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Multilingual Writers and Metalinguistic Awareness: Can We Use Manuscripts as a Basis for a Typology of Creative Scriptural Practices?

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In my paper, I shall try to understand the impact multilingualism of has oin a writer's literary production. I will show that, to understand this phenomenon, the writers' manuscripts constitute a privileged way because they keep track of the underlying processes of the written production. I'll review several strategies of used by multilingual writers (functional separation, code switching, simultaneous writing in two languages and self translation) observable in their working documents. The observation of multilingual writers' manuscripts revealed the interest and the relevance of the notion of metalinguistic awareness. Metalinguistic awareness can be defined as skill in reflecting about the language which becomes the object of our thought. I shall show that metalinguistic awareness is a very useful notion for the theorization of multilingualism's impact on literary creativity. I shall also insist on the fact that this emergent field (studies of multilingual writers' manuscripts) enriches considerably research in textual genetics and should have a place in research on writing more generally.

Depuis une dizaine d'année, la communauté internationale a entrepris plusieurs initiatives pour la promotion du plurilinguisme et de la diversité culturelle. La prise de conscience des enjeux du plurilinguisme révélés par ces actions a amené les chercheurs à s'y intéresser de plus près, notamment dans le domaine de la neurolinguistique. Depuis les années 2000, a émergé tout un champ d'étude sur le cerveau des sujets plurilingues. Toutefois, ces recherches ne touchent pas au domaine

de l'écriture. Dans d'autres champs disciplinaires comme la psycholinguistique, la sociolinguistique ou les sciences de l'éducation, le plurilinguisme est également appréhendé uniquement dans le domaine de l'oral. Aujourd'hui, le seul domaine qui a pris comme objet d'étude la relation du plurilinguisme avec l'écrit et avec la créativité est le domaine littéraire. Cependant, jusqu'à présent, les études critiques littéraires qui se sont penchées sur la production des écrivains plurilingues portent presque exclusivement leur attention sur les œuvres imprimées. Loin de la spéculation des analyses littéraires classiques, l'approche génétique développée à l'ITEM (Institut des Textes et Manuscrits Modernes) permet d'accéder aux traces empiriquement observables, tout comme le font les études expérimentales. Il est en effet impossible de comprendre la relation entre les langues pratiquées par un écrivain et son acte créateur autrement que par une étude approfondie de ses documents de travail. Les observations des manuscrits des écrivains plurilingues ont fait apparaître l'intérêt et la pertinence de la notion de conscience métalinguistique. La conscience métalinguistique peut être définie comme habileté à réfléchir sur le langage qui devient l'objet de notre pensée. Nous allons montrer que cette notion est très utile pour la théorisation de l'impact du plurilinguisme sur la créativité littéraire. Nous insisterons également sur le fait que le champ émergent d'étude sur le plurilinguisme des écrivains enrichit les recherches en génétique textuelle et doit trouver sa place dans les recherches sur l'écriture de manière générale.

1. Introduction

Editorial policies of almost all nations are not favorable to multilingual publications. To be able to ensure the publication of their work and its commercial success, multilingual writers are often forced to erase the marks of their multilingualism and multiculturalism in the final stage of their work intended for publication. However, their working documents offer the researcher privileged access to the true creative process, thanks to empirically visible scriptural traces. Under the term of *working document*, I mean all documents that can be handwritten or typed by the author and that have participated in the development of his work. Genetic criticism does not focus on one particular final state of the text, but rather in the process by which the text came to be published: "the chief concern [of genetic criticism] is not the "final" text but the reconstruction and analysis of the writing process. Geneticists

find endless richness in what they call the “avant-texte”: a critical gathering of a writer’s notes, sketches, drafts, manuscripts, typescripts, proofs, and correspondence” (Deppman, Ferrer, & Groden, 2004). The observation of scriptural traces enabled a breakthrough in understanding the creative writing process and contributed to the affirmation of the genetic approach in both theoretical and methodological terms. Through studies of a great number of manuscript corpora, Genetic criticism has elaborated the protocol for any manuscript study, establishing the sequences of the textual states of a work. It has established the writing strategies that are implemented and a typology of writers (*construction-driven* and *schema-driven*). This typology was confirmed by research in cognitive science (Alamargot, 2009) and implemented in didactic studies (Fabre-Cols, 2004; Lumbroso, 2008). Genetic criticism has finally identified four main scriptural operations inherent to any act of writing: adding, deleting, moving and replacing.

So due to its methodological rigor, the genetic study of writers’ drafts is similar to experimental studies. (For a description of the genetic approach, see Grésillon [1994], de Biasi [2003], Deppman, Ferrer, & Groden [2004], and Anokhina & Pétilion [2009].) The genetic study of manuscripts has, however, a considerable advantage over the latter. For example, in neurolinguistics, which is of interest for the study of the functioning of the multilingual brain (*Study on the Contribution of Multilingualism to Creativity*, 2009), the number of patients subjected to experiments is very limited.¹ In addition, such research is almost always on a combination of languages including English, which seems to limit the scope of these studies. Concerning the multilingual writers’ documentary resources, they are infinitely rich, as are the linguistic combinations because, as well as Western multilingual writers who master the “main” Indo-European languages, there are many writers from the Americas or Africa who, in addition to a lingua franca (French, English, Spanish or Portuguese), let traces of their mother tongue appear in their writings.

The researcher who will want to devote herself or himself to this exciting study of multilingual writers’ drafts in order to understand the impact of multilingualism on creative writing, will have to face two constraints. On the one hand, it is the access to manuscripts which may have different types and degrees of difficulty: e.g. permission from the author or his beneficiaries, the geographical remoteness of the documentary resources, or the state and condition of their conservation. Indeed, some developing countries have no preservation policy for manuscripts, which may be due to non-perception of the national heritage value of these documents, or simply by the lack of financial means. Another constraint that the researcher must face is the mastery of languages spoken by a writer. This condition, which seems obvious to

a linguist, is not always met, especially when it comes to rare languages such as, for example, the Malinke language, mother tongue of the Ivorian writer Ahmadou Kourouma who wrote in French, or the Kikongo language, mother tongue of the Congolese writer Sony Labou Tansi.²

Another clarification may be necessary. It is often said that the phenomenon of multilingualism among writers is linked to population migrations, wars and exiles that have marked the last century. This is absolutely correct.³ But it is also important to remember that the multilingualism of writers—and multilingualism in general—is a very old phenomenon. A case in point is the macaronic language developed in 15th-century Italy from vernacular words to which were given both Latin syntax and Latin endings. Another is the Andalusian Arabic poetry of the 9th and 10th centuries, or many texts of Petrarch (14th century) which will be further discussed below.⁴

2. An Outline of a Typology of the Scriptural Practices of Multilingual Writers

Research on the scriptural practices of multilingual writers has allowed us to identify the very different strategies in the use of the languages during the writing. Some bilingual writers completely separate the two languages they speak by associating them with distinct tasks in the creative process. Others, however, constantly mix languages when writing their work. Another scriptural model is to write in two parallel languages: in this case, writing in L₁ supports and nourishes work in L₂, but the two linguistic productions remain separate and give rise to two very separate works. Finally, another possible strategy is to write in different languages in a consecutive manner: first in L₁ and then L₂. This is particularly the case with self-translation. I will now present an outline of a typology of these scriptural strategies.⁵

2.1. Functional Separation of Languages

The first strategy consists of the functional separation of languages spoken by a writer. This means that each language performs a specific function in a creative process. One can observe this phenomenon in the manuscripts of multilingual writers in different eras.

Thus, Petrarch (14th c.) used Latin to give himself metadiscursive information while composing verses in the popular language: “Throughout the genesis of his poetic work in Italian, Petrarch uses the Latin language, to which he confers a para and meta-text role. . . . the autographs of *Song Book* [*Chansonnier*] are indeed dotted with marks of approval or dissatisfaction

compared to the Italian text, written in Latin, such as *vel* (and other variants) *hic placet hoc petition, hec uidetur proximior perfectioni*, or *non uidetur satis sad principium dic aliter hic* when the verse is not satisfactory.”⁶ With Pushkin (19th c.), the functional distribution of languages is done in a different mode. Alexander Pushkin perfectly mastered French and Russian and used them in everyday life. By observing his manuscripts, one can notice that French is used especially in the planning stage, while the Russian language arises from the first attempts at textualization (Tomachevski, 1928).

In the case of other writers, their mastering of another language may not be strong enough for them to express their creativity in this language. But this foreign language, Italian in the case of Paul Valéry (20th c.), may nevertheless have a significant impact, for example, by the cultural contribution it carries. We can find in the drafts quotations from other authors in foreign languages that guide the writing process. This underlying influence can also manifest itself through the rhythm, especially in poetic composition. It may also be the emotive power of a foreign language. Valéry’s manuscripts kept in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (National Library of France) let us see all these expressions which the author himself was well aware of (Sanna, 2012):

Ego scriptor. Archaïsmes. Me sont parfois reprochés. Ne sont pas volontaires. Mais non refusés de moi si favorables et surtout me viennent spontanément (chose assez mystérieuse ?) Peut-être **italianité syntaxique** dans les constructions et besoin de ligne de chant dans la phrase ? (Valéry, 1957-1961, p. 721)

[Ego scriptor. Archaïsmes. Are sometimes held against me. Are not intentional. But not denied by me, so supportive and above all come to me spontaneously (a rather mysterious thing?) Maybe **syntactic “italianity”** in the constructions and in need of vocal line in the sentence?] (Valéry, 1957-1961, p. 721)

Je suis un être greffé.

Je me suis fait à moi-même plusieurs greffes.

Greffer les mathématiques sur de la poésie, de la rigueur sur des images libres. Des “idées claires” sur un tronc superstitieux: **un langage français sur un bois italien**. (Valéry, 1957-1961, p. 170)

[I am a transplanted person.

I gave myself several transplants.

Transplanting mathematics on poetry, rigor on free images.
Clear ideas on a superstitious trunk: **French language on Italian wood**]. (Valéry, 1957-1961, p. 170)

Valéry's example shows that the functional separation is not always clearly defined and identifiable. We can also observe this phenomenon in the manuscripts of the writer Dionysios Solomos (1798-1857), an important figure in Greek literature. A quick overview of his manuscripts lets us see at first the following multilingual writing pattern: the poet first prepares a prose matrix in Italian, and then builds the verses in Greek.

(1) The “visionary woman”

Draft in Italian

Nelle cui mani (del gionetto) è il destino della mia patria.

Io lo vidi! A me parve bello come l'astro del mattino

le mie viscere tremarono: gli occhi mi s'empierono di

lacrime: e per molta ora mi si nascose la dolce faccia. (AA25 1r)
(AA25 1r)

[In His Hands (of the young man) is the destiny of my country.

I have seen it! To me seemed beautiful as the morning star

my insides tremble: the eyes are filled with

tears: and for a long time its sweet face is hidden from me]

Formulation / Greek translation from the Italian draft:

μ'τρεμανε τα σοθικα, τα ματια μ ορα

κ'εχασα εκινο τὸ γλικὸ προσωπο για πολιορα. (AA25 1r)
(AA25 1r)

[My insides trembled, my eyes ορα (rhymes are pending)

and I lost for a long time that sweet face]

We see in this operation the obvious parallel with Pushkin's writing who also distinguished languages according to the conceptualization and textualiza-

tion phases. However, rigorous linguistic analysis of Solomos' manuscripts allows us to see several other phenomena, highlighted by Kostas Pavlou.⁷ On the one hand, next to the Italian and Greek, many passages are observed in ancient Greek, Latin and French. On the other hand, we see a lot of interference between his two major writing languages.⁸ These interferences between Greek and Italian are found at all levels: phonetic, morphosyntactic and semantic. This leads us to consider a second writing strategy: code-switching.

2.2. Code Switching

The mixture of linguistic codes or code-switching was observed and theorized by sociolinguistics for spoken language.⁹ Based on the language practices of multilingual speakers, code-switching refers to the alternation of linguistic codes within the same statement of the spoken language. However, this phenomenon can also be observed in writing, especially in the drafts of multilingual writers, in their epistolary exchanges and sometimes even in their published works. Canadian researcher Rainier Grutman named this phenomenon *heterolingualism* which signifies for him, the use of foreign idioms in a literary work (Grutman, 1997). Anglo-Saxon researchers refer to this phenomenon as *translingualism*.¹⁰

Speakers with a good command of languages are supposed to use the linguistic codes separately and independently. In reality, several writers mix linguistic codes in their writing. Thus, throughout his work, the Russian writer Leo Tolstoy has consistently drawn from French, as several thousands of manuscripts' pages show. In Tolstoy, French is present everywhere: in the plans, in the notes, in notebooks, in scenarios, in drafts and even in the printed text. Thus, when an available Russian word does not satisfy the writer, he prefers to use a French term that appears to him as the only satisfactory solution:

. . . слово это неупотребительно; но да извинят меня пуристы и защитники богатства русского языка, у нас нет слова *laideur* . . . (Tolstoy, 2000, p. 291)

[. . . This word is not used. But purists and defenders of the richness of the Russian language please forgive me, we do not have the word *laideur* . . .]

These Franco-Russian notes of Tolstoy have not yet been the subject of study, and in the few published excerpts, they are annotated as unreadable.

With Vladimir Nabokov, who was recognized as a renowned Russian writer

and as one of the best American writers, linguistic interferences can be observed in different types of documents: in drafts, letters and published works. Let's see how the mixture of codes operates in the writer's correspondence:

(2) Внешностью она не красавица, но у нее отличная фигура ; на мой взгляд *elle a du chien*, как говорили у нас в старину. . . . Подошел бы ей, как я уже вам писал, человек серьезный, солидный лет за сорок, нашедший свое место в жизни, и—католик. *Pour le reste je me remets à vous . . .*

[Physically, she is not a beauty, but is very well proportioned and I think *qu'elle a du chien*, as we used to say. . . . What would suit her, as I have already written to you, is a serious man, sturdy, in his forties, having found his place in life, and—Catholic. *Pour le reste je me remets à vous . . .*]

(Letter from Nabokov to Countess Zinaida Chakhovskoy, 1932-1935, Congress Library, Manuscripts Division, Box 22, folder 1)

(3) Мальчик наш отнюдь не тихоня, а аховый хулиган ; *we look foward* показать его вашей матушке, если она придет в Берлин.

[Our boy is far from being good, a real hooligan; *we look foward* to introducing him to your mother, if she comes to Berlin]

(Postcard from Nabokov to Countess Zinaida Chakhovskoy, 1932-1935, Congress Library, Manuscripts Division, Box 22, folder 1)

The same phenomenon is observed in Pushkin's (1956-1958) correspondence:

(4) потоп! ничто проклятому Петербургу! *voilà une belle occasion à vos dames de faire bidet* (p. 109).

[the flood! it is nothing for this cursed Petersburg! *voilà une belle occasion à vos dames de faire bidet*.

(5) Я бы впридачу предложил ему мою дружбу, *mais il l'a depuis longtemps, d'ailleurs ça ne fait que 1000 roubles* (p. 95).

[I would also have offered him my friendship, *mais il l'a*

depuis longtemps, d'ailleurs ça ne fait que 1000 roubles]

The code-switching, omnipresent in the epistolary exchanges of multilingual writers, is also found in their literary production. As such, Vladimir Nabokov is particularly interesting to study. On the one hand, flamboyant multilingualism has always been a hallmark of this multilingual writer (including in his first works written in Russian). On the other hand, there is a quantitative increase in linguistic interferences in his work, as his fame grew. It seems that the reputation of a writer greatly facilitates the possibility of introducing foreign language references in his work.

Thus, Nabokov's English-language works are full of interferences in other languages:

(6) . . . and that if Degas could immortalize a *calèche*, why could not Victor Wind do the same to a motor car? (*Pnin*, p. 82)

(7) "However, I have been called an *enfant terrible* for expounding this theory, and perhaps you will not go on agreeing so easily when you hear me out" (*Pnin*, p. 141)

(8) Oh, she had become wonderfully pretty, and *elle le mangeait des yeux*—but Ada slammed the lantern shut, and with apologetic groans, the slut groped her way to the inner passage. (Ada or ardor, p. 151)

(9) "Nothing," said Van. "I just want to put on record that I adore girls. I had my first one when I was fourteen. *Mais qui me rendra mon Hélène* ? She had raven black hair and a skin like skimmed milk. I had lots of much creamier ones later. *I kazhetsya chto v etom* ?" (Ada or ardor, p. 183)

It is interesting to note that in examples (6)-(9), Nabokov does not see fit to translate to his reader the incursions into foreign languages.

However, as a general rule, Nabokov tries to use various strategies to make available the linguistic interferences to his readers:

(10) . . . and after such feasts, upon meeting gruff Pnin, Serafima and Oleg (she raising her eyes to heaven, he covering his with one hand) would murmur in awed self-gratitude: "*Gosposi, skol'ko mi im dayom!* (My god, what a lot we give them!)"—"them" being the benighted American people. (*Pnin*, p.59)

(11) . . . “*A vī, baten’ka, zdorovo postareli* (Well, well, old boy, you certainly don’t look any younger!)” (*Pnin*, p. 90)

(12) Yes—she never doubted that Timofey was a darling (“*Nu kakoy zbe ti dushka*”). (*Pnin*, p. 47)

In these examples, the writer uses the immediate translation in brackets. Similar processes are widely used by other multilingual writers.¹¹

2.3. Parallel Writing in Two Languages

We have just observed two strategies that are composed of two opposites poles in the scriptural practices of multilingual writers: on the one hand, functional separation of languages and on the other, code-switching.

As in many human activities, it is easier to identify opposing strategies. However, in most cases, these activities are in fact a continuum, where we will find subjects who only use one or the other strategy, but there will also be those who will find themselves on different scales of this continuum.

Thus, between the two strategies I have described above—the functional separation of languages and the mixture of linguistic codes—there is a third strategy which is parallel writing in two languages. This strategy mainly characterizes poetic writing.

The Malagasy poet Jean Joseph Rabearivelo (1901-1937) represents this type of simultaneous multilingual writing well. Rabearivelo was constantly torn between his fascination with France and his love for Malagasy culture, between the French language and the language of his country. He wrote and published his poems in both languages; but only careful observation of his drafts identifies the authentic order of writing and the very complex mutual stimulation of the two languages spoken by the poet.

With pages of his drafts being systematically separated into two parts, one can observe the constant back and forth between the two languages: writing unfolds from Malagasy to French and vice versa (for a detailed analysis, see Riffard [2012]).

As I mentioned earlier, parallel writing in two languages seems to be more characteristic of poetic creativity. Thus, similar writing strategies are observed in other poets, especially in Patrice Desbiens, a Franco-Ontarian poet who writes in French and English. While critics insist on regarding him as a French writer obscuring his multilingualism and marginalizing the presence of English in his writings, his poetic production is nourished by these two languages (Simard, 2014). Thus, in his bilingual book *L’homme invisible / The Invisible Man*, published in 1981, on the left page the narration is in French

and on the right page in English:

(13) Le temps passe comme des motoneiges dans les yeux de l'homme invisible.

Jours jours jours.

Semaines semaines semaines.

Mois mois mois.

Times goes by like cars in the invisible man's eyes.

Days days days.

Weeks weeks weeks.

Months months months (Desbiens, 2008, pp. 60-61).

If the poetic bilingualism is exposed, accentuated, almost claimed in the Desbiens' publications, it is hidden, omitted, secret in Rabearivelo and can be discovered only thanks to his work papers. We shall also note in both poet's this necessity of putting in perspective both languages, both texts which are placed side by side in the Desbiens' publication and in the Rabearivelo's drafts. In *The invisible man*, English and French echo each other. In the drafts of Rabearivelo, the links which weave between two languages are complex: the Malagasy feeds the imagination and the lexical creativity in French and vice versa.

2.4. Self-Translation (Consecutive Writing in Two Languages)

Besides the study of fiction drafts, it is also essential to study the practices of translation and self-translation of multilingual writers. In fact, self-translation is another case of the use of two languages spoken by a multilingual writer. Actually, it is the *consecutive* writing in two languages. In fact, a large number of multilingual writers either carry out the translations of their works themselves (e.g. Samuel Beckett, Nancy Huston, Vassilis Alexakis, Anne Weber, etc . . .) or supervise translations made by their colleagues (Nabokov) (Weissmann, 2012).

Nancy Huston had clearly expressed it on the translation of her novel *Plainsong*:

Je n'aurais fait confiance à personne pour le traduire. Quand la première version a été terminée, je l'ai réécrite en français (Laurin, 1993).

[I would not have trusted anyone to translate it. When the first version was completed, I rewrote it in French].

In order to truly understand the dynamics of the transformation of a work from one language to another, the use of writers’ and translators’ working documents (drafts) play an invaluable role. Thus, the draft translation of Beckett shows us the strategies of the re-creation of his works in another language. Beckett begins by translating literally. Gradually, each new textual level retreats more and more from the original work to give in the end a fundamentally different work that often cannot be understood without comparison to the original work, or even without reading the drafts (Montini, 2012):

Table 30.1. S. Beckett, Mercier et Camier

French Version	Translation manuscript	English version
Et le rendez-vous était pour quelle heure, selon toi ? Pour le quart de neuf heures, dit Camier. Je ne comprends pas, dit Mercier. Que ne comprends-tu pas ? dit Camier. Ce que ça veut dire, le quart de neuf heures, dit Mercier. Ça veut dire, neuf heures quinze minutes, dit Camier. Alors tu te trompes lourdement, dit Mercier. (<i>Mercier et Camier</i> , p. 16)	And for what hour was our appointment, according to you? said Mercier. <i>(For the quarter of nine, said Camier.</i> <i>I don't understand, said Mercier.</i> <i>What don't you understand? said Camier.</i> <i>What you mean by the quarter of nine, said Mercier.</i> <i>I mean nine hours fifteen minutes, said Camier.)</i> Nine fifteen, said Camier. Then you are grievously mistaken, said Mercier.	And for what hour was our appointment, according to you? said Mercier. Nine fifteen, said Camier. Then you are grievously mistaken, said Mercier.

Vladimir Nabokov is also interesting to study from the perspective of a re-creation of his works in another language. After the publication of *Lolita* in 1955 which made Nabokov famous in the U.S. and created a strong demand for his works, one of the writer’s main activities was overseeing the translation of his Russian works into English and into French. Nabokov’s archives (New York Public Library and Library of Congress, USA) keep a large number of translators’ manuscripts with corrections made by the author. These documents allow us to understand the translation strategies that Nabokov put in place for his works. The observation of these translators’ drafts shows that, for each work translated into English, Nabokov was engaged in a major rewriting

work based on the text matrix of his translators. For some English translations, the rewriting by the author reaches 80 percent of the text (Shrayer, 1999, p. 557).

Why are multilingual writers so keen to self-translate? By engaging in self-translation, they actually delay the time when the umbilical cord is cut with their work. These writers therefore come to establish a multilingual “creative continuum” (Shrayer, 1999, p. 563) which cancels the “closing” of the text, always artificial and painful for a writer (Anokhina, 2014).

3. Metalinguistic Awareness

The observations of multilingual writers’ corpuses (Anokhina, 2012) have shown the interest and relevance of the concept of *metalinguistic awareness* that I shall develop further. This concept developed in didactics and psychology / psycholinguistics for students and language learners, seems to be very useful for theorizing the impact of multilingualism on literary creativity (see for example Cummins [1978] and Mertz & Yovel [2003]).

Emerging research on the impact of multilingualism on different spheres of creativity have emphasized that

- There is a relationship between multilingualism and creativity;
- Multilingualism improves access to information;
- Multilingualism offers alternative ways of organizing thought;
- Multilingualism can perceive the world around us differently;
- Learning a new language increases the creative potential of the individual (*Study on the Contribution of Multilingualism to Creativity*, 2009).

Thus, we now know that a multilingual subject has several cognitive advantages. One of these advantages is the enhanced metalinguistic awareness. Metalinguistic awareness can be defined as an ability to think about language which becomes the object of our thought (for definitions of linguistic awareness, see Trévisé [1996]).

Research in cognitive psychology and psycholinguistics has shown that bilingualism in children promotes the development of their metalinguistic awareness (Dabène & Ingelmann, 1996; Davidson & Raschke, 2009; Davidson, et al., 2010). The perspective opened by the works on multiple intelligence notably Gardner’s (1996), enable us to see that a writer—considered as an expert writer in cognitive psychology—has a highly developed verbal intelligence. And yet this type of intelligence seems to be particularly related to *metalinguistic awareness*, which also has a very high level of development in a writer. Although metalinguistic awareness seems to be specific to any

writer (expert writer), studies on the positive impact of bilingualism on metalinguistic awareness in children lead us to believe that it is also particularly developed in multilingual writers. Preliminary studies of individual cases of writers who speak and write several languages lead us to already distinguish four types of metalinguistic awareness in multilingual writers.

3.1. Acute Metalinguistic Awareness of the Languages Spoken by the Writer

A multilingual writer, especially one who has learned several languages during childhood seems to have, early on, a keen awareness of the phonological, syntactic and semantic differences between languages. This was undoubtedly the case with V. Nabokov and Driss Chraïbi, a Moroccan writer who, since childhood, kept comparing the French and Arabic phonological systems (Grine Medjad, in press). The writer Julien Green (1991) has also expressed it in his own way:

I learned foreign languages with an ease that surprised my teachers. Above all, beautiful language delighted me. Poetry exercised a magical power over me comparable to a melody on a primitive.

These writers have explicitly expressed their unique perception and sensitivity to the specific characteristics of the languages they grasped.

3.2. Translation of Other Writers

Nabokov (1941) has described the qualifications needed for an ideal translator capable of translating a masterpiece:

First of all he must have as much talent, or at least the same kind of talent, as the author he chooses. . . . Second, he must know thoroughly the two nations and the two languages involved and be perfectly acquainted with all details relating to his author's manner and methods; also, with the social background of words, their fashions, history and period associations. This leads to the third point: while having genius and knowledge he must possess the gift of mimicry and be able to act, as it were, the real author's part by impersonating his tricks of demeanor and speech, his ways and his mind, with the utmost degree of verisimilitude.

Hence, the translator must be as talented as the author and it is no coincidence that among quality translators Nabokov quoted the renowned writers: Baudelaire, Poe, Joukovskij and Schiller. We believe that the passion for languages and language itself can motivate the activity of intense translation which some writers engage in. For example, this was the case with Mérimé, the tireless French translator of Gogol, Pushkin and Tolstoy ... Another notable example is Paul Celan, who translated into German: Russian, English, Italian, Romanian, Portuguese, Hebrew, French (Nouss, 1996, p. 18).

For such writers, the translation activity holds a place just as important as creating their own works.

3.3. Learning Other Languages

Some multilingual writers have a strong fascination for languages in general which leads them to learn new languages, sometimes exotic. Thus, Vassilis Alexakis, a writer of Greek origin and French-speaking, began learning *Sango*, the lingua franca of the Central African Republic (Amilitou, in press). The Brazilian writer João Guimarães Rosa takes this intellectual and linguistic curiosity even further:

I speak: Portuguese, German, French, English, Spanish, Italian, Esperanto, a little Russian; I read: Swedish, Dutch, Greek and Latin (with the help of a dictionary); I understand some German dialects; I studied grammar: Hungarian, Arabic, Sanskrit, Lithuanian, Polish, Tupi, Hebrew, Japanese, Czech, Finnish, Danish, and I did a little snooping of other languages. BUT ALL THAT, BADLY. I think that studying the mind and the mechanism of other languages help us greatly in understanding the language of the country in more depth. But I study them mainly for pleasure, by inclination and distraction.¹²

These type of writers need to draw inspiration from other linguistic systems, even if they only use one language for their writing. Thus, Guimarães Rosa, multilingual passionate, writes in his mother tongue, Brazilian Portuguese.

3.4. Invention of a New Language

There are also writers who have pushed their fascination for languages and language itself as far as creating their own language. This is to some extent the case of Joyce (Ferrari, 2012), and is particularly true of Frederic Werst who,

in his novel *Ward* (1st and 2nd centuries), created a *Ward* language with a very advanced grammar. Frederic Werst indulges in a very systematic thinking exercise to create a language that can be passed on (Rigeade, in press). The attempts to create languages, that counter the trend of loss of natural languages, are numerous. Initially reserved to scholars with utopian ideas, the creation of new languages tends to democratize itself today (Danna, 2012).¹³

The thorough study of the different work documents of multilingual writers will validate and enrich this first typology according to the peculiarities of their metalinguistic awareness.

4. Conclusion

I think, despite the editorial constraints that the supremacy of a national language imposes, multilingual and multicultural writers cannot conceive the existence of a unilingual world, even fictional. Their multilingualism and multiculturalism leave traces—conscious and unconscious—in their works and especially in their working documents. On the cognitive level, it seems impossible that a multilingual subject should not to draw, one way or the other, on the range of possibilities presented to him by the languages he speaks.

I hope to have shown that the notions of *metalinguistic awareness* developed in psychology and didactics could be useful for understanding the cognitive functioning of multilingual writers. Indeed, research on bilingual children seems to converge with the observation of the multilingual writers work papers that are central to my approach (Anokhina, 2015). This ability naturally stimulated in a bilingual child, exists at a very high level of development in multilingual writers and finds its manifestation in their various creative strategies, as I have shown.

If the capacity to pay attention to tongues and language is naturally stimulated in a bilingual child and arrives at a very high level of development in multilingual writers, it can be stimulated in every learner of foreign languages, thanks to an early awareness of languages and strengthened by being made aware of language (Dabène & Ingelman, 1996) as early as elementary school.

Notes

1. These last few years, statistical reliability in the hard sciences is mentioned more and more often by researchers in these disciplines. Indeed, the lower the number of subjects, the more questionable the statistical reliability and reproducibility of any given study. See for instance Christley (2010), Halpern, Karlawish & Berlin

- (2002), Lawrence (2007), Button et al. (2013).
2. As well as Kikongo, he spoke *Lingala*, a Bantu language spoken in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
 3. On this subject, see for example, Moser and Mertz-Baumgartner (2012). This book presents 300 writers born outside French territory, but living and publishing in France.
 4. Kudelin (2010) draws our attention to the fact that the knowledge of several languages was not at that time the privilege of a restricted circle of scholars and that a large part of the Andalusian population was bilingual and trilingual.
 5. I am more particularly going to lean on the research of my group *Multilingualism, translation, creation* of the ITEM (UMR 8132 CNRS / ENS, France) which gathers researchers working on different linguistic areas.
 6. His autographs are now kept in the Vatican Library. In them, we can observe the use of languages by Petrarch, whose writing in Italian is inseparable from self-reflexive thought in Latin. Regarding this, see Giaveri (2012: 43-44).
 7. For a detailed analysis, see Pavlou (2012). I would like to warmly thank K. Pavlou (Open university of Cyprus) who presented his research “Entre l’italien et le grec: la genèse du premier projet d’écriture des *Libres Assiégés* de Dionysios Solomos?” to the seminar of the *Multilingualism, translation, creation* team, on the 24th of May 2013 in Paris.
 8. Interference is a linguistic phenomenon resulting from the contact of languages. According to Mackey (1976) “*interference is the use of elements belonging to one language while we speak or write another*” (p. 397).
 9. It is worth distinguishing *code-switching* from the *code-mixing* phenomena which consist of combining morphemes from different languages.
 10. See, for example, Kellman (2003). For Kellman, a translingual writer is one who writes in more than one language or in a language other than their primary one.
 11. Romain Gary uses very similar strategies. For the use of languages in the literary creation of this writer, see Chepiga (2012).
 12. João Guimaraes Rosa, Letter from the 19 October 1966 to his niece Lenice Guimaraes de Paula Pitanguy, quoted in French in Dosse (2011: 193) and in Portuguese in http://www.germinaliteratura.com.br/pcruzadas_guimaraesrosa_ago2006.htm.
 13. See Eco (1997), Albani & Buonaroti (2001), Yaguello (2006). The tradition of language inventors is very old. We must remember as such that the macaronic language which appeared in Italy in the 15th century, was trying to combine elements from Latin with regional languages. Cf. Garavini (1982).

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