In literary stylistics ‘multilingualism’ refers to the use of two or more languages within the same text (Grutman 2009). Texts can either give equal prominence to the languages represented or add “a liberal sprinkling of foreign tongues to a dominant language clearly identified as their central axis” (183). In her monograph, Monolingualism and Linguistic Exhibitionism in Fiction, Anjali Pandey draws on cultural and globalization studies, stylistics, translation studies, semiotics and postcolonial studies to explore the multilingual strategies employed by 21st century prize-winning transnational authors over a decade from 2003 to 2014. The authors selected are: Aravind Adiga, Monica Ali, Jhumpa Lahiri, Neel Mukherjee and Salman Rushdie.

Pandey’s novel approach is based on an interdisciplinary and inclusive model that aims to overcome the binary distinction between linguistic acts of appropriation and abrogation in multilingual textualities. The proposed model considers different textual uses of multilingual content and their literary effects on a cline. An illustrative example of the double use of appropriation and abrogation strategies in the same text is offered by the work of Gloria Anzaldúa, who simultaneously engaged in appropriation by writing in English and in abrogation by code-switching into Spanish with no glosses and no translation (Pandey 2016, 104).

Drawing on her detailed and insightful study, Pandey contends that, unlike the ‘deep multilingualism’ of their counterpart 20th century literary works that aimed at alienating the multilingual reader, current uses of multilingualism “enhance semiotic transparency; encourage linguistic equivalency; and ultimately, aim at rendering a mediating effect on the reader” (101). She names this use of multilingual textuality ‘shallow multilingualism’ or ‘linguistic exhibitionism’ and argues that its goal is to create a familiarizing effect that seeks at “making the Other similar to the self” (Cavagnoli 2014, in Pandey 2016, 102).

Amongst various multilingual strategies, Pandey analyses self-translation, appositive parallel translation (or parenthetical translation), parallel juxtaposition, paratextual glossary of terms, parenthetical explanation and contextual translation. In Brick Lane (2003) Monica Ali uses linguistic tagging to tell, rather than show, the Anglophone reader of any code switches into or out of either Bengali or
other languages at salient points in the novel. In so doing, she signals the occurrence of self-translations into English and renders the source language invisible. An example of how Ali reminds the reader that a literary action occurs in Bengali and not in English is in the following excerpt from a dialogue between Nazneen and her husband Chanu (Ali 2003, in Pandey 2016, 183):

- “What is this called?” said Nazneen.
- Chanu glanced at the screen. “Ice skating,” he said, in English.
- “Ice e-skating,” said Nazneen.
- “Ice skating,” said Chanu.
- “Ice e-skating.”
- “No, no. No e. Ice skating. Try it again.”
- Nanzeen hesitated.
- “Go on!”
- “Ice es-kating,” she said, with deliberation.

An example of self-translation combined with an appositive parallel translation of an italicized Bengali sentence, which is in a transliterated and anglicized form, is in a dialogue between Nanzeen (whose words are rendered in English while they are actually uttered in Bengali) and her lover Karim (Ali 2003, in Pandey 2016, 180):

> “Why do you like me?” she asked one day, hoping that the words came naturally, as if she had just thought of them.
> He was in a playful mood. “Keno tumake amar bhalo lage?” Who says that I like you? His fingers touched the hollow of her throat.

An example of translation via parallel juxtaposition is in a scene of exorcism (Ali 2003, in Pandey 2016, 177–178):

> Then the exorcism began. As a warm-up exercise the fakir and his two helpers in circles around the servant boy, half singing and half-speaking verses, words which locked into each other as tightly as bones in a hand […]
> Ke Katha koyre, dekha deyna
> Ke Katha koyre, dekha deyna
> Node chode, hater kache
> Faster and faster went the chanters, faster and faster flew the words […]
> Ke Katha koyre, dekha deyna
> Who talks, not showing up
> Who talks, not showing up
> Moves about, near at hand.

Through the multilingual strategies illustrated above, Ali, like Jhumpa Lahiri in *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008), enables the Anglophone reader to understand Bengali in and through English, thus simultaneously minimizing the linguistic
hardship of decoding real bilingual encounters and foregrounding English. As Pandey argues, “For Anglophone readers, this strategy renders in both formal and thematicized terms a visibilization of English, with a concurrent invisibilization of Bengali” (Pandey 2016, 179). In a similar fashion, in The Lives of Others (2014) Neel Mukherjee provides an extensive paratextual glossary at the end of his novel to enable readers to understand the meaning of unitalicized multilingual words and phrases used throughout the narrative, including the original Indian names of tropical shrubs and trees (Pandey 2016, 122–123).

In Salman Rushdie’s The Enchantress of Florence (2008) Urdu, Arabic, Turkish and Chaghatai italicized lexicalizations are translated meticulously via parenthetical explanation, as for the words doli and arthi (Rushdie 2008, in Pandey 2016, 261):

She was a doli-arti prostitute of the Hatyapul, meaning that the terms of her employment stated that she was literally married to the job and would only leave on her arthi or funeral bier. She had to go through a parody of a wedding ceremony, arriving, to the mirth of the street rabble, on a donkey-cart instead of the usual doli or palanquin.

Other types of in-text translations used by Rushdie are parenthetical translation: “Sulh-i-kul, complete peace” and contextual translation, by means of which the meaning of the foreign word can be inferred from contextual clues, as in the following excerpt: “He had gone to the Akhsi fortress near Andizhan – ah, where the delicious mirtimurti melons grew!” (Rushdie 2008, in Pandey 2016, 161–262).

As Meylaerts points out, multilingual literary texts constitute a challenge to the “traditional definition of translation as the substitution of one language for another and of one literary text for another” (2013, 521). We can safely affirm that Pandey’s groundbreaking work raises awareness of the interrelationship between authorship and translatorship and inspires translation studies scholars to question linguistic or national boundaries in relation to which separate literatures are constructed as well as rethink the nature of the relationships between literatures, as envisioned by Meylaerts (528).

References


Reviewer’s address

Sara Laviosa
University of Bari Aldo Moro
Via Garruba 6
70122 Bari
Italy
sara.laviosa@uniba.it