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Dialogue of Cultures - Culture of Dialogue: from Conflicting to Understanding

LITERARY DISCOURSE AS A GROUND FOR ETHNIC IDENTITY REALIZATION

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Abstract

The article discusses the issues of constructing the identity concept that is relevant for cross-cultural communication in the frame of literary discourse. The author considers the literary text as a symbiosis of the content and features of individual creativity, which reflects the author's ethnic and cultural identity. This is due to the poly-code nature of the literary text, which has an ethnic specificity, implemented in the dichotomy 'Us' vs. 'Them'. While studying the relationship between 'Us' vs. 'Them' in Russian and German linguistic cultures embodied in lexical units, the author comes to the conclusion that these language units of literary texts with ethnic coloration act as specific indicators of communicative behavior of men and women belonging to different ethnic groups. The article emphasizes that in the mentality of the ethno-cultural community the concepts of 'Us' vs. 'Them' are also reflected by means of stereotypes through which the characteristic of 'Us' in comparison with 'Them' is revealed. Analyzing the literary works by Eugene Vodolazkin, the author pinpoints the heterostereotypes underlying the discreteness of 'Us' vs. 'Them'. Besides, the author focuses on the fact that ethnic self-identification in this opposition is based on relations within such categories as norms of behavior, traditions, food, drinks, clothing, language and habits. The main aim is to determine how the self-identification of the personality created by the writer is expressed linguistically based on existing stereotypes in the society regarding the ethnic community of different cultures representatives.

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1. Introduction

Modern globalization processes have stirred up the interest of linguists, cultural scientists, sociologists, and philosophers in the anthropocentric problem of ethnicity and the related concept of "identity", which contributes to a deeper understanding of the axiological picture of the world of different peoples. In this regard, the study of national and cultural identities and their implementation in a literary discourse become relevant, since writers verbally reflect their own identity in their works and, on the basis of historical and social experiences, construct many cultural and ethnic features peculiar to a particular society, a specific linguistic and cultural community.

2. Problem Statement

The problem of discourse in general and a literary one in particular was raised by a wide range of linguists: for example, van Dijk (2015a, 2015b, 2018), Tan (2012), Alonso (2014), Karasik (2014), etc. Literary discourse is described by Karasik (2014) as kind of personality-oriented existential discourse (2014, p. 147), which acts as a link between the writer's literary consciousness, reflecting the facts and objects of reality through the prism of a literary text, and the reader's perception. The text, obviously, is presented in the form of a symbiosis of the content and specifics of individual creativity, which is verbally embodied in a system of language categories that represent the author's ethno-cultural identity. Thus, literary works are seen as a source of ethnic information about the linguistic culture of a particular nation.

3. Research Questions

The questions of studying ethnos as a cultural community are discussed by Bromley (1983), Lévi-Strauss (2011), Tajfel and Turner (1986). In their opinion, there is a certain cultural code, or key, which is understood as the behavior of a particular ethnic group representatives, as well as the system of values that form the basis of the world order, prohibitions, aesthetic codes. The problems of ethnolinguistics are considered in the works of Peeters (Peeters, 2015; 2017; Peeters, Mullan, & Sadow, 2020a; 2020b; 2020c), and the key concepts of linguoculturology are presented in the works of Karasik (2014), Palmer (2015) and other scholars. The category of ethnicity is verbally fixed in language units, thus being a mechanism that contributes to the preservation and transmission of culture.

The preservation of national and cultural identity in the multicultural space is presented in the works by Avxodeeva (2016), self-identification discourse was studied by Lappo (2018), strategies of self-identification were the subject of discussion in the research of Leonova (2016), communication strategies of national identity are highlighted by Shiryayev (2018).

National and cultural identity is understood as the final result of the individual representation in the cultural and symbolic space of a national / ethnic community, as well as the acceptance of the cultural norms and values (Avxodeeva, 2016, p. 22). In addition, according to Grishaeva (2007), a necessary condition for ethnic identity is the awareness of belonging to a particular ethnic group, class, gender, culture and attributing certain moral, physical, and intellectual personal qualities to oneself (pp. 123, 144, 146).

The identity formation is carried out through ethnonyms, auto - and heterostereotypes, character traits, hidden behind words and images associated with them. The foundation of identity is found in

traditions, values, culture, national language, historical past, ethnic, territorial, religious affiliation of a particular people.

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim of this article is to consider the notions of identity in the frame of literary discourse, to analyze the opposition 'Us' vs. 'Them' in Russian and German linguistic cultures embodied in verbal lexical units and identify heterostereotypes underlying the discreteness of 'Us' vs. 'Them'.

5. Research Methods

The language material is represented by texts parts, taken from the works by Eugene Vodolazkin ("Lavr", "Aviator", "Brisbane"), which reflect the identity of the author. The study of literary discourse was carried out by continuous sampling method of data from the literary sources, as well as partial componential analysis, contextual and definition methods.

6. Findings

In the spotlight of the author's attention is Gleb Yanovsky, a brilliant musician, virtuoso who has received international recognition. An outstanding guitarist at the peak of success loses the opportunity to perform due to illness and tries to find support to start anew. The writer embodies into the image of the main character the idea of an intercultural dialogue between Russia and Ukraine (Gleb Yanovsky); Russia and Germany (Gleb Yanovsky, Katarina Herbert, Stefan Mayer, etc.). The space-time continuum created by the author is large-scale: Kiev – Saint Petersburg – Munich – New York, where Vodolazkin shows common stereotypes about representatives belonging to different ethnic and cultural communities.

German women about the Russians:

1) Russian men are strong, ill-mannered, tough. This idea is expressed in the commentary by Barbara, Katarina's sister: «... *p`yanuyu Barbaru, nesmotrya na ee razmery`, otry`vayu ot pola i nesu na divan. Ona nazy`vaet menya **brutal`ny`m russkim tipom**, no e`ta brutal`nost`, v obshhem, ej po dushe ("...I manage to lift drunk Barbara, despite her size, off the floor and carry her to the sofa. She calls me **a tough Russian type**, but this quality, actually, is what she likes")* (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 55).

2) Vodka is the national drink of the Russians. Katarina, Gleb's wife, in an attempt to escape the reality turns to alcohol abuse due to the fact that she cannot become a mother. Addressing her husband she says: « *No posmotri, chto my` p`em, - **chisto russkij napitok** » ("but look what we are drinking – **a purely Russian drink**") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 55).*

3) Russian people talk a lot. Heraldina Costner is the housekeeper of the Yanovskies in Munich: « *O **beskonechny`x russkix besedax** s perepolnenny`mi pepel`niczami rasskazy`vaet v svobodnoe vremya sadovniku-bavarczu » ("[she] tells a Bavarian gardener in his spare time about **endless Russian conversations with overflowing ashtrays**") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 120).*

4) Russian bias against the Germans because of the past war. Katarina Gardner / Yanovskaya is convinced that even German musicians are treated ambivalently in Russia. « *Posle proshedshej vojny`*

velos`im (portretam nemeczkix klassikov) kosovato, xotya nikto i ne dumal ix ni v chem obvinyat`» ("After the war, they hung (portraits of German classics) **askew**, although no one thought to accuse them of anything") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 275).

5) A literal understanding of a foreign language. The lack of practicality and logic in the Russian tongue twisters. Teaching the Russian language and music to Beata, Gleb saw the student's lack of understanding in the semantics perception of Russian texts: «*Shla Sasha po shosse i sosala sushku. Pochemu ona ee ne gry`zla? E`to ochen` zhestkaya sushka? Sushka, izgotovlennaya s narusheniem texnologii*» ("Sasha was Walking along the highway and sucking on a sushka. Why didn't she **bite** it? Is it a very hard sushka? Sushka made with the process flow disruption") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 348).

6) Russians have strange holidays. So, Katarina, having fallen in love with Gleb, tried to blend into Russian culture. Katya offers to toast to the Old New year: «*E`tot stranny`j russkij prazdnik ona ochen` cenit`*» ("She appreciates a lot this **strange Russian holiday**") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 265).

German men about the Russians:

7) The Russians are very sensitive. Stefan Mayer, who does not tolerate objections, is forced to admit to Vera the inaccuracy of his translation of a folk song title: «*Mama moya, dumayet po-bavarski Majer. Do chego vse tonko organizovany`. Mama moya*» ("Oh, my Goodness! Mayer thinks in Bavarian. How **subtly organized** everything is. Oh, my!") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 375).

8) In Russian cuisine, vodka and fried sunflower seeds are always present. «*Znaniya povara o russkoj kuxne by`li obshirny`, xotya i ne lisheny` svoeobraziya: na desert on predlozhil podat` kremanki s zharenny`mi semechkami. Dlya usileniya russkogo kolorita oni kupili neskol`ko buty`lok vodki*» ("The cook's knowledge of **Russian cuisine** was extensive, although not without its originality: for dessert, he suggested serving **fried sunflower seeds** in dessert bowls. To enhance the Russian flavor, they bought **several bottles of vodka**") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 389).

Thus, "the assessment of "deviant" forms of behavior of 'Them' in comparison with 'Us' is formed, which in turn generates biases (van Dijk, 2015a, p.192). There is a formation of the border between 'Us', which is well-known, and the different, alien one – 'Them'.

Let's consider the assessment of Russian characters in relation to German linguoculture:

1) The appearance of German women: «*Vy`sokaya ry`zhaya nemka s gromkim golosom. U nee vse chrezmerno: golos, smex, dvizheniya*» ("A **tall** red-haired German woman with a **loud** voice. She has everything excessive: voice, laughter, movements") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 55). Or «*Vy`sokuyu xuduyu nemku znali vse. Svetly`e pryamy`e volosy`, goticheskoe liczo, chut` vzdernuty`j nos. Za glaza ee nazy`vali Veshalkoj*» ("Everyone knew the **tall, thin** German woman. Straight blond hair, a Gothic face, and a slightly upturned nose. Behind her back, she was called a **Hanger**") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 216).

2) Germany is a prosperous, reliable country with an ordered way of life. Nestor, a writer from St. Petersburg, who came to Germany to interview Yanovsky, notes: «*Myunxen – samo spokojstvie*» ("Munich is the very **calm**") (Vodolazkin, 2019, p. 121).

3) The Germans are precise, scrupulous, and punctual: Yanovsky speaks about Mayer: «*Punktualen. E`ffektiven. Skup na slova*» ("Punctual. Efficient. A man of few words") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 337). Or «*By`l podpisan trudovoj dogovor na semi stranicax. S nemeczkij tshhatel`nost`yu tam*

perechislyalis` obyazannosti i prava novogo t`yutora, v tom chisle vse isklyucheniya iz ukazanny`x obyazannostej i prav`» ("A seven-page employment contract was signed. With German care, it listed the duties and rights of the new tutor, including all exceptions to these duties and rights") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 345). This heterostereotype is quite stable in the Russian mentality.

4) German practicality in commerce, pragmatism. A German producer, who proposed a project for a terminally ill girl's performance and a musician with Parkinson's disease, explains his decision as a way to support people with disabilities around the world. However, Gleb realizes that a public statement about the diagnosis is a way to insure Mayer in the event of a concert program to be proved a failure. *«Medicinskuyu temu on vy`dvigaet kak opravdanie pri vozmozhnoj neudache. Kak by` my` ni vy`stupili, den`gi trebovat` obratno nikto ne budet, i Majeru e`to izvestno» ("He puts forward the medical topic as an excuse for possible failure. No matter how we perform, no one will demand the money back, and Mayer knows this") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 357). The producer's action in relation to an expensive instrument is indicative. Giving Yanovsky a personal guitar made by a famous Spanish master and allowing him to use it for free at performances, Mayer immediately adds: «Gitara, konechno, zastraxovana» ("The guitar, of course, is insured") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 374).*

5) The Germans are a militant people. Vodolazkin repeatedly emphasizes this idea in his works. For example, in the novel "Aviator", the main character evaluates Geiger through an exoethnonym, calling the German doctor a "damn Teuton" (*«chertov tevtonecz»*) for his intransigence in dispute and ability to argue an opinion (Vodolazkin, 2016, p. 186). In "Brisbane", Mayer is sure that Gleb's purpose is to destroy competitors: *«V otlichie ot voinstvennogo tevtoncza, Gleb ne sobiralsya nikogo istreblyat`» ("Unlike the militant Teuton, Gleb did not intend to destroy anyone") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 388).*

6) European reverence for capital. The musician, trying to save Vera's life, arranges an operation for a talented girl in a private German clinic specializing in liver transplantation: *«Kogda ya soobshhayu, chto vopros o den`gax ne stoit (uvazhitel`ny`j vzglyad sobesednika), my` perexodim k obsuzhdeniyu medicinskix voprosov» ("When I say that the question of money is not worth it (a respectful look from the interlocutor), we move on to discussing medical issues") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 387).*

7) Stereotypical views of Europeans about Russians. Gleb Yanovsky is an outstanding musician who has performed in all the world most respected concert halls: *«V grimernoj (Karnegi-xoll) mne prinosyat krepkij chaj v stakane s serebryany`m podstakannikom – kogda-to davno direktoru skazali, chto tak e`to delayut v Rossii. V poezde. Emu ne skazali, chto v poezde» ("In the dressing room (Carnegie Hall) they bring me strong tea in a glass with a silver cup holder - once upon a time the director was told that this is how it is done in Russia. On the train. He was not told what was on the train") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 186).*

8) It is an open secret that European residents largely associate the image of distant, snow-covered Russia with a bear: *«Na scenu vy`letaet plyushevy`j mishka kak vy`razhenie simpatii k Rossii» ("A teddy bear appears on the stage as an expression of liking for Russia") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 187). It is significant that the audience does not throw a hare, cat or dog, but a bear as a sign of appreciation (It's also important to recall the symbols of the Moscow Olympics-80 and Sochi-2014).*

Vodolazkin shapes ethnogender features at the lexical level of the language system in the 'Us' vs. 'Them' opposition, contributing to the actualization of the character's value orientations and marking the

identity of the speaker. Levi-Strauss (2011) drew attention to the binary thinking of the individual in the ordering of the world (p. 181). Dividing real objects into 'Us' vs. 'Them' is a significant phenomenon in understanding ethnic communities. This division in mentality goes back to ancient cultures, when the otherness was attributed to 'Them'. Thus, in the author's novel "Lavr", which takes place in the Middle Ages, an archaic set of characteristics of 'Them' is presented: *"Arsenij i Bloxa....prochli o mantikorax, kotory`e zhivut v Indijskix zemlyax: zuby` u nix v tri ryada, golovy` chelovecheskie, a tela l`viny`e"* ("Arseny and Blokha....read about manticores that live in Indian lands: their teeth are in three rows, their heads are human, and their bodies are of lion's") (Vodolazkin, 2019b, p. 148).

In the cultures of different peoples this opposition is some sort of a fundamental category in which ethnicity acts as a variant of it. In the mentality of an ethno-cultural community, the concept of 'Us' vs. 'Them' is reflected by means of stereotypes, through which the characteristic of 'Them' in comparison with 'Us' is revealed. It is significant that the same phenomena of reality differ in the features of fixing and understanding of what is seen by representatives of different linguistic cultures.

The culturological binary opposition 'Us' vs. 'Them' is the basis for the "ethnicity" attribution and it helps to identify the marked behavior of people of different genders and belonging to different ethnic groups, determined by the specifics of the considered cultures represented in the language. Its dualism forms ethnic self-consciousness and behavior in the society. The opposition is determined by various types of relationships in the society, their assessment and the formation of a mindset. The language personality, being marked from the point of view of society and ethnos, enters a diverse relationship between 'Us' and 'Them' in the culture (Kon, 1984). Thus, ethnic self-identification in the opposition is based on relations regarding such categories as norms of behavior, traditions, food, drinks, clothing, language, habits, etc.

Let's consider them in the novel "Brisbane":

1) Kinship relationship: 'Us' (our family) ~ 'Them' (Katarina's parents). In Gleb's family the relationships were of extremely multicultural character. His father, a Ukrainian, has married Russian women twice. And, despite the pronounced Ukrainian linguistic culture, he understands and accepts the choice of his son to study in St. Petersburg and build a career in Russia, and then in Europe. This attitude is very different from the relationship between Gleb and the parents of his German wife. The Gertner couple did not accept their daughter's Russian husband. They deliberately speak fluent German, creating a language barrier, constantly provoking humiliating situations: *"Roditeli Kati po-prezhnemu pol`zovalis` skorogovorkami i zakaty`vali glaza, kogda on ne ponimal skazannogo. Iz-za dveri do nego donosilis` kriki frau Gertner i, sredi prochego, upominanie o Stalingradskoj bitve, kotoruyu, on, Gleb, skoro zdes` ustroit"* ("Katya's parents still used tongue twisters and rolled their eyes when he didn't understand what was being said. From behind the door, he could hear Frau Gertner's screams and, among other things, the mention of **the battle of Stalingrad**, which he, Gleb, would soon arrange here) (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 338). The author's use of the intertextuality technique convincingly shows the gap in Russian and German understanding of one of the turning points in the history of the war between the Soviet Union and Germany – the battle of Stalingrad.

2) Ethnic differences: 'Us' (native nation) ~ 'Them' (foreign nation). It is interesting to read a multicultural dialogue between Gleb's father, Fyodor, a bearer of Pro-Ukrainian sentiments, Oles', his son from the second marriage, and Gleb, the son of a Russian woman and a Ukrainian, who "absorbed" the best

of two related cultures. Fyodor in the novel speaks Ukrainian. During the August events of 1991, he calls his son, informing him in Ukrainian that « *відменер це робитимуть у множині, бо єдиної нуті в Росії і України більш не буде* » ("we will not be able to have a common way, Russia and Ukraine") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 281). In their conversations he always emphasizes the difference between Ukraine and Russia. The same views are passed on to his younger son, Oles', who grew up in Ukraine. Oles's dialogue with Gleb after Fyodor's funeral is very revealing. He says in Ukrainian: "*Skazhy, bratyku: ty Ukrainu khoch trokhy zhalyiesh? Ty zh narodyvsia tut, vyrys. V tebe serdtse ne bolyt?*" ("Tell me, my brother: do you sympathize with Ukraine? You were born here. Isn't your heart bleeding?") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 310). And Gleb replies that « *bolit, Rossiya i Ukraina dlya menya – odna zemlya* » ("it hurts, Russia and Ukraine are one land for me"). However, Oles' does not think so.

3) Language relations: 'Us' (native language) ~ "'Them' (foreign language). Gleb Yanovsky is a professional musician with a keen sense of Ukrainian and Russian languages. So, speaking about Ukrainian songs, he notes that « *oni skazochno krasivy`* » ("they are *fabulously beautiful*"). When he arrived in Leningrad with his grandmother after the ninth grade, Gleb understood: « *Ego potryasla russkaya rech`, kakoj on eshhe nikogda ne sly`shal. U nee by`la svoya izy`skannaya melodiya i, uz, konechno, slova* » ("He was *shocked* by the Russian speech, which he had never heard before. It had its own *exquisite melody* and, of course, the words") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 170). Compare Yanovsky's perception of the German language in the sentences to follow: "*Perejdy na nemeckij, ya obretayu reshitel`nost`*" ("By switching to German, I gain *determination*") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 55). Or « *Otvechayu po-nemeckki, strogo i korotko* » ("I answer in German, *just to the point*") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 63).

4) Social relations: 'Us' (our society) ~ 'Them' (other societies). For instance, the episode of Lyudmila's inconsiderate arrival in Munich to the Yanovskies without an invitation, despite the ambiguity of the situation (her daughter is expecting a child from Gleb and lives in the same house as his wife). There is excessive use of samogon (Slavic moonshine) in the house where only good expensive wine is served for dinner. Her indecent drunken shouts in German "*Hander Hoch*", "*Hitler kaput!*" insult the Germans present in the house. Or there is the image of down-and-out Anna Lebed, suffering from a mental disorder, who relies on invective vocabulary.

5) Food: 'Us' (our) ~ 'Them' (their). Lyudmila, a Ukrainian who came to Munich, brings *salo* (lard) and *samogon* as a gift. During the feast at Nestor's in St. Petersburg the table is laid with *fruit, champagne, vodka, sausage, cheese, sprats*. In Vera's house in Russia before the New Year there is "*oliv`e, vodka i Sovetskoe shampanskoe. Na krayu stola mandariny`*" ("*Olivier salad, vodka and Soviet champagne. On the edge of the table there are tangerines*") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 248). At Gleb's in Munich a dinner from a German restaurant is served on the lawn by a housekeeper, there is expensive wine and candles. In Germany, Gleb dines in German restaurants: "*Razrezayu bavarskuyu kolbasu i zapivayu ee pivom*" ("I cut up a *Bavarian sausage* and wash it down with *beer*") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 203).

6) Medicine: 'Us' (our) ~ 'Them' (their). In Russia, due to economic conditions, people still prefer to be treated for free, while in Germany medicine is mostly paid. Vera, a girl from Russia, does not dare to go to the doctor for a paid consultation: « *govorit, chto u nix e`to ne prinyato* » ("she says that *they are not used to it*") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 165).

7) Rules of behavior: 'Us' (our traditions) ~ 'Them' (their traditions). It's known that people in Russia are quite friendly and ready to support a dialogue. In Europe, they respect each other's personal space very much. In Munich an elderly Berliner sitting on a bench unexpectedly starts a conversation with Gleb: "*Dostatochny`j li e`to povod dlya rassprosov, osobenno v Germanii?*" ("*Is this a sufficient reason for questioning, especially in Germany?*") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 343).

8) Country: 'Us' (native) ~ 'Them' (foreign). Speaking about Russia in Europe Gleb summarizes: "*On vse men`she znaet o Rossii, kotoraya ne by`la poxozha ni na odnu stranu v mire. V nej ne by`lo nemeczkoj tshhatel`nosti i amerikanskogo bogatstva, tam ne umeli igrat` v futbol, i otsutstvovalo chernokozhee naselenie*" ("*He knows less and less about Russia, which was not like any other country in the world. It lacked German thoroughness and American wealth, they did not know how to play football, and lacked a population of color*") (Vodolazkin, 2019a, p. 352).

7. Conclusion

Lexical units of literary texts with ethnic coloring act as specific indicators of the communicative behavior of men and women belonging to different ethnic groups. In addition, ethnomarkers reflect the phenomena and events of different countries of a particular era, and serve as a form of recreating the real world, representing the author's personal views. When constructing an image, the writer relies, on the one hand, on the realities of a certain linguistic and cultural community that informs about a culture, its environment, customs, social structure, and life, on the other hand, about well-known stereotypes (Karaseva, 2012, p. 17). Vodolazkin in the verbal continuum of the literary text introduces details that indicate the deep worldview of a particular ethnic group that contributes to the formation of an identity. Therefore, the author of the texts expresses certain national and cultural stereotypes.

Literary discourse provides broad opportunities for analyzing the ethnic identity of various linguistic cultures representatives with the help of the universal binary opposition 'Us' vs. 'Them'. This opposition is based on the verbally fixed marking of the mindsets of the studied ethnic communities. Further research might include studying the following problems: 1) identification of the mechanism of ethnic identity formation in literary discourse; 2) representation of national identity in the literary discourse of different authors; 3) linguistic means of constructing identity in different types of discourse; 4) ways of expressing identity through key national concepts in discourse.

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