soldaten Schwejk*, 1926) and the German translation of Wittlin’s *Sól ziemi* by Izydor Berman (*Das Salz der Erde*, 1937)¹¹. Berman saw not problem in keeping the textual multilingualism in his translation and took great care so that the reader was well oriented in this multilingualism¹². The German translator of *Schwejk* had a much more difficult task: she had to render in the translation not only the specific German language of the original but also various stylistic levels of Czech. On the basis of German spoken in the Prague Malá Strana, Grete Reiner created a separate language that helped the novel become a bestseller and for which, at the same time, she was heavily criticised [see: Petr 1963; Gregor 1967].

¹⁰ “For a heterocultural reader, the text should be equally understandable (accessible) as for the autocultural reader” [Mecklenburg, p. 290].

¹¹ Neither Grete Reiner nor Izydor Berman did not survive world war II.

¹² In one place, he added, for instance, a graphic element, thus emphasising the presence of Ukrainian in the text; this is about the message “Beware of the train! *Sterehty sia pojizdu!* / *Achtung auf den Zug!* / *Sama la trenu!*” [Wittlin 1991, p. 52] translated by Berman in the following way: „Achtung auf den Zug! / *Strzeż się pociągu!* / Позір! Стереґтися поїзду! / *Sterehty sia pojizdu!* / *Sama la trenu!*” [Wittlin 1986, p. 63]. Cf. Makarska 2012b.

What happens in the German translation of *Drach*? What kind of dices are loaded against the translator Olaf Kühl? Kühl, who translated Gombrowicz and Masłowska, did not even consider resigning from this plurality. In the translation, the above quoted letter of Josef Magnor to his parents sounds as follows:

Voater, Mamulka un Briederla. Schickt mir Patentknifel finfunzwanzig un Schmalz inne Bichse, Zigaretten oder Pfeifentobak, aber guten. Schickt mir auch ein Hand-tuch, Fusseckle. Melech. Kees. Eine Litewka kenntet ihr mer kaufen, wees nur nich, wo. Geld schickt mir, wenigstens 10 Mark. Bei mir ist alles gut. Ich hoob einen englischen Panzer gesehen. Er war schlimm un hoot geschossen. Ich bin gesund. Schreibt was von doaheim.

Gott sei bei Euch

Die besten Gruse

Euer Josef. [Twardoch 2016, p. 243]

In the original, the drunken „masörz Grolla” chasing a pig shouts: „Pōdź sam yno, pierōnowo, zatracōno...!” [Twardoch 2014, p. 12], while in translation: „Komm schoa, Miststick, ferfletstes...!” [Twardoch 2016, p. 15]. Kühl is, therefore, not satisfied with “wasserpolnisch” and replaces it with a scarcely used German dialect from Lower Silesia. On the one hand, it is understandable for a German reader; on the other, it sounds strange enough to achieve an effect similar to the original. *Welflajsz* is here rendered as *Wellfleisch*, *ciaperkapusta* as *Panschkraut*, *wuszt* as *Woscht*, *żymlōk* as *Semmelwürste*. However, the replacement of the still used Silesian dialect (with which the author living in Pilchowice has contact every day) with an almost historical dialect seems a hazardous undertaking, all the more since it entails smaller cosmetic procedures, such as the following one: Josef Magnor, speaking the Lower-Silesian dialect, comes with the military train straight from the front precisely to Lower Silesia (Niederschlesien):

– Sörnük je to samo co strōm a człek. Podziwej se, bajtel: to je sörnük. To sōm my. A to je strōm. Blank to samo, pra? [...] Strōm a człowiek, a sörnük sōm jedno, myśli Josef Magnor dwanaście lat później, w wojskowym pociągu z Lys na Górny Śląsk. [Twardoch 2014, p. 16]

Das Rieh ist doas selbigte wie een Baum un een Mensch. Guck mal, Kleener: Doas ist een Rieh. Das semmer. Un doas ist een Baum. Genau daselbigte, gelt ock? [...] Baum und Mensch und Reh sind das gleiche, denkt Josef Magnor zwölf Jahre später, im Wehrmachtszug von der Leie nach Niederschlesien. [Twardoch 2016, p. 19]

Textual multilingualism is a challenge not only for the reader, but also for the translator. In the first place, the translator has to convince editors in a publishing house to his solutions; and they might like experiments but rarely in translations, as I have observed. In the case of *Drach* Olaf Kühn proposed a coherent solution: the Lower-Silesian dialect employed by him is strange to the reader but almost understandable at the same time; the Polish-Silesian-German multilingualism is not present here just like the permanent mixing of languages that are part of the original *Drach*.

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Although the two novels, *Obyčejné věci* and *Drach*, were written around a dozen years apart, they undertake the subject of the polyphony of languages and treat their readers in a similar way: the reader is put to a test, over and over again, forced to read actively. Textual multilingualism, once referred to as macaronism/mixed script, does not serve aesthetic aims here, but the “recording” of the space and its inhabitants. Since in both cases it is a peripheral space, this multilingualism (and multiculturalism) appears to be a protest against homogeneity and monolingualism of the centre.

Textual multilingualism is a sort of *alter ego* of bilingual writing: the writer does not decide to change a tongue—he places all its versions (languages, sub-dialects, dialects) next to each other in one text. They constitute the essential polyphony or a polyphonic twister (it should suffice to recall some consciously constructed fragments of *Na wysokiej połoninie*), a cacophony or experiment that allows the break of the automation of the “unbearable [...] linguistic affability”. Multilingual texts reveal, particularly today, after the ethnic and cultural unification of Central-Eastern Europe that linguistic and cultural mixtures, not subdued to anyone’s codification, are obvious and common.

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