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IMMIGRANT WOMEN FICTION: SELF-IDENTIFICATION AND TRANSLANGUAGING AS EVERYDAY PRACTICES

Exploring themes such as cultural identity, language diversity, and transnational perspectives, this article examines the linguistic practices of Russophone émigré women in literary works and raises questions about how these women express themselves, the cultural influences on their language use, and the intersection of language with gender and migration. The research aims to understand the role of language in conveying experiences and perspectives gathered abroad and demonstrates how Russophone women describe their linguistic environment and their integration into a new reality.

Key words: *immigrant fiction, creative multilingualism, Russian diaspora writing, Russophone literature, code switching.*

Introduction. In one of her novellas, the prominent Russian writer Liudmila Ulitskaya (1997) describes a gathering of immigrants to the U.S.A. All these individuals from Russia demonstrated a diversity of talents, educational achievements, and personality traits. Despite different life trajectories they had one thing in common: they had left their homeland and had now plunged into the unknown of a new life. Uprooted and then seeking to sprout shoots in unfamiliar soil, they were forced to make a transformative journey. Over time, even their physical bodies underwent changes as they absorbed the essence of the New World, gradually shedding ties with home. Their thoughts, aspirations, and perspectives evolved, yet they kept seeking validation for their choice to leave their homeland. The more challenges they encountered in America, the more they needed affirmation that emigration was the right choice. Whether consciously or not, they welcomed news from Moscow that reported the erosion of talent and the deterioration of social life. This reinforced their satisfaction with their own life-changing decision.

And yet, despite their will, their distant homeland, which they tried so hard to erase from their thoughts, still held a profound place in their hearts. Their connection to Russia seemed to be unbreakable – an indescribable, unpleasant feeling embedded deep within, akin to a chemical reaction in their blood, causing nausea and bitterness.

The pain of migration and exile is a theme that penetrated Russian-language mass culture. Bibish (2004), whose real name is Khadjarbibi Saddikova, tells the story of a woman from Central Asia who comes to Russia, adapts to the language and way of life, and strives to maintain her identity while showing others that she is a person of high moral character. The book describes numerous situations in which a woman who does not speak Russian finds herself misinterpreting others' words based on certain characteristics, and facing ridicule for their Russian speech. Reflecting on these misunderstandings, she asks her imaginary interlocutor, *Смешно, правда?* 'Funny, isn't it?' When she is pressured to adhere to Russian customs since she lives in Russia, she responds, *А если я поеду в Монголию – должна жить как буддисты, а в Италии – как католики, так, что ли? У меня есть своя вера, она внутри меня находится, и я ее никому не навязываю. И вам тоже советую меня не заставлять!* 'And if I go to Mongolia, should I live like a Buddhist, and in Italy – like Catholics, is that it? I have my own faith, it resides within me, and I don't impose it on anyone. And I advise you not to force me either!' (ibid: 195). When her son goes to school, the principal mentions that they always expect backward children from Central Asia as they speak Russian poorly, but her children speak without an accent and answer questions well. Bibish explains that her mother-in-law is half Russian, and her husband graduated from a Russian school: *С детства свекровь с ними занималась, баюкала по-русски, сказки им читала по-русски. Потом дети ходили в садик в русскую группу, а потом мы их в русскую школу отдали, и вот в результате они своего языка не знают, и знать не хотят, и еще меня ругают: «По-чукчайски нам не плети, мама», – говорят. Вот мы и приехали из-за них* 'Since childhood, my mother-in-law took care of them, sang lullabies in Russian, read them fairy tales in Russian. Then the children went to kindergarten in the Russian group, and then we sent them to a Russian school, and as a result, they don't know their own language, don't want to know it, and even scold me: "Don't speak to us in Chukchai, Mom," they say. That's why we came here' (ibid: 197). The last phrase is touching, as non-Russian influence can explain the word order, choice of verb, and adverb (presumably referring to 'in Chukchi').

Another example is the Tajik-born singer Manizha Sangin who represented the Russian Federation at the Eurovision-2021 song contest and was appointed a Goodwill Ambassador for UNHCR, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the Russian Federation. The videoclip with her song "The City of the Sun" opens with the question: "What will you take with you if you never come back home again?" Sitting in an empty room with Chinese checkered bags often used by migrants the singer repeats this question again and again. Then there is a close up of a bag being opened, and the singer's hand drops into it a passport and some money and pills. Her belongings are on a conveyor belt moving slowly in front of our eyes reminding one of an airport scene before departure. Then Manizha goes to an old desk-top computer and fleeting images appear on the screen: children's faces and views of a peaceful city which can be recognized as Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan. Images of farmers working in the fields are followed by scenes of violence and devastation. These images look like family chronicles from

Tajikistan, once a peaceful country, which in the 1990s was torn by a civil war. Hostilities, power struggle, and poverty made many Tajiks emigrate and look for better life in Russia. In the last scene the singer is sitting on a huge pile of canvas bags. She no longer sings but speaks slowly: "Eighty million people were forced to leave their homes because of persecution or wars. What will their memories preserve for the future? This does not depend on them alone but also on us. Please, let us try to be kinder." The song is dedicated to all those who are in exile, and her appeal to the audiences to be kind clearly alludes to various cases of discrimination and violence which migrants from Central Asia suffered in Russia. The videoclip had 1.2 million viewings and hundreds of commentaries in YouTube. It also provoked a discussion in Facebook (FB) conducted in Russian and partly in Tajik. FB users praise Manizha for expressing their common pain and giving them moral support (Facebook.com/UNinTajikistan/posts/3987100171341737). On the other hand, many Russian-speaking men refuse to associate her with Russian women. These discussions confirm that the concept of identity is multifaceted and that both language and ethnicity play a role.

The question which Manizha is asking in her videoclip also concerns a female bard, Natella Boltianskaya. In the concerts she gives in different countries where Russian-speaking émigrés live she recalls how she saw off many of her friends who were migrating still in the Soviet times. It was then that she came to dislike Moscow international airport Sheremetievo because at that time, both people staying and people leaving were sure that they were parting forever. Many years passed and traveling to and back became possible. Émigrés started visiting the towns where they grew up as foreigners. They no longer really belonged. And when during her concert tours Natella started visiting homes of her old friends abroad, she found them to be quite different from their pre-emigration homes. But there was one thing that reconciled her with changes: bookshelves with the same books, placed in the same order as in the Moscow apartments of their owners. These old books carried across continents served as bridges between times and people separated by migration. Books together with old photos are often mentioned in the narratives of Russian-speaking émigrés as the most important thing that they took leaving home for good (Yelenevskaya & Protassova, 2023).

We wanted to investigate linguistic practices of Russian-speaking women abroad as reflected in literary works. Our research questions are: How do these female immigrants depict them in fiction? What linguistic patterns and strategies do they employ? How do Russophone women negotiate their linguistic identities through the texts and to what extent do they reflect their language use in real-life contexts? What cultural and societal factors influence linguistic practices and how do they intersect with the themes of gender, identity, and migration? How do Russian-speaking women use language to convey their experiences, emotions, and perspectives in literature? What implications do the linguistic practices of Russian-speaking women in literature have for our understanding of language diversity and representation in literary discourse?

Theoretical background. Texts written by immigrant authors demand examination within various realms of production, dissemination, and translation. They address a spectrum of critical themes, such as the global journey of books and migrant authors, the comparative reception of postcolonial literature, transnational critique, mobility, feminism, linguistic mediation, immigrant narratives, and politics. Studies of immigrant fiction integrate research from world literature, book history, and narrative theory to question traditional approaches to literary analysis rooted

in national literary paradigms (Walkowitz, 2007). Deutsch Scotland (2018) claims that immigration fiction, viewed as part of trauma studies, explores how immigrant authors convey the challenge of communicating pain and the impact of immigration policies. Literature uniquely enables readers to understand the experiences of others, supplementing legal education by providing insight into the lives of immigrants alongside statutory texts. Immigrant women, facing ethno-gendered domestic violence, are particularly vulnerable due to cultural factors and legal barriers. There are various kinds of immigrant suffering, and their literature renders it (e.g., Hron, 2009).

On the other side, creative multilingualism (Kohl et al., 2020) explores the pulsating interplay between language diversity and creativity. Topics range from the dynamic relationship between pluricentricity and identity (Mustajoki et al., 2020) to the intricate nuances of translation and the imaginative worlds of constructed languages and reveals the transformative power of multilingualism in our daily lives. Cuttler (2005) and Cowart (2006) examine immigrant and ethnic American literature, emphasizing the distinction between first-generation immigrants born in the United States and their immigrant parents and concentrating on the fluidity of linguistic and cultural translation challenging traditional immigration metaphors and concepts of Americanness and ethnicity.

Researchers feel the need to redefine Russian diaspora writing by moving away from the traditional view of it as a subordinate part of national literature. Instead, the emphasis should shift towards analysis of transnational ties that influence cultural practices outside the homeland. Indeed, we observe a unique diasporic literary expression characterized by hybridity, ambivalence, and a sense of multiple belonging. Drawing on various conceptual perspectives, including diaspora and postcolonial studies, translation theories, self-translation, world literature, and evolutionary literary criticism, literary scholars argue that diaspora narratives reshape historical memory, challenge mainstream notions of Russianness, reinterpret cultural themes, and address topics often considered marginal or taboo in the homeland. The discussions are centered around the methodological perspective of diaspora and its significance for understanding the contemporary human condition (Meklin, 2005; Rubins, 2021).

The book “Global Russian Cultures” explores questions about Russian identity and cultural expression in diverse geographical and linguistic contexts, including literature written in English by authors like Gary Shteyngart and Lara Vapnyar. It challenges the notion of a singular, essential Russian identity, instead recognizing the multitude of Russian cultures worldwide, shaped by migration and geopolitical shifts. The contributors argue that these global Russian cultures are independent entities with their own forms of literature, music, film, and everyday life, transcending political and linguistic boundaries and challenging traditional nation-building projects centered around Russia. Butenina (2019) shows that Russian-American literature captures key elements of the Petersburg literary tradition and incorporates them into the narrative of New York, the quintessential immigrant American city, highlighting eccentricity, eschatological myth, (meta)literary elements, theatricality, and transitory states, reflecting the hybridization of textual space within the immigration narrative framework, albeit leading to New York being portrayed as a less tragic literary counterpart to Petersburg.

Caffee (2022) posits that current research in Russophone literature encompasses works written in the Russian language by authors who do not

necessarily identify themselves as Russian, which positions this scholarship within the broader context of transnational and postcolonial perspectives in Russian, East European, and Eurasian literary studies. The thematic and geographical scope of her studies covers literature and media from Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, and the United States, with a focus on materials published in the last decade. The common themes explored include identity politics, language ideology, the development of new national ideas, responses to post-Euromaidan geopolitical challenges, and the intersection of contemporary writing with new media. We have encountered similar phenomena in our material.

Material and method. We gathered books authored by several female émigré writers and thoroughly examined them to identify instances of linguistic self-reflection and code-switching. Our methodology involved motive and content analysis. This study builds upon previous research on similar topics and adds to a series of partial investigations focusing on the language characteristics of immigrant literature, language diversity, female émigré identities, and the concept of home in the Russophone diaspora. The selection of authors was based on their vivid engagement with topics that interest us: adaptation to a new environment in emigration, self-presentation of Russian-speaking women, and the comparison of past experiences in different countries with a new environment. We find that the reflections of these female authors complement each other and provide an insight into the overlapping of multiple worldviews. The protagonists constantly have to overcome challenges, they suffer defeats and achieve successes, and strive to live meaningful lives. They are observant and critical both of themselves and their surroundings.

Results and discussion. It is not surprising that the reflection on the acquired experience of emigration and adaptation requires expressing one's thoughts in writing. This self-reflection shows how previous views are refined or replaced by new ones, necessitating a new language that contains fragments of thinking shaped by a different culture and the language of the new environment. It is quite likely that women's perspectives are formed based on internal preferences and life attitudes. In some of the analyzed texts, the protagonist is the alter ego of the author, while in others some authors endow other characters with their thoughts and ideas.

1. The transition from polyethnic city of Nalchik, the capital city of the Kabardino-Balkaria Republic of Russia, to polyethnic America is described by an unknown writer with the initials I. D. (2007), identified as Ilona Davydova, whose textbooks of easy English learning were popular. The author uses metaphors that she has devised to explain the process of learning English: “If it were Russian, I’d take the wheel, turn on the ignition, and... off I go! My automobile would readily and smoothly accelerate. In an hour, without any obstacles or impediments, I would cover dozens, if not hundreds of kilometers, having gained speed and employing talents that I developed over many years! No such achievements can be mastered in English”. English is a wheelbarrow, a wheelchair that she would prefer not to use, and the promise that she would eventually switch to a Chevrolet and Russian would remain no more than a good old Volga [Soviet car] does not help her reconcile to artificial limbs which would never replace real legs. “A foreign language appears to be like a scattering of peas, and catching fleeting words is impossible”. The author observes that in America, the level of the Russian language used by immigrants has plummeted: they “desperately employ harsh language”, their “speech comes from a garbage can”. Former notions of language competency and purity are no longer operational: “Ten years of life were spent at Soviet school,

automatizing writing skills, doing sentence analysis, studying literature, and today, nobody needs it anymore". The 'true' texts are those which are written in Russian, but not in an emigrant Russian". Using the analogy that 99% of her being is made up of Russian, which is like an ocean, and less than 1 per cent of her being is made up of English, which is like a cup into which water drops—I.D. considers the alternative: either she manages to learn English immediately or return home because otherwise she will fall behind her peers and get stuck in her personality development. The author reminds us that a word-by-word translation does not convey the beauty of the language, and the glossary is so brief that gaps prevent the reader from getting a sense of the overall content and direction of the text. It appears to the narrator that she was born with Russian, or that she has gained it unconsciously. Working on English seems to be a waste of time. Instead, she would be able to learn a lot about life—this process is like coping with calluses, a prison sentence that must be served. The passion that allows you not to notice the prickles and ruts of language gradually emerges during motivated reading, and the inspiration works wonders, transforming you into a supercomputer processing a massive amount of data, and your capacity to concentrate grows. The author associates the ability to acquire a modern language and receive data about one's surroundings with a sense of wonder about life and the joy of those things that come together with language.

2. In her book *Confession of an Emigrant Girl* (2014) Yulia Petrova tells a story of a young woman's infatuation with a foreign country which gradually disappears as realities of immigrant life remove the glamor from the myth the protagonist created. Masha, the heroine of the novel is from Kiev. Her pre-migration life was dedicated to studying English and dreaming of England, particularly London. She managed to get to the city of her dreams when she became a sports journalist. The two-day business trip seemed like a joke and Masha grieved having to leave London, but this trip reinforced her desire to live in England. She figured out how to secure a multiple-entry visa and flew to conquer the country. "Perhaps our party of luck hunters was not too different from those who came here a hundred years ago," she says of individuals she meets along the way. They are young, speak poor English, and have little experience, but they want to bring back home a lot of money. "Emigrants are all the same. People remain the same as time passes and eras change. Some will flourish, while others will be crushed by the machinery of another society. History tends to repeat itself". In the quest for an inexpensive place to live, the protagonist meets a Slovakian and immediately feels drawn to him because of their shared mentality: "Being abroad has an amazing effect on people. When you're at home, you consider any guest to be a stranger. However, it is worthwhile traveling to an Eastern European country such as Poland or the Czech Republic, where you will notice that any Russian-speaking person becomes like a family member. And as you travel further west, the same East Europeans will appear to be the most genuine comrades. Simultaneously, Asia transforms all Europeans into possible relatives". The novel focuses on the immigrant experience, including the torments of finding love, choosing a good location where an émigré can feel at home, looking for a job, and wrestling with bureaucracy in the effort of obtaining a permanent visa.

3. Maria Sumnina (2008) who writes about America did not wish to go into exile. She viewed migration as an adverse phenomenon and was looking forward to returning to Moscow. The book depicts two years of her life – the required and adequate duration of residency in the country for a subsequent application for

American citizenship. Sending emails to her pals at home on a regular basis served as therapy, and the emails were eventually compiled into a book. The events take place at the start of the new millennium, and, unlike their predecessors, young people wishing to move to the US understand the importance of proficiency in English and have vivid visions of life overseas.

The book is a fascinating illustration of the evolution of a person who is anti-migration. It is also a fascinating experiment in adapting the Russian language to represent American space. What is going on around her seems surreal to the narrator: "I felt so sad – we live in some kind of a life parody, we achieve something, but it's some funny clumsiness, in an unreal, inhuman city, where the houses are made of cardboard, the editorial office is in the corridor, rats and cockroaches are all around, a cheerful design, a cross between languages, and no one is clean, and people are all alone, and in advertising, and on road signs there are calls to inform on each other; they're trying to kill you anyway, to extract as much money as possible for unnecessary services, and all this is under the threat of war and under the control of a maniac". When the narrator dials telephone numbers given in ads, she rarely understands anyone, because "everyone's accent, superimposed on mine – is a complete mess". Immigrants with different background engage with one another and grow close: "So we went across Brooklyn: Colombian immigrants were driving Russians, and Pakistani immigrants were on the couch belonging to Colombian immigrants". Although there are "recognizable figures – women in fur coats and headscarves near jeeps – our Orthodox… There's a strange sense here – they're doubly alien, both because they're immigrants and because everyone in the parish is from the same community, and the priest speaks two languages, neither of which is his".

In the confusion of the total picture individual inscriptions and yells seem simpler to understand in the surrounding world: "Shit, shit; The water is not safe; St. Emeric's Catholic Church; Hey! Moving in! Maybe we can make new friends?"

By the middle of the book, English words creep into the author's vocabulary, and they are frequently explained, such as *shabby* (*встрепанная*), or transliteration is used: *насладиться апскейл* [enjoy premium], (upscale – *роскошный, ориентированный на потребности богатых клиентов* [luxury, focusing on the interests of wealthy clients]). Reproduction of Americans' comments become longer: "Why are you leaving more often than coming?", "I can order for you". This change in the use of language aims to reflect the narrator's developing familiarity with the host society's habits as well as a growing familiarity with the climate.

A *New Yorker* is signified by the adjective *NY-skiy* and the noun in plural by *NYcy* which are formed by an analogy with NY as NI but do not seem to be used in Russian. Some of the words are not supplied with translation, implying that the reader should be familiar with them, e.g., a *gym*. Yet some terms are explained at length: a *grocery* is 'a store with a limited assortment of foods, chips, and detergents, where you can make a sandwich and pour tea'. '…at our place in the Poconos on a deck (translation: 'at the dacha in the mountains, in the Russian community, on a verandah')', where noteworthy are both the place name and a loan word, which is common among all Russian-speaking Americans. Other examples include: "No picturing!!!," signs warning of "no parking beware of the dog" (in English: 'Carefully, vicious dog', a literal, word for word, translation). The translation appears to be inaccurate; the concept has been Russified: no one should be afraid of a dog, but you must be careful not to let the dog out of the gate. So too with the word *bullshit*, which is translated literally (in American English, it is

desemanticized). As with зефир *маршмэллоу* ‘marshmallow’ (not widely known in Russia where the equivalent might be *zefir*). Some explanations are given in footnotes: ‘a soft, airy confection made from gelatin, sugar, and flavorings’. Probably, the author fails to give an accurate reading of *Shoot the freak*, following which the word *freak* is merely used in various pronunciations and contexts. When everything seems to be going well and ‘I am myself again,’ the local psychiatrist’s expression comes to mind: *my old self*. For example, on the route to Chicago, they travel on the ‘highway’: ‘Two tolls later – there are booths where they collect money – one should pay for the roads – we moved into Illinois’. According to the narrative, the author did not make any extra efforts to improve English. Sumnina also reacts to an English-language calque in a Russian-language announcement: ‘Make a meeting quickly!’ from English *make an appointment*, and to an insertion of an English word into Russian speech: ‘offered such a *beautiful* puppy’.

During an anti-war protest, an anonymous young man is attacked and battered, which prompts the protagonist to burst into native speech: ‘Here something happened to me that I was terrified of and did not expect to happen. I dashed there and began shouting horrible insults in Russian; my adrenaline was pumping, and my head was throbbing so much that I had to take *validol* [a popular Russian over-the - counter medication for heartaches]. The hardest part about being in a crowd is that you can’t keep your cool. Any trend is multiplied by a hundred.’

Repeated language errors become a recurring theme in conversations: ‘We discussed the problems of the language, and the Americans tried to speak Russian, and we finally took revenge on the “bloody mumblers.” Rebbeka spat out the word “washcloth”’. If someone laughs behind your back, you may become irritated and angry ‘at extraterrestrials, at the re-use of the term “bloody mumblers,” and at the fact that they always make us feel like strangers’. Constantly dreaming of a home in Moscow but fearing bureaucracy, the author argues, almost on the eve of returning home: ‘We are so used to not understanding anything here and not influencing anything that we have forgotten how to act decisively’. She knows that it is impossible to get rid of one’s accent until the very last moment: ‘Everyone comments on our language after we leave. They say, “Well, tell us something, and we’ll listen to your accent”’.

4. Dina Rubina, born in Uzbekistan, a Russian-Jewish writer living in Israel, is the author of *Women’s Wind*, which is about the contributions of Russian-speaking immigrants in various domains of life in the United States. Rubina’s works have always been multilingual and polyphonic. The story in *Women’s Wind* takes place in Kiev, Canada, and the United States. Back in Kiev, the heroine was surrounded by people from many walks of life, speaking a variety of languages and working in a variety of occupations each having a professional slang. She now lives in New York, and like many of her co-ethnics, she started speaking English only after migration. After migration she had to retrain and like many of her co-ethnics found a job in a beauty parlor. First and foremost, mashups in her language are linked to her work as a *бьютишен* / *эстетишен* ‘beautician, or aesthetician’ (*kosmetolog* in standard Russian). *Лайсенс* ‘licence’ (treated in her sentences as a masculine noun, while the Russian noun is feminine) is a work permit; *фейс* ‘face’ is a person; *шампунь-леди* ‘shampoo-lady’ is a job of a hair-washer; *бьюти-дейз* ‘beauty days’ is her part-time job in a nursing home; *снимать мессэджи с телефона* ‘take phone messages’; *нашей* ***corporation*** *принадлежат двадцать пять салонов* ‘our corporation owns twenty-five beauty parlors’, *Я стараюсь слишком рано людей не* ***буковать****, если только нет срочной необходимости.*

У меня личный кабинет, где я произвожу разного рода процедуры или – запомни и используй это слово – ***сервисы*** ‘Unless there is an urgent need, I try not to book clients too early. I have my own parlor where I give numerous types of treatment, or – remember and use this term – services’; *клинзеры* ‘cleansers’; *спонжики* ‘sponges’*; стимер* ‘steamer’; *вакс* ‘wax’*, отваксать* ‘work with wax’*, фэйшл* ‘facial’; *шарм-скул* (feminine) ‘charm school’; *старая карга оставила хороший тип* ‘the old hag left a good tip.’ Certain terms are associated with life in America in general, like *боро* ‘borough’ (administrative division of Greater New York neighborhoods); *home attendant* (old people’s assistant); *их* ***трейдеров юнион*** *держит за яйца все американское общество* ‘their trade union holds the entire American society by the balls’; *выглядит она очень* ***феминин*** ‘she looks very feminine’; *бордвок* ‘boardwalk.’ Emigrant jargon appears to be embodied in such examples: *Да, а с самим салоном произошла романтичная история: Эдди его прогулял, просвистел или, как еще говорят здесь, “****профакал****”* ‘Yes, and a romantic story happened with this very parlor. Eddie drank it away, he philandered it away or, as they say here, fucked it up’; *Мне даже удалось втиснуть туда книжный шкаф – “****юзаный****”* ‘I even managed to squeeze a bookcase there, a “used” one’; *не особо знакомые с английским советские эмигранты, безбожно коверкая, “Сони-Исланд-авеню”* ‘Soviet emigrants, who were not really familiar with English, distorted the words beyond recognition and called it “Sony Island Avenue” (meaning Coney Island Avenue); ***срентуем*** *тачку* ‘let us rent a car.’

Immigrant Russian-language jargon is rendered here, revealing its typical features: phonetic and morphological adaptation of English words to the Russian pronunciation and grammar, addition of endearing, diminutive and pejorative affixes, a mix-up of stylistic registers, generous insertion of taboo words and a mixture of Russian and English slang. A specific feature of the text is that borrowings are concentrated around the protagonist’s occupational sphere. Yet, we can also see that expressing her emotions the protagonist relies on both languages in her repertoire. Notably, in one of our interviews, a migrant from the US used literally the same mix up of Russian and English words listed here while she was talking about the care she takes of her face and body from a Ukrainian-born lady.

5. Alla Barkan is a pediatrician and professor of medicine who emigrated from Kazakhstan first to Austria and then to Switzerland. She wrote many pedagogical books for parents and provided psychological counseling for Russian-speaking people abroad. In her book (Barkan 2018) she accumulated her experience of living abroad, focusing on women in different life situations. Barkan refers to the fifth wave of emigration as specialists invited to work. While men happily work in science, enjoying comfortable conditions, women have no one to talk to. Although it seems that Russian is spoken everywhere in the center of Vienna, if you strike up a conversation, you will find out they are from different planets. She characterizes the new Russians who have settled in Europe. Some believe it is good that Vienna is full of immigrants from Moldova, Ukraine, willing to work for virtually nothing under the table. The situation is different in Austria compared to their homeland: a former director of a botanical garden works as a gardener, someone who was a professor and department head now provides private psychology services, and other Russians in Vienna are difficult to categorize (*neither fish nor flesh*), and still, one has to be careful with them and even offer to pay for silence. Russian-speaking friends are needed to share with someone other than servants. At the same time, they try to make acquaintances with all

the prominent Russians, including descendants of the White émigré community. In the garden, roses are bought from all over the world, while daisies come from her native Russian village. Counting which wave of emigration this is, Barkan concludes that this should already be the n^{th} wave of immigration, as it steadily flows into all countries. However, even in small numbers, these immigrants find reasons to leave Russia, a country they ironically refer to as 'the beloved.' The overcrowding and fear in Russia prompt many to seek refuge abroad, often bringing their families to the safety of living in mansions and have no need for bodyguards. Meanwhile, businesses of modest means spring up to facilitate their departure from the former Soviet Union. As for the Russian wives of Austrians, this seems to be a different story altogether, with many marriages being either superficial or hastily entered into, resulting in more pain than joy. Life in a suburban mansion near Moscow was beautiful, and most importantly, everything happened in Russian, not in a foreign language. It is noted that abroad, *Antonina* calls herself *Angela* or *Angelika*, and *Galina* becomes *Christina*. Some researchers (e.g., Clifton, 2013; Protassova, Yelenevskaya, 2024a) draw attention to how names, national identity, and immigrants' integration into host countries are discussed, and the social consequences of these discussions and to the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion based on names considered 'foreign.'

Stories of Russian-speaking women in Europe have been collected by Budagashvili (2017) and others. The histories of children in immigration are artistically and didactically reported, e.g., in Stazi (2018), Heinz (2020), Guelfreikh (2021), and Danilova (2021). In these books, perception of another country is often conveyed by comparing impressions of different surroundings, cultures, landscapes, and the scenery of two or more environments. Adventures are often described as the challenges of simultaneously learning two languages, the struggles with misunderstandings, the gradual immersion into a different environment, the search for friends and self-affirmation, ultimately leading to success or to a new conception of their own personality. Whan compared to real practices of the Russophone immigrant women (e.g., Protassova & Yelenevskaya, 2024a; Yelenevskaya, 2024), we can state that linguistic biographies are in many aspects close to the same patterns and quite similar to what is reported on immigrant literature in general.

Conclusion. Based on a selection of both well-known and lesser-known female authors, we examined the main themes of their stories and novels in terms of reflections on emigration and adaptation processes in a new country. All the protagonists reveal differences in character, and they all view their life experiences as unique. Dealing with a new cultural and linguistic reality and being at various stages of integrating into the new society, they portray the self simultaneously mirroring how this process unfolds for others. They are seldom indifferent to the people around them and demonstrate a range of feelings and attitudes: sympathy and envy, criticism and admiration, encouragement and compassion. Seeking means of expression, they draw on the idiom and imagery of their own language and on the language of their new environment, which suggests hybridization of their identity.

Russophone women express their linguistic practices in literary works by utilizing various language patterns, expressions, and stylistic elements witnessing their knowledge of different languages, their feelings of nostalgia, and their search for comfort in the soul. In their literary expressions, immigrant women employ code-switching, specific lexical choices, syntactic structures, and narrative techniques to convey their experiences and perspectives which testify to their

changing status, view of the world, and life trajectories. These female émigrés negotiate their linguistic identities through fiction by exploring the themes of language proficiency, bilingualism, cultural heritage, diaspora communities, and assimilation. One of the biggest questions remains the linguistic and cultural integration of their children, their pains, sufferings, their integration, and ultimate success or failure.

Fiction written by Russian-speaking women often reflects their language use in real-life contexts by incorporating vernacular speech, dialects, and linguistic nuances discrepant with their previous cultural and social backgrounds. Although happening in various countries, the process of integration reveals common features. Cultural and societal factors such as historical events, migration experiences, gender roles, and societal norms influence the linguistic practices depicted in their texts. Intersections with the themes of gender, identity, and migration showcase the complexities of language acquisition, adaptation, and expression in multicultural contexts.

The study provides insights into the dynamic relationship between language, culture, and personal identity. Russophone female writers use language to convey their unique experiences, emotions, and perspectives, shaping narratives that reflect their linguistic and cultural heritage. Linguistic practices portrayed in literature by Russian-speaking women contribute to broader discussions about language diversity, cultural representation, and the role of women in shaping literary traditions, the richness and complexity of language use, challenging monolithic representations and promoting a more inclusive understanding of linguistic diversity. All these factors changes over time and first impressions and long experiences result in different recapitulations of the reflections and positions gained by the authors.

The wellbeing of all the featured authors naturally aligns with the stage of their integration into the life of a new country. The search for justification and meaning in their actions inevitably accompanies the immigrant's journey. The female perspective, if one may say so, emphasizes everyday details and the attainment of certain levels of comfort. All of this is described in the academic literature on immigration and is presented here in a literary form.

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Резюме

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ХУДОЖНЯ ЛІТЕРАТУРА ЖІНОК-ІММІГРАНТОК: САМОІДЕНТИФІКАЦІЯ ТА ОДНОЧАСНЕ ВИКОРИСТАННЯ КІЛЬКОХ МОВ ЯК ПОВСЯКДЕННА ПРАКТИКА

Постановка проблеми. Тексти, написані авторами-іммігрантами, порушують такі важливі теми, як порівняльна рецепція постколоніальної літератури, фемінізм та політика іммігрантських наративів, інтегруючи дослідження зі світової літератури та теорії наративу, щоб кинути виклик традиційним національним літературним парадигмам. У цій статті досліджено

трансформаційну силу багатомовності та гібридного вираження діаспорних літературних творів, які змінюють історичну пам'ять та культурну ідентичність.

Мета дослідження – вивчення відображених у літературних творах мовних практик російськомовних* жінок, які проживають за кордоном. Серед поставлених запитань є такі: як жінки-іммігрантки зображені в художній літературі? Які лінгвістичні моделі та стратегії вони використовують, щоб впоратися з викликами свого нового життя? Як ці жінки виражають свою мовну ідентичність за допомогою текстів і наскільки точно ці тексти відображають їхнє реальне використання мови? Які культурні та суспільні чинники впливають на ці мовні практики, і як вони пов'язані з темами гендеру, ідентичності та міграції? Дослідження вивчає перетин мови з культурними та суспільними впливами в часи надрізноманітності.

Методи. Ми проаналізували книги письменниць-емігранток (І.Д. Петрової, Сумніної, Рубіної, Баркан та ін.) для виявлення мовної саморефлексії та перемикання кодів за допомогою мотивного та контент-аналізу. Ця розвідка ґрунтується на попередніх дослідженнях і сприяє розумінню мовних особливостей емігрантської літератури, жіночої емігрантської ідентичності та концепції дому в російськомовній діаспорі.

Результати. Історії, розказані російськомовними жінками-мігрантками, розкривають виклики та перемоги життя в новій країні. Ці оповідання часто порівнюють різні середовища і нації, ілюструючи боротьбу за вивчення мов та інтеграцію в незнайоме суспільство, що тісно пов'язано з реальним досвідом, задокументованим дослідниками діаспори. Досліджувані літературні твори висвітлюють мовні практики та культурну адаптацію жінок, використовуючи перемикання кодів та неоднозначне ставлення до їхніх досягнень.

Дискусія. Досліджуючи такі теми, як культурна ідентичність, мовне розмаїття та транснаціональні спільноти, автори аналізують мовні практики російськомовних жінок-емігранток у літературних творах і показують, як ці жінки рефлексують про себе. Культура їхнього нового середовища впливає на використання ними мови, а мова перетинається з гендерним та міграційним досвідом. Мова передає перспективи, сформовані в країнах їхнього походження, і демонструє, як російськомовні жінки описують свій мовний багаж та інтеграцію в нову реальність.

Ключові слова: іммігрантська література, творча багатомовність, російська діаспорна література, російськомовна література, переключення кодів.

Abstract

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IMMIGRANT WOMEN FICTION: SELF-IDENTIFICATION AND TRANSLANGUAGING AS EVERYDAY PRACTICES

Background. Texts written by immigrant authors tackle critical themes like comparative reception of postcolonial literature, feminism, and the politics of immigrant narratives, integrating research from world literature and narrative

* Офіційна мова держави-терориста проти України. – *Прим. ред.*

theory to challenge traditional national literary paradigms. This article examines the transformative power of multilingualism and the hybrid expression of diasporic literary works that reshape historical memory and cultural identity.
Purpose. The research aims to explore the linguistic practices of Russian-speaking women living abroad as depicted in literary works. The RQs addressed include: How are female immigrants portrayed in fiction? What linguistic patterns and strategies do they use to cope with the challenges of their new life? How do these women negotiate their linguistic identities through texts, and how accurately do these texts reflect their real-life language use? What cultural and societal factors influence these linguistic practices, and how do they relate to themes of gender, identity, and migration? The study investigates the intersection of language with cultural and societal influences in times of superdiversity.
Methods. We analyzed books by female émigré writers (I.D., Petrova, Sumnina, Rubina, Barkan et al.) to identify linguistic self-reflection and code-switching, using motif and content analyses. This study builds on prior research and contributes to understanding language characteristics in immigrant literature, female émigré identities, and the concept of home in the Russophone diaspora.
Results. Stories narrated by Russophone migrant women reveal challenges and triumphs of living in a new country. These narratives frequently compare different settings and nations, illustrating the struggle of learning languages and integrating into unfamiliar societies which align closely with real-life experiences documented by diaspora researchers. The studied literary works highlight women's linguistic practices and cultural adaptations, using code-switching and mixed attitudes toward their achievements.
Discussion. Exploring themes such as cultural identity, language diversity, and transnational communities, the authors examine the linguistic practices of Russophone émigré women in literary works and provides how these women reflect about the self. The culture of their new environment influences their language use, and language intersects with gender and migration experiences. Language conveys perspectives shaped in their countries of origin and demonstrates how Russophone women describe their linguistic luggage and their integration into a new reality.
Key words: immigrant fiction, creative multilingualism, Russian diaspora writing, Russophone literature, code switching.

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