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## CAPITOLO 5 TRADUZIONE E MULTILINGUISMO

### **Intertextual translatability using the example of the German translation of the Ukrainian novel *Twelve Rings* by Yuri Andrukhovych**

#### **Abstract**

This chapter deals with questions of intertextuality and in this context with the problem of the translatability of an intertext. The analysis is carried out using the example of the German translation of the Ukrainian novel *Twelve Rings* by Yuri Andrukhovych.

In the analytical part of the article some intertexts will be identified and explained. It will be analyzed whether these intertexts were recognized in the German translation and how successfully they were communicated to the German readership. A limited number of references from the fields of poetry, advertising and pop culture, which are used as intertextual models in the novel, will be dealt with. The examples are decoded and described to clarify how a communication process between the author and the recipient takes place.

**Keywords:** intertextuality, intertext, communication process, recipient, quotation.

#### **Traducibilità intertestuale sull'esempio della traduzione tedesca del romanzo ucraino *I dodici cerchi* di Yuri Andrukhovych**

##### **Riassunto**

Questo capitolo tratta della questione di intertestualità e, in tale contesto, del problema di traducibilità dell'intertestito. L'analisi è stata eseguita con l'uso della traduzione tedesca del romanzo ucraino *I dodici cerchi* di Yuri Andrukhovych.

Nella parte analitica dell'articolo alcuni intertesti sono stati identificati ed esplicitati. L'oggetto dell'analisi sarà quello di verificare se questi testi sono stati approvati in tedesco nonché quanto efficacemente sono stati comunicati ai lettori di lingua tedesca. Un numero limitato di testi di riferimento dell'area di poesia, pubblicità e cultura popolare sono stati utilizzati in quanto modelli intertestuali. Gli esempi sono stati decifrati e descritti per dimostrare come avviene il processo di comunicazione tra l'autore e il destinatario.

**Parole chiave:** citazione, destinatario, intertestualità, intertesto, processo di comunicazione.

## 1. Introduction

The following political event served as the impetus for choosing the topic of the paper. On July 11, 2019 a sensational development in the relationship between Moscow and Kiev took place: the two presidents spoke with each other for the first time. A successful dialogue can only take place if understanding and being understood are possible.

In the book written in 2003 by Yuri Andrukhovych, Ukrainian, Russian, English and German are spoken, but because people do not always understand each other, misunderstandings and errors abound.

Multilingualism is practised in various ways in Andrukhovych's novel, first at the level of the code, where on the one hand the Cyrillic and Latin alphabets are mixed, and on the other Ukrainian is constantly contaminated with "European" languages such as German and English. Thus, on the level of the code, there is a constant co-existence and opposition of Ukrainian and Russian on the one hand and Western European languages on the other. [...] Wall inscriptions [...], interjected foreign-language personal talk [...] and others produce a specific idiom that must also be seen in connection with the discourse on Europe in the text (Stickel, 2014: 379).

As Sturm-Trigonakis notes, "[...] an increasing acceptance of mixed-language texts can be observed, which is certainly also due to the prevailing processing of current topics of globalisation in them [...]" (Sturm-Trigonakis, 2016: 183).

For an adequate translation from this "specific idiom", very good knowledge of the language is not enough:

Andrukhovych not only has an incredibly rich linguistic register (from high literary speech to vulgar stammering), but has also expanded and fertilized modern Ukrainian literary language as such. In his novel, the most diverse levels of language and dialect expressions meet, and some things can only be imperfectly translated into German, such as the bourgeois Ukrainian of the Galicians of the interwar period or the language of the Hutsuls, a Carpathian people whose traditions and customs belong to the crystallization points of Ukrainian identity (Stöhr, 2005: 298).

As already mentioned above, the situation for the translator is made more difficult by the fact that the author has "textual resources from more than one national literature" (Sturm-Trigonakis, 2016: 182) (it is enough to mention Ukrainian, Russian and German only).

Intertextuality plays an important role in Yuri Andrukhovych's work. On the pages of his novel he refers to numerous works of different authors: Jung, Kant, Nietzsche, Freud, Sacher-Masoch etc., whereby the author expands the geographical and historical framework of his text.

The novel acquires its idiosyncratic poetic dimension through allusions and quotations, motifs and symbols derived from the poetry of the Ukrainian poet Bohdan-Ihor Antonych, who died young in 1939 (Stöhr, 2005: 296).

Numerous examples show how playing with intertextuality and set pieces from European culture works – in addition to the intertextual reference to the regional Ukrainian tradition (Antonych's green), there is the allusion to Johann Strauss' waltz *Stories from the Vienna Woods* (1868), where the association with the green forest is reproduced (Stickel, 2014: 378–379). This play “with old and new myths, with western and eastern clichés [...] not only lets the worldviews collide, but – extremely skilfully – also ways of speaking” (Rakusa, 2011: 31).

One must have the complete background knowledge with which the author operates. This background material is also not familiar to every recipient in the Ukrainian language, so some facets of the intertextual game might escape him. Since Andrukhovych juggles quotations from different eras, jokes and puns can remain hidden for the modern reader, since many names have been forgotten and realities have disappeared from everyday life. This makes the intertextual dialogue between the author and the recipient in the target language all the more complicated.

Before analyzing how intertextual aspects of Yuri Andrukhovych's novel *Twelve Rings* could be translated into German, we recall the term intertextuality and explain its characteristic aspects.

## 2. Intertextuality in the practice of translation

The translator assumes the role of mediator between the author and the recipient in the target language. In this sense, his task is to facilitate communication at all levels. It is particularly difficult in the case of a “non-literal use of language”, [in which] “by referring to another text, a formulation acquires a meaning that differs from the literal meaning it would have if this reference were not given” (Laiko, 2004: 19). In other words, we are dealing with intertextuality

when an author, in writing his text, is not only aware of the use of other texts, but also expects the recipient to understand this relationship between his text and other texts as intended by the author and as important for the understanding of his text. Intertextuality in this narrower sense thus presupposes the success of a communication process in which not only the author and the reader are aware of the intertextuality of a text, but in which each partner of the communication process also takes into account the intertextual awareness of his partner (Broich, Pfister, 1985: 31).

Stör emphasizes the “tradition of Andrukhovych's aesthetically revolutionary, carnivalesque poetry and prose” and the “polyphony of narrative discourse in

the Bakhtin sense” (Stöhr, 2005: 295). Here, too, it comes as no surprise that “a reference to Bakhtin [1895–1975] as an obligatory gesture of respect never lacks at the beginning” (Laiko, 2004: 20).

With Genette, intertextuality is one of the five forms of transtextuality. Intertextuality is present when the actual text contains two or more texts where one text is present in another. Genette describes three traditional forms of intertextuality that have different indirectness of reference character: *the quotation* marked with quotation marks and/or references with the highest (one hundred percent) proportion of the original; *the allusion* appealing to the reader’s prior knowledge due to its alienating nature; and *the undeclared plagiarism* (Genette, 1993: 10).

The following definition clarifies the relationship between intertextuality and quotation: “Every quotation is a form of intertextuality, but not every type of intertextuality is a quotation” (Zima, 2000: 299). From this it follows that the superordinate term is intertextuality, while the quotation constitutes a form of intertextuality.

The marking of intertextuality is expressed in the text in different ways. The emphasis of quotations mentioned above is only one of many ways to refer to the reference text or content. A detailed classification of marking possibilities, which are accessed in the further analysis, can be found at Broich (Broich, Pfister 1985: 31–47).

### 3. Analysis of the quotations in the original and the translation

In this analysis, we will deal with the delivery of different quotations in Andrukhovych’s novel, since their recognition in the text is of great importance. If they are overlooked or not recognized, the intention of the author cannot be reflected in the target text.

Andrukhovych quotes the advertising slogan of the beverage brand Sprite: “Слухайся своєї снагу” (Andrukhovych, 2013: 28). In 2006, a Sprite slogan was changed from its long running “Obey Your Thirst” to just “Obey” in the United States and was outright replaced with “Freedom From Thirst” in many countries.

In the German translation the translator exchanges this for the slogan of Mars Incorporated: *Mars macht mobil* (Andruchowitsch, 2005: 30). In Germany, the original text “Mars mobilises you at work, sports and play” in the 1980s and 1990s was used in the form “*Mars macht mobil bei Arbeit, Sport und Spiel*”. In this case, the translator succeeded in creating an alliteration that fits ideally into the atmosphere of a railway station described above, where a train is expected to arrive late. In addition, in 2005 the Mars brand was much more present in Germany than Sprite.

An example of a quote highlighted in italics is the refrain of the song *Wind from the Sea...* from the album *Wind from the Sea* by the Russian singer

Natalie released in 1998. The song was among the 99 most popular Russian hits of the years 1991–2011: “[...] то в Марлени все ж крутиться крутиться здесь у підкорці ветер с моря дул, ветер с моря дул, ветер с моря дул [...]” (Andrukhovych, 2013: 36).

This song emphasizes the dominance of Russian pop culture in the Ukrainian entertainment sector and the low musical taste of one of the protagonists. In the German text, the protagonist is tormented by Adriano Celentano’s *Azurro*, which is much more familiar to the German reader than a wind blowing from the coast of an unnamed sea. But the political nuance of the dominance of Russian pop culture in the Ukraine is completely lost: “[...] während in Marlen irgendwo ein Ohrwurm (‘Azuuro, da ta ta ta da ta ta Azuuro dam dam’) klopft [...]” (Andruchowitsch, 2005: 38)

Another highlighted quotation, which stands out from the rest of the text because it is left in the foreign language (Broich, Pfister 1985: 31–47) refers to the phrase from the theme *Alabama* in Kurt Weill’s opera *The rise and fall of the city of Mahogany* (1930), probably familiar to the protagonist as a version covered in 1966 by The Doors: “[...] набрати справжнього розмаху ввечері (oh show me the way to the next whisky bar)” (Andrukhovych, 2013: 66).

Andrukhovych provides the English quotation with a footnote containing a translation into Ukrainian. In the German text, the translator replaces the phrase from the theme *Alabama* with the verse from *Moonlight and Vodka*, a song by Chris de Burgh which appeared on the album *Man on the Line* in 1984: “[...] Abends so richtig in Fahrt zu kommen (moonlight and vodka, take me away)” (Andruchowitsch, 2005: 69).

What the interpreter was guided by in this case, cannot be explained; we haven’t found a good reason for this replacement. Perhaps, the 37-year-old Ukrainian intellectual is more likely to sing in the early 2000s Chris de Burgh than The Doors.

In the following quote, the model is desecrated in a way in which the protagonist disrespectfully quotes a famous Ukrainian poet and human rights activist. The author emphasizes the quote by commenting that the words of a poet not mentioned by name were not quoted, but parodied. Moreover, the reference text appears in the plot “whereby the actors of a text read a reference text or discuss it” (Laiko, 2004: 36), in our case the listeners burst into roaring laughter: “Якби я міг не писати, то робив би коло землі, не стільки цитував, скільки перекирлював когось іншого, від чого все товариство заходилося реготом” (Andrukhovych, 2013: 68).

In order to be sure that the reader is aware of the significance of intersexuality, the author mentions the following information in the notes:

*Якби було краще жити, я б віршів не писав, а робив би коло землі.* This sentence comes from Wassyl Stus (1938–1985), one of our outstanding Ukrainian poets,

dissident and human rights activist, author of several volumes of poetry and countless poetic translations. Shortly after being nominated for the Nobel Prize by the International Human Rights Organization, Stus died in unexplained circumstances in a prison camp in the Urals, where he served a fifteen-year (!) sentence for “anti-Soviet propaganda and agitation” (Andruchovych, 2005: 303).

In the German translation, intertextuality is emphasized by the same means: “Wenn ich nicht schreiben könnte, würde ich das Feld bestellen, parodierte er mehr, als dass er zitierte, und die ganze Gesellschaft brach in brüllendes Gelächter aus”<sup>1</sup> (Andruchowitsch, 2005: 71).

The words of Stus are often associated with the quotes of Anton Chekhov or Leo Tolstoy. The last-mentioned, for example, wrote in his diary on October 19, 1909: “If you write, then only when you can’t help but write”.

In his autocitation from the poem with the English title *And everybody fucks you* Andruchovych directly adopts the leitmotif of the reference text, which is incorporated into the new subject, except that originally it was about the position of a secretary-referent with obligatory computer knowledge, not the dishwasher: “[...] і вона понад півроку пронидала так званою посудомийницею (сто баксів на місяць, і всі тебе трахають)” (Andruchovych, 2013: 106).

In 2004 Andruchovych’s text *And everybody fucks you* was set to music by the Ukrainian cult band Мертвий Півень (Dead Rooster) and became very popular in the country. When translating into German, no reference was made at all to the origin of these lines, whereby the English title would have offered itself as a quotation: “[...] und fast ein halbes Jahr fristete sie ihr Dasein als sogenannte Tellerwäscherin (hundert Dollar im Monat und alle ficken dich)”<sup>2</sup> (Andruchowitsch, 2005: 110).

By “implicitly or explicitly incorporating textual resources from different national literatures and cultures into the author’s text, the contingency of nationally defined literary systems is revealed and ‘sacred’ texts are decanonized” (Sturm-Trigonakis, 2016: 182). This development can be observed in the following example, where an unmarked quotation was inserted:

– Сама ти гуцулка, – не втрималася Марлена, жбурляючи в Лілю порожньою, на жаль, косметичкою. – Гуцулка Ксеня! – додала вона, щоб допекти остаточно (Andruchovych, 2013: 109).

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<sup>1</sup> [If I could not write, I would cultivate the field, he parodied more than he quoted, and the whole society burst into roaring laughter].

<sup>2</sup> [and almost half a year she lived her life as a so-called dishwasher (hundred dollars a month and everybody fucks you)].



– Selber Huzulenweib, – brach es aus Marlen heraus, und sie schleuderte den leider leeren Kosmetikbeutel auf Lili<sup>3</sup> (Andruchowitsch, 2005: 113).

A *Hutsul girl named Xenia*, a Ukrainian song, composed in 1932 by Roman Savyc'kyj, which had the status of a folk song. The song was recorded in the 1990s by the Ukrainian cult band Мертвий Півень (Dead Rooster). During the second half of the 1990s, they evolved into a grunge/art-rock band, though their music can't be described by one particular style. Many songs of the band were based on lyrics of Ukrainian poets like Yuri Andrukhovych.

In the text, *A Hutsul girl named Xenia* is used as an insult to a disrespected country girl, so that her own Ukrainian identity is perceived as shameful. The translator completely omits this reference to the folk song.

In another place, the *devil's thriller sonata* is fiddled down, the name of which is enclosed in quotation marks. Since this is about the poet Bohdan-Ihor Antonych, the reader recognizes the title of his poem: "[...] і пустився витинати 'Чортівського бриджа', а потім відразу і аркана [...]" (Andrukhovych, 2013: 126)

In the German text this emphasis is missing, the reader is not made aware of the intertextuality, which is difficult to discover: "[...] und begann, die Teufelstrillersonate herunterzufiedeln und danach einen Arkan [...]"<sup>4</sup> (Andruchowitsch, 2005: 130).

In the following scene, the author draws attention to a quotation by making it stand out through its italic print and the fact that it remains in the foreign language. In addition he points out to the reader that the quotation is paraphrased, without saying exactly that it's about *I Can't Get No Satisfaction* by The Rolling Stones: "[...] так що інша цитата, цього разу з іншого генія минулих епох, щоправда, дещо перекручена, сприймалась як ніколи доречною: you can't give me satisfaction [...]" (Andrukhovych, 2013: 203–204).

While Andruchovich believed he had to draw the Ukrainian reader's attention to the fact that the quotation was paraphrased, the German translator renounced this reference in the conviction that the German reader was aware of the reference text: "[...] so dass ein anderes Zitat, das von einem anderen Genius der Vergangenheit stammte, unglaublich treffend schien: you can't give me satisfaction [...]"<sup>5</sup> (Andruchowitsch, 2005: 210).

In the interrogation scene, the protagonist is forced by the police to confess: "[...] і тепер вони наввипередки вигавкували своє колись, ніби в кожного

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<sup>3</sup> [– Hutsul woman herself, – it burst out of Marlen, and she threw the unfortunately empty cosmetics bag on Lili].

<sup>4</sup> [and began to fiddle away the Devil's Thriller Sonata and then an arkan].

<sup>5</sup> [so that another quote that came from another genius of the past seemed incredibly accurate: you can't give me satisfaction].

з них пролізало по Олегові Скрипці і всі вони разом повторювали колись, колись [...]”<sup>6</sup> (Andrukhovych, 2013: 251)

The author makes use of the play on Ukrainian words “once upon a time” and “spill the beans” (*колись*). *Once upon a time* is the title of a song by Vopli Vidopliassova (also VV) (*Воплі Відоплясова, ВВ*), an Ukrainian rock band, created in 1986 in Kyiv. The leader of the band is the singer Oleg Skrypka. Vopli Vidopliassova are the founders of the Ukrainian rock-n-roll style and neo-ethnic rock. They first sang Ukrainian rock outside of Ukraine.

This context is completely lost in the German translation by not mentioning Oleg Skrypka at all: “[...] sie bellten nun um die Wette, und alle zusammen wiederholten immer wieder sing, sing [...]”<sup>7</sup> (Andruchowitsch, 2005: 258).

#### 4. Summary

Andrukhovych’s novel is characterised by the author’s enormous subtextual play, which, depending on the literary competence of the recipient, has to bring about certain impressions and emotions in the latter.

In the course of the previous analysis, a number of discrepancies between the original Ukrainian text and the German translation were identified. The translator must not be accused of not recognizing the intertexts or of misunderstanding them. Hönig and Kußmaul rightly point out that it would hardly be possible to translate texts if the translator were not allowed to release the text from the socio-cultural ties of the source language and to embed it in the target language in a way that is fair to the expectations of the recipients (Hönig, Kußmaul 1982: 53). Despite the correct recognition and decoding of the intertextual aspects, socio-cultural discrepancies often diverge widely, so that they cannot be overcome by conventional linguistic means. In such cases, embeddings or remarks are often used.

Only a limited part of the intertextual material of the novel could be analysed within the framework of this work. Nevertheless, on the basis of the choices made, the following conclusions can be drawn.

When translating texts with intertextual fragments, it is necessary to have possible matching substitutions in the target language. This can only be guaranteed if the translator knows the corresponding sources and templates. This is the only way to overcome the “tragedy of not understanding and not being understood” (Stöhr, 2005: 299). The translator’s own creations are not

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<sup>6</sup> [they barked as if in a competition as if Oleg Skrypka had climbed into each of them and all together they repeated again and again: “spill the beans, spill the beans”].

<sup>7</sup> [they barked as if in a competition and all together repeated again and again: “spill the beans, spill the beans”].



automatically to be regarded as a danger, although the true intention of the author is not taken into account, so that certain nuances fall by the wayside, for which we have given enough examples.

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