

MULTIPLE INTERPRETATIONS DUE TO ZERO TYPE CODE-SWITCHING

Keywords: *zero-type code-switching; intracultural; multicultural; transcultural and polycultural reading*

INTRODUCTION

Zero type code-switching (ZCS) arises when the narration of the multilingual fictional world happens in one language only¹. ZCS is not only an enigmatic aesthetic tool the narrators often use, but it is a source of multiplying the interpretation possibilities of the text. The present study exemplifies how a simple poem built on ZCS can be differently interpreted depending on the reader's way of decoding the hidden cultural references. After theoretically introducing the narrative framework of a literary work along the cultural identifiers of the actants, the poem of Inger-Mari Aikio² will practically exemplify how important is the reader's understanding of ZCS. Depending on the way the reader ZCS understands, the poem can be interpreted either as a poetic process reflecting intercultural, transcultural, multicultural or pluricultural interaction. Beside these prototypical interpretations, there are – naturally – many other variants, but for the theoretical concern of this study, this is the most relevant way to evaluate the process.

NARRATIVE FRAMEWORK AND THE CULTURAL EVALUATION OF THEIR ACTANTS

As underlined in Domokos 2018,³ literary code-switching brings along a high number of what one can call as culturalias of different cultural patterns (linguistic

* DOMOKOS Johanna (1970), költő, műfordító, habilitált egyetemi docens, Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem, Budapest, johanna.domokos@uni-bielefeld.de

1 DOMOKOS Johanna–Marianna DEGANUTTI: *Four major literary code-switching strategies in Hungarian literature. Decoding monolingualism*. Hungarian Studies Yearbook 3(2021). 1. sz. 43–63.

2 Inger-Mari AIKIO: *Jiebki vuolde ruonas giđđá*. DAT, Guovdageaidnu, 1993.

3 Johanna DOMOKOS: *Écriture multiculturelle and the Finnish literary field* = Uő: *Endangered Literature*. L'Harmattan–Károli Books, Bp., 2018. 67–86.

units referring to arti-, menti- and sociofacts, c.f. Posner 2008⁴), and cultural accounts (statements evaluating the social order, esp. power relations). In such writings the cultural background and linguistic repertoires of the communicating agencies from all of the levels of the narrative unit (e.g. author, reader, implied author, implied reader, narrator, narratorial addressee, communicating fictional figures) carry semantic relevance and their horizontal and vertical relationships need to be taken into consideration. It is worth mentioning that these cultural categories (culturalia, accounts, linguistic repertoires) can be considered in any kind of literary work, not only works including (zero type) code-switching.⁵

The narrative framework exemplified in Figure nr. 1 below can be understood as mapping the narrative composition of fictional, non-fictional and mediation levels and their various actants who strongly cross-influence each other.

(1) real author (RA) \Leftrightarrow (2) implied author (IA) \Leftrightarrow

[3] narrator (N) \Leftrightarrow [4 a, b.] Figures in the TEXT (F) \Leftrightarrow [5] narratee (Ne) \Leftrightarrow

(6) model reader (MR) \Leftrightarrow (7) implied reader \Leftrightarrow (8) real reader

*Fig. 1. Communicating agencies of a literary work
(based on Chatman 1990, Jahn 2005)⁶*

Position nr 1. refers to the real author as the flesh and body historical person who physically writes the text. Position nr. 2 refers to the implied author, that is the personal image of an author projected by the real reader of the text. Position nr. 6 indicates the ideal or model reader who possesses all the prerequisites to understand every denotation and connotation in a text, while position nr. 7 denotes the implied reader, a hypothetical figure of the reader to whom a given work is designed to address

4 Roland POSNER: *Kultursemiotik* = Anselm NÜNNING–Vera NÜNNING: *Konzepte der Kulturwissenschaften. Theoretische Grundlagen—Ansätze—Perspektiven*. J. B. Metzler, Stuttgart, Weimar, 2003. 39–72; *Semiotik/Semiotics*. 2. Teilband (Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft/Handbooks of Linguistics and Communication Science [HSK]). German Edition, Kindle edition, 2008.

5 DOMOKOS Johanna: *On the Ecology of Cultural Interference. Examples from Nordic and Saami Literature*. Acta Translatologica Helsingiensia 2(2013) (a továbbiakban DOMOKOS: *On the Ecology*). 13–24.

6 Seymour CHATMAN: *Coming to Terms. The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film*. Cornell, London, 1990; Manfred JAHN: *Narratology 2.3: A Guide to the Theory of Narrative*. English Department, University of Cologne, 2021. www.uni-koeln.de/~ame02/pppn.pdf (Utolsó megtekintés: 2022. 08. 16.)

itself. Furthermore, position nr. 8 indicates the real reader as the historical person who physically takes the book in his or her hands and reads the text. These positions are all part of the level of nonfictional communication in a narrative unit. The level of fictional mediation contains position nr. 3 and nr. 5, that are contains the interaction between the narrator and the narratee. Position nr. 4a., b., c., etc. host the major and minor characters on the level of action, that shape the level of the story.

EXAMPLE

For locating cultural markers of communicating agencies, polycultural accounts and culturalias in a text, as well as demonstrating the role of the language the text is written in, and how the reader's cultural background influences the interpretation, we will look to different approaches to a poem published by Inger-Mari Aikio in 1993. This poem using the technique of ZCS, the narrator relates monolingually a multicultural dialogic situation between the lyrical I and its communication partner, called as Sicilian. Being asked about her own cultural background and practices the lyrical I becomes aware of a painful assimilation process. In Figure nr. 2 below one can find the original poetical text and its English translation:

sisilialaš don jearat makkárat min soagñovierut dološ jáhkut, sieiddit	Sicilian, you ask me about our wedding customs our old beliefs, our stone altars
in dieđe ja heahpanan	I do not know them and I feel ashamed
jeara baicce makkárat suomelaččaid vierut ja osku	ask me rather about the Finnish customs what they believe
de diedán ja heahpanan	I do know them and I feel ashamed

Fig. 2. A poem by Inger Mari-Aikio along its translation

Among the personal, cultural and anthropological dimensions of the textual actual world, no doubt the cultural level of the poem is presented in most details. This is due to the use of (1) the pronouns *me*, *our* and *them*, *they*, *those*, nouns that classify

as cultural socifacts (*wedding customs, Finnish customs*), artifacts (*stone altars*) or mentifacts (*old beliefs*) and of verbal reference to actions producing cultural facts (*know, believe*). To this level belong both the noun and the adjective addressing ethnic identity (*Sicilian, Finnish*), and also the voiced cultural resentment (shame). The anthropological level is present through the addressing instance, the human agents speaking and being able to inquire cultures, reflecting on emotions, while the personal level is activated through the pronouns *I* and the *you*. All cultural patterns are well described with the help of socio-, menti- and artifacts. The two ethnonyms mentioned in the poem can be evaluated as sociofacts (reference to a group) and as well as mentifacts (group described in a special way). Though the third ethnonym is not directly mentioned, the pronoun *min* 'our' in the third line could be marked as sociofact.

In this text an overt, homodiegetic narrator refers to him/herself in the first person („I”), and will address with ZCS his/her narratee directly. Through this technique the reader experiences less psychological distance from the story and more readily develops empathy, effectively slipping into the skin of multicultural characters. ZCS should therefore also be considered as major element inducing empathy, especially for readers who are in the majority position of a society.

Besides identifying culturalia (as above) and cultural markers of communicating agencies (as to come), I will look also for describing the text with the help of a cultural accounts. My definition of cultural accounts goes back to Dausendschön-Gay and Krafft (1998).⁷ These two authors define the *account* as linguistic manifestations of the social order and they described the following four types:

- (1) anticipation of difficulties in understanding, due to cultural difference,
- (2) setting up and/or deconstructing a hegemonic situation through the representation of incompetence,
- (3) perspectivization: using special perspectives in order to address certain thematic aspects and
- (4) relationship work: distancing from one's own group (p. 167).

These accounts are not the only ones one can find in literature and there is a pressing need to map all the cognitive, affective and connative accounts in all of the interferential modalities⁸. Taking the impulse from Dausenschön-Gay and Krafft,

7 Ulrich DAUSENSCHÖN-GAY– Ulrich KRAFFT: *Kulturelle Differenz als account = Fremde im Gespräch. Gesprächsanalytische Untersuchungen zu Dolmetsch-Interaktionen, interkultureller Kommunikation und institutionalisierten Interaktionsformen*. Hrsg. Birgit APFELBAUM–Hermann MÜLLER. IKO-Verlag für Interkulturelle Kommunikation, Frankfurt a.M., 1998. 163–197.

8 For the description of the inter-, pluri-, multi-, and transcultural modalities in literature see DOMOKOS: *On the Ecology*. 13–24.

we can define *cultural account* as linguistic manifestation qualifying the relationship between individuals, groups and cultural orders. Just as it happens in the following line: „I do not know them, and I feel ashamed”.

ZCS AND DIVERSE INTERPRETATIONS IN THE PROCESS OF THE RECEPTION

What happens when a reader meets a text using ZCS? How many different interpretations arise just from the fact who is reading, and where and how does the reader decode ZCS? The following units of this study will look into four major tendencies the cultural elements can be substituted. For outlining the effect of the reader on the interpretation of the text, I texted the poem with my Gruppe B^e Students at University Bielefeld.

INTERCULTURAL INTERPRETATION

First I gave the poem in English to my students, without mentioning that it is a translation. Thus, they interpreted it as a dialogue) between Figure of Culture 1 (F1^{C1}) and Figure of Culture 2 (F2^{C2}) in a common language (Code 3). The other agents of the narrative levels were described accordingly:

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{RA}^{\text{C1}} \Rightarrow \text{IA}^{\text{C1}} \Rightarrow \text{N}^{\text{C1}} \Rightarrow \\ \text{F1}^{\text{C1}} \text{ and } \text{F2}^{\text{C2}}, \text{Co}^{\text{C1}} \text{ and } \text{Co}^{\text{C2}} \Rightarrow \\ \text{Ne}^{\text{C3}} \Rightarrow \text{MR}^{\text{C1}} \Rightarrow \text{IR}^{\text{C3}} \Rightarrow \text{RR}^{\text{C3}} \\ \text{Code}^{\text{C3}} \end{array}$$

Fig. 3. Intracultural relationship work by distancing one's self from one's own group

In this interpretation the language that enables the dialogue, English (Code^{C3}), does not belong to the identifying code of either of the figures. The addressed conflict zone of the major figure is placed on intracultural level (on Co^{C1}, indicating the collective/society of culture 1). Therefore the first cultural account of the poem (“I do not know them / and I feel ashamed”) reveals a problem in the cognitive and affective intersection of a micro context (in this case likely a family). Following this interpretation strategy, the second cultural account of the poem (“I do know those / and I feel ashamed”) reveals the conflict between the micro and macro contexts (the Finnish society itself) of the lyric “I.” Thus this narrative instance can be classified as the fourth type of intercultural accounts in the scheme proposed by Dausendschön-

Gay and Krafft (1998), namely intracultural relationship work by distancing one's self from one's own group. In this regard, the lyric "I" reveals a self-critical reflection upon her own culture. This is a topic often addressed by multicultural authors (see the critical voice manifested in the novels of Kiba Lumberg and Veijo Baltazar regarding the impairments of their own Roma culture in Finland, e.g. sexual discrimination and honor killing).

TRANSCULTURAL INTERPRETATION

When I gave the same text to another group of my students, but mentioned the fact that the text was a translation from Sami, the communicating agents and their cultural correlations were made in the following way:

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{RA}^{C1} \Rightarrow \text{IA}^{C1} \Rightarrow \text{N}^{C1} \Rightarrow \\ \text{F1}^{C1} \text{ and } \text{F2}^{C2}, \text{Co}^{C1}, \text{Co}^{C2} \text{ and } \text{Co}^{C3} \Rightarrow \\ \text{Ne}^{C1} \Rightarrow \text{MR}^{C1} \Rightarrow \text{IR}^{C1} \Rightarrow \text{RR}^{C1} \\ \text{Code}^{C1} \end{array}$$

Fig. 4. Deconstruction of a hegemonic situation through representation of (self) incompetence

The poem was interpreted on three cultural levels, namely that of Sami, Finnish and Sicilian. Accordingly the language that enabled the poem, Sami (Code^{C1}), does belong to the identifying code of the major figure. This time the addressed conflict zone of the major figure gains an intersystemic dimension (between Sami and Finnish positions). Thus the narrative instance can be classified into the second type of intercultural account described by Dausendschön-Gay and Krafft (1998), namely deconstruction of a hegemonic situation through representation of incompetence or more exactly of (self) incompetence. The efficacy of these lines is very much attributed to the explicit representation of cultural hegemony through selfincompetence that automatically criticizes respective social practices.

MULTICULTURAL INTERPRETATION

As several of my students pointed out, the interpretations above do not represent the only possible ways to read the poem. The poem could also be discussed according to the following agency line (where CSa indicates the Sami culture, CF the Finnish,

and CSi the Sicilian, + a positive relationship, – a negative one, CM indicates agents from and within diverse cultural backgrounds):

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{RA}^{\text{CSa}\&\text{CF}} \Rightarrow \text{IA}^{\text{CSa}} \Rightarrow \text{N}^{\text{CSa}\&\text{CF}} \Rightarrow \\ \text{F1}^{\text{CSa}\&\text{CF}-} \text{ and } \text{F2}^{\text{CSi,CSa}}, \text{Co}^{\text{Sa}}, \text{Co}^{\text{CF}} \text{ and } \text{Co}^{\text{CSi}} \Rightarrow \\ \text{Ne}^{\text{CM}} \Rightarrow \text{MR}^{\text{CM}} \Rightarrow \text{IR}^{\text{CM}} \Rightarrow \text{RR}^{\text{CM}} \\ \text{Code}^{\text{C1}} \end{array}$$

Fig. 5. Perspectivization: using personal history to address cultural assimilation

With this interpretation it is important to pay attention to the language in of the original text, but one should not lose sight of the fact that the narrator is a bicultural agent, which is precisely what makes it possible to narrate the assimilation processes. Therefore the narrative instance can be classified as the third type of intercultural account as described by Dausendschön-Gay and Krafft (1998), namely as an act of perspectivization: using special perspectives in order to address certain thematic aspects. In this case the story of the poem was engineered by another minoritarian agent („the Sicialian“), probably with similar concerns. The narrative instance transformed into written medium uses the direct speech of the lyric “I,” an agent with double cultural bonds (one to a suppressed culture and one to a learned culture). Very likely all of her Saami readers are familiar with this problem. In this regard the poem voices a shared trauma. And while literature is a transcultural medium, all readers – from Finland or from anywhere else – are also deeply moved. Multicultural literature is an intimate genre that invites readers to make their own personal reflections on the topic, and to question their own practices and perspectives on such matters.

This poem was published about ten years after the situation the poem was inspired by. In an interview the Sámi poet Inger-Mari Aikio tells the following story:

I was in my early twenties, when I had a conversation in Finnish with the Sicilian scholar Nuccio Mazzullo. The fact that he addressed this question so directly to me, made me suddenly realize all the things that I missed in my education. Being taken to a Finnish-language boarding school at age seven, I learned nothing about my own culture. The awakening to this personal but also collective history strengthened my wish to become a Sami writer writting in Sami” (Book Fair in Leipzig, 2011).

Indeed, Aikio spent end of the 1980’s with studying Sami at various institutions, and engaging more and more in producing Sami poetry and film. Nowadays she is one of the most prolific and much translated writer of the Sami people.

PLURICULTURAL ASPECTS

A pluricultural interpretation of this poem will be interested in parallel stories, and how and why they are connected. Thus, the interpreting reader has to ask how does also the Sicilian language doing at that time? Though it is estimated to have 5,000,000 speakers, Sicilian is very much a home language spoken among peers and close associates. The regional dialect encroaches on Sicilian, most evidently in the speech of the younger generations. Poets in Sicily rarely write in Sicilian. Most speakers are literate just in Italian, not Sicilian; this implies a poor knowledge of the written language in all its formal grammar and spelling rules, in contrast to a still-wide diffusion of informal spoken Sicilian in the island. The education system does not support the language. Local universities do not carry courses in Sicilian, or where they do it is described as *dialettologia*, that is, the study of dialects.

Therefore when we pay attention to similar cultural developments between Sami and Sicilian cultures, the poem becomes not just a voice of an ethnies, but of all minor literatures, languages. It emphasizes the importance of viewing cultural interference within the paradigm of cultural and literary ecology. Those who enjoy and work with Sami and other endangered literatures can clearly see the necessity of placing literary studies within the larger context of ecological considerations.

CONCLUSION

The sections above have dealt with the phenomenon of literary ZCS, and as this narratological technique can effect the interpretation process happening along reception. Since ZCS involves that the narrator covers linguistic multilinguality of the fictional world, the reader needs to decode them when reading. Due to many variations embedded in the text but also the cultural sensitivity of the reader, ZCS will be open the gate to multiple interpretations. The four major interpretations described as intercultural, transcultural, multicultural and polycultural are possible readings, but not at all the only ones. Beside understanding the storyline (level of content), other cognitive processes and compositional aspects shape the satisfaction the reader gets while engaging in reading poetry.

NULLATÍPUSÚ KÓDVÁLTÁSBÓL EREDŐ ÉRTELMEZÉSI LEHETŐSÉGEK

Kulcsszavak: *nullatípusú kódváltás; intrakulturális; multikulturális; transzkulturális és polikulturális olvasat*

A tanulmány azt vizsgálja, hogy az olvasóra milyen interpretációs feladatok hárulnak, amikor egy irodalmi szöveg nullatípusú kódváltást alkalmaz. Akkor, amikor a lírai vagy prózai narrátor úgy meséli el a szituációt, hogy annak nyelvi kódjait nem tükrözi vissza közvetlenül, az olvasónak a mű befogadása során valamiképp interpretálni kell ezeket. Ennek szemléltetésére a tanulmány Inger-Mari Aikio számi költőnő egy versét választja ki, melyet a tanulmány írója a saját diákjain tesztelt. A négy teljesen elhatárolható értelmezés eredményeképp a vers intrakulturális, multikulturális, transzkulturális és polikulturális olvasatait kapjuk. Ezek mellett természetesen számos további módzata van a befogadás élményének, amelyekre a tanulmány nem tér ki.

POSSIBILITĂȚI DE INTERPRETARE REZULTATE DIN COMUTAREA CODULUI DE TIP ZERO

Cuvinte-cheie: *comutare de cod de tip zero; interpretare intraculturală, multiculturală, transculturală și policulturală*

Studiul actual examinează sarcinile de interpretare impuse cititorului atunci când un text literar folosește comutarea codului de tip zero. Când naratorul liric sau prozaic povestește situația fără a reflecta direct codurile ei lingvistice, cititorul trebuie să le identifice într-un fel în timpul recepționării operei. Pentru a ilustra acest lucru, studiul selectează o poezie a poetei sami Inger-Mari Aikio, pe care autoarea studiului a testat-o pe proprii ei studenți. Ca rezultat al celor patru interpretări complet distincte obținem lecturi intraculturale, multiculturale, transculturale și policulturale ale poeziei. Pe lângă acestea, desigur, există multe alte moduri de interpretare, pe care studiul de față nu le acoperă.