

# 1 Introduction

*If you are coming-in people be, then come in.*

(Gabriel Okara, *The Voice*)

Linguistic hybridity is a common feature of texts that are translated across linguistic and cultural borders—be it conventional interlingual translation moving from source text (ST) to target text (TT) or other forms of translation that lack a tangible ST such as migrant, travel or postcolonial writing. In the latter case Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o (2009:18) aptly speaks of “a literary act of mental translation”. Both types of translation—conventional interlingual translation and cross-cultural writing—aim to reach an audience that extends beyond the language barriers of the source culture. Because of this, source and target language come into contact during the process of writing. Moreover, in the case of cross-cultural writing, source and target language meet not only during the writing process itself, but frequently also in the (fictional or nonfictional) story-world. Often, translation is therefore not only the medium but also the object of representation in cross-cultural writing. The consequence of this is that linguistic hybridity not only contributes to the construction of the implied author’s world-view directly in so far as it is a manifestation of his/her attitude towards the languages involved but also in a more subtle and indirect manner as it contributes to the construction of the narrator’s and the characters’ world-view.

However, research aimed at categorizing creative writing strategies that employ linguistic hybridity (e.g. Ashcroft et al 2002; Bandia 2008; Batchelor 2009; Zabus 2007, to name the most extensive studies) has so far focused on the medium of representation, without systematically taking into account its relation to the object of representation. In other words, existing approaches categorize linguistic hybridity predominantly according to its manifestation on the page rather than its relation to the (fictional or nonfictional) reality of the narrative. Although narratology has provided us with a general distinction between language as object and language as medium, and although Meir Sternberg (1981), building on this distinction, proposed to distinguish between represented translation and representing translation according to

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the narrative level on which the translational act occurs—I will discuss both aspects in more detail in Chapter 2—the relationship between medium and object has so far not been awarded a significant role in studies of linguistic hybridity. Gillian Gane, who refers to Sternberg’s distinction in her paper “Achebe, Soyinka, and Other-Languagedness” (2003), unfortunately then neglects to make this distinction in her own analysis, which again focuses on the manifestation of linguistic hybridity on the page, as she presumably falls in the trap of not fully grasping that the essential difference between representing and represented translation is due to the fact that they are realized on different narrative levels and not determined by their formal aspects.

As a consequence of this lack of a systematic distinction between language as object and language as medium, the way in which linguistic hybridity contributes to the construction of meaning in the narrative and, hence, how TT shifts in linguistic hybridity can shift the world-view constructed for the narrator and the characters is predominantly overlooked. At the same time, however, linguistic hybridity—as is nonstandard language in general—is a feature that is particularly prone to shifts in interlingual translation.<sup>1</sup> Firstly, translators often erase or dilute linguistic hybridity encountered in the ST. In the context of Europhone African literature, this has been demonstrated for example by Kathryn Batchelor (née Woodham) (see Woodham 2006 and Batchelor 2009). Secondly, as scholars such as Lavisosa (1998), Øverås (1998) and Zauberga (2001) have shown and as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, interlingual translation often creates linguistic hybridity—for example through the translator’s unconscious calques or through a deliberate attempt at foreignization.

If we therefore assume that the TT erasure or dilution of linguistic hybridity present in the ST as well as the TT addition of linguistic hybridity not present in the ST is a common phenomenon, then the question that arises is whether and how TT shifts in linguistic hybridity can alter the meaning potential of a text. In particular, can TT shifts in linguistic hybridity affect the reader’s construction of the narrator’s and the characters’ world-view and, hence, ultimately also the reader’s own world-view, and if so, how?

We can only address this question if we have a fundamental understanding of the way in which translation as representing medium relates to translation as represented object in these cross-cultural texts—both in the ST and in the TT. The present discussion, therefore, by building on insights from narratology and combining them with concepts taken from cognitive poetics, stylistics and film studies, offers an approach to linguistic hybridity that integrates the relation between medium and object, which enables us to investigate whether and how linguistic hybridity potentially has an impact on the mental representations the reader constructs when interacting with the text and, hence, whether and how TT shifts in linguistic hybridity can affect the text’s meaning potential. In particular, I will investigate how linguistic hybridity interrelates with (i) the reader’s construction of the perspective from which the story events are perceived, (ii) the narrator’s attitude

towards the narrated cultures, and (iii) the narrator's and the characters' cultural identity and affiliation. If TT shifts in linguistic hybridity affect the TT reader's mental representations of the narrator and the characters, it follows that these shifts potentially also have an impact on the world-view the reader constructs for the implied author. Moreover, the reader's mental representations either refresh or reinforce the reader's own schemata. Therefore, these shifts can also have an impact on the reader's interpretation of other texts and of the world at large, i.e. the reader's own world-view. As our schemata may have social and practical consequences, TT shifts in world-view such as those discussed in this volume can ultimately have an impact on the world we as a community construct for ourselves and therefore on the way we live our lives.

Chapter 2 will thus develop Sternberg's (1981) distinction between representing and represented translation and will propose a new model of linguistic hybridity, one that is based on the relation between medium and object. This model will then serve as the backbone for developing a theoretical framework that will focus on TT shifts in linguistic hybridity and how they can lead to shifts in the TT reader's construction of the narrator's and the characters' world-view and hence, as I will argue throughout, ultimately also to shifts in the reader's construction of the world-view of the implied author and potentially also in the reader's own world-view. Chapter 3 will focus on investigating how linguistic hybridity interrelates with the perspective from which story events are perceived. Chapter 4, too, discusses perspective, in particular how the story's narration can be filtered through the collective consciousness of a culture and how the absence or presence of linguistic hybridity interrelates with the narrator's identification with and allegiance to one culture rather than another. Chapter 5 investigates the more immediate link between linguistic hybridity and characterization, namely in what way linguistic hybridity in the character's discourse conveys implicit information about the character's cultural identity and world-view. As all of these aspects—perspective, cultural identity, allegiance—are, as I will demonstrate, at least in part actualized on the textual level through the presence or the absence of linguistic hybridity, the TT erasure, dilution or addition of linguistic hybridity can cause shifts in these aspects in comparison to the ST.

Rather than competing with existing approaches to linguistic hybridity, the ideas proposed in this volume thus complement these by extending our conceptual apparatus and adding facets to the ongoing discussion that have hitherto not been studied in a systematic fashion. Moreover, by exploring the question of how linguistic hybridity relates to perspective and how readers can be manipulated into empathizing with one world-view rather than another, this book not only contributes to current debates in translation studies and beyond that are concerned with cross-cultural writing and linguistic hybridity but also to the growing body of translation studies research concerned with questions of voice and perspective that is influenced by narratology and stylistics (e.g. Bosseaux 2007; Taivalkoski-Shilov

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2006) and, more broadly, to translation studies research concerned with ideology (e.g. Baker 2006; Munday 2008).

In order to illustrate how the concepts and tools that I will develop in the following chapters can be applied to the analysis of linguistic hybridity in cross-cultural writing and, consequently, of what happens when these texts are translated into another language, I will make reference to Anglophone Nigerian narrative prose and, where relevant, its translations into German.

The reason for the focus on written narrative prose is twofold. Firstly, unlike film and performed drama, written text has only one communication channel at its disposal. Whenever language as object and language as medium are not identical, film and drama have the possibility to present both language as object and language as medium simultaneously, as is for example the case when providing a translation of foreign language dialogue in the form of sur- or subtitles or via a supplementary auditory channel, such as individual headphones.<sup>2</sup> As the language as object remains present, the act of translation itself is present too. This ensures that audiences are more likely to be aware of reading or listening to a translation. Written text, however, has no alternative communication channel, and therefore, if the act of translation is to be represented in the text, it has to be represented in the language as medium. Furthermore, drama and film are not only able to represent both language as medium and language as object at the same time, but they can also have more than one language as medium simultaneously. As performed drama and film introduce actors to represent characters, the representing actor discourse is not to be conflated with the represented character discourse—drama and film thus introduce a further level of mediation not present in narrative prose. Imagine a Greek tragedy performed by an Icelandic theatre company in Icelandic for an English audience. The actors' Icelandic might be surtitled into English for the audience, but in the fictional story-world that is represented on the stage the characters are meant to speak Ancient Greek, not Icelandic. In this sense, both Icelandic and English function as medium of representation, not as represented object.

Secondly, while the distinction between medium and object of representation underlies all narratives, in so far as they “represent temporally organized sequences and thus relate ‘stories’” (Hühn et al 2013:§1), there are genre-specific differences. Poetry, for example, “typically features strings of primarily mental or psychological happenings perceived through the consciousness of single speakers and articulated from their position” (Hühn et al 2013:§1). It thus lacks the polyphony and the variety of different perspectives that narrative prose can offer and that—as will be illustrated throughout this volume—can be signalled through linguistic hybridity. Drama, on the other hand, although it features a mediating agency in the form of, for example, “selection, segmentation and arrangement” (Hühn et al 2013:§1), is “typically devoid of any overt [mediating] agency” (2013:§1). Thus, it typically lacks the narrating voice of narrative prose as well as the dual perspective merging the voice of narrator and character

that is possible in written texts, for example in the form of free indirect discourse. This latter aspect is particularly relevant for the discussion in Chapter 4, which looks at the narrator's cultural identification with and allegiance to the narrated culture(s).

The focus on Anglophone Nigerian writing is due to the fact that post-colonial writing particularly well exemplifies that translation is often an object of representation in cross-cultural texts. The postcolonial reality represented in these narratives constitutes an arena of past and on-going translation, both in the metaphorical sense of assimilating the culture and/or language of the (ex-)colonizer—Michael Cronin's "translation-as-assimilation" (2003:142)—and in the more conventional sense of linguistic transfer. The postcolonial world thus contains both the source and the target language as well as hybrid language varieties that fuse source and target language. Secondly, postcolonial writing is also the context in which linguistically hybrid literature has so far been studied most extensively. As a consequence, there is ample research that allows me to contrast previous approaches to linguistic hybridity with my own approach as well as to build on this existing research. Thirdly, the ideological ramifications of linguistic hybridity are arguably most apparent in postcolonial writing where this "abrogation and appropriation" of the colonial language, as Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin call it, is seen as an overt political act of defiance (2002:37–38).

The specific focus on Nigeria is predominantly a pragmatic one, but it is not entirely arbitrary. West African writers, unlike East Africans, do not have an indigenous *lingua franca* such as Swahili to fall back on. In Nigeria, Africa's most populous state and the home of hundreds of indigenous languages, English is the only national language and therefore the only language that can transcend not only international borders but also the nation's own ethnic boundaries.<sup>3</sup> Nigeria has produced some of Africa's most well-known Anglophone writers, such as Amos Tutuola, Nobel prize winner Wole Soyinka and of course Chinua Achebe, who is often referred to as the Godfather of African literature and whose style has influenced fellow Anglophone African writers such as Nkem Nwankwo, Zaynab Alkali and Flora Nwapa. Gabriel Okara and Ken Saro-Wiwa, whereas perhaps less famous than Tutuola, Soyinka and Achebe, arguably appropriated English more radically than any other Anglophone African writer. Moreover, the themes of these writers' literary output, too, are often political. Achebe famously criticized the appreciation of art for its own sake common in the West as a European luxury Africa can ill afford. "Art for art's sake is just another piece of deodorised dog-shit", as he put it succinctly in his essay "Africa and her writers" (1975a:19; italics omitted). World-view is thus a particularly important aspect of these texts, and therefore, TT shifts in world-view—triggered by TT shifts in linguistic hybridity—are all the more interesting.

I will mainly focus on narrative prose by those writers whose proclaimed aim it was to experiment with the language of their British colonizers and to

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subvert it—to fashion out a “new English” as Achebe (1975b:62) put it. The use of English and other European languages in African literature has often been the focus of a heated debate. The Makerere Conference on Anglophone African Literature in 1962, which explicitly excluded writers who work with African languages (see also Ngūgĩ 1986:111), and the subsequent publication of Obi Wali’s contentious essay “The dead end of African literature?” (1963) are often seen as the starting point of this debate, which saw the crystallization of three schools of thought: the Neo-Metropolitans, the Evolutionists/Experimenters and the Rejectionists, to borrow Okara’s terminology (1991:14).

The latter school, as the name suggests, rejects the use of European languages as the medium of African literature. In their eyes, such a self-translation constitutes a betrayal of Africa, in so far as it contributes to the development of the literatures of the colonial centre at the expense of a development of the continent’s own literatures and of a literary language within Africa’s indigenous languages (see e.g. Wali 1963:14–15).<sup>4</sup> In order to support his argument, Wali draws comparisons with 16th- and 17th-century England, arguing that writers like Shakespeare, Donne, Milton and Spenser chose to write in English, despite the “cosmopolitan languages” of their time being Latin and Greek, and in doing so advanced both the English language and the development of its literature (1963:14). The second main concern voiced by the Rejectionists is related to audience. Wali’s argument that Europhone African literature is inaccessible to the majority of Africans and reaches only an educated elite (1963:13–14) is later famously taken up by Ngūgĩ wa Thiong’o in his book *Decolonizing the Mind* (1986), which set forth his reasons for abandoning English in favour of Gĩkũyũ and Swahili as the language of his fictional writing.

The Neo-Metropolitans and the Evolutionists/Experimenters, on the other hand, embrace colonialism’s linguistic heritage in their writing. The difference between these two schools lies in their view of what form this English should take and, more generally, in the attitude towards colonial hegemony that this differing view implies. The Neo-Metropolitans strive for “impeccable English” (Okara 1991:14) and aim to be assimilated into the Western literary canon (see e.g. Buchi Emecheta quoted and commented on in Achebe 2000:71). Assimilation, however, is not on the Evolutionists/Experimenters’ agenda. They recognize and value the subversive potential of writing in English as well as the potential to subvert English.

Writing in English can serve an anticolonial agenda for two reasons. Firstly, English is able to reach a global audience, including the centre of the colonial power, in a way literatures written in minor languages cannot. Needless to say, for texts written in minority languages—or major languages that have currency only on a regional level—to be read globally, translation into a world language is required. However, as Richard Jacquemond (1992) has demonstrated, a hegemonic power is unlikely to translate the creative output of a politically, economically and/or culturally dominated culture,

especially if this output challenges its hegemony over this dominated culture. Being able to circumvent this linguistic barrier by writing in a world language is therefore an important factor in the struggle against colonialism and post-independence self-assertion. Such a self-translation thus can serve to counteract the overall tendency of dominated cultures to be represented by dominating cultures rather than to represent themselves—a tendency most notably observed by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (2003). Postcolonial writing in English is capable of “infiltrating the ranks of the enemy and destroying him from within”, as Achebe put it (quoted in VanZanten Gallagher 1997:260).

Secondly, as already pointed out, due to the multitude of indigenous languages in many African states, works written in smaller African languages require translation even in order to be read on a national level. Colonial languages such as English and French, on the other hand, are able to transcend ethnic boundaries within African nations and within the African continent. In his reply to Wali, Ezekiel Mphahlele points out the different political circumstances prevailing in colonial Africa compared to those of Europe during the 16th and 17th centuries: unlike African writers, neither Spenser nor Milton or Shakespeare “need[ed] to organize a variety of tribes speaking different languages against a colonial or fascist power” (1963:8). Given the multitude of ethnicities, English and French can serve as a “unifying force”, as a “common language with which to present a nationalist front against white oppressors” (1963:8). These two points are also made by Margreet de Lange (2008) in her study on translation and nation building in post-apartheid South Africa. According to de Lange, the apartheid government encouraged the use of indigenous languages as part of their “divide and rule” tactics (2008:91). By writing in English, black South African writers not only were able to subvert these “divisive ethnic policies of apartheid” but also to make themselves heard by the international community (2008:91).

The Evolutionists/Experimenters’ attitude towards colonialism and its post-independence legacy shows both in the political themes of their novels and in the way they shape the language according to their needs and purposes, putting their own distinctive African stamp on the colonial language. This “abrogation and appropriation” of the colonial language (Ashcroft et al 2002:37) manifests itself on the page in a “culturally marked English” (Kehinde 2009:80)—a hybrid English that fuses and juxtaposes European and African elements.<sup>5</sup> The writing of the Evolutionists/Experimenters thus tends to accentuate its translated nature by deliberately letting the source language disrupt the target language. It is the writing of this latter group that I will focus on in this volume.

I intend the term “hybrid English” here to mean an English that has roots in both worlds—the former colonies as well as the former colonial centre in the case of postcolonial writing, the country of origin as well as the destination country in the case of migrant writing and the target audience’s culture

as well as the travel destination in the case of travel writing. In the context of postcolonial writing, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2002:8) set up the useful distinction between “english” and “English” (also “metropolitan English”), where the former refers to the several varieties of English (“englishes”) that have developed in the former British colonies—including fictional varieties only to be found in postcolonial literature—and the latter to those varieties of English indigenous to the erstwhile colonial centre itself. In the context of postcolonial writing, my term “hybrid English” is therefore synonymous with Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin’s coinage “english”. Of course, British English, which incorporates influences from languages such as French and Latin into a Germanic language, is itself a hybrid language. Rather than being set in motion by the British Empire, the hybridization of English has thus been “an ongoing phenomenon throughout history” (Ch’ien 2004:4). Hence, an approach that views “english” as linguistically hybrid and at the same time leaves aside the hybrid roots of British English is doubtlessly Eurocentric and vulnerable to criticism.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, I have opted for the terms “hybrid English” and, more generally, “linguistic hybridity” as these terms highlight dual heritage—an aspect that is highly relevant for the argument I want to develop in these chapters.

## NOTES

1. I will use the term “TT shift” in a broad sense, indicating a difference or a potential difference between a ST segment and what I consider to be its corresponding TT segment, rather than in the sense of J. C. Catford’s original definition of “departures from formal correspondence in the process of going from the SL (source language) to TL (target language)” (1965:73; 2000:141). As pointed out by Munday (1998:2), Catford’s linguistic definition of translation shifts has been expanded in later studies.
2. Whereas the latter method cancels out the main auditory channel for the individual user, it nevertheless remains available for the user to be accessed whenever s/he chooses to do so.
3. Estimates of how many languages are spoken in Nigeria range between more than 200 to more than 400 languages. World Bank statistics from 1988 (quoted in Zabus 2007:235) for example estimate 350 languages, while David Crystal (1994:267) speaks of circa 400 and Edmund Bamiro (2006:34) of “over 400 local languages”. The official webpage of the Nigerian Embassy in the United Kingdom (2012) offers a more conservative estimate—more than 200 languages.
4. I will use the term “indigenous language” rather than the commonly used term “vernacular” throughout. Firstly, there is the latter term’s unfortunate etymology as it derives from the Latin “vernaculus” (“domestic, native, indigenous”), which itself derives from “verna” meaning “home-born slave, native” (OED online). Secondly, a distinction between language and vernacular where the former term denotes the languages indigenous to the (ex-)colonial centre (such as English) and the latter the languages indigenous to the (ex-)colonial periphery (such as Igbo) reinforces the myth of Western cultural superiority by implying a hierarchy.

5. These elements need not be authentic. Nigerian writer Nkem Nwankwo for example occasionally creates phrases that do not originate from an authentic Igbo source but have “an air of authenticity” (Zabus 2007:151).
6. Other denominations for “english” include “indigenized” English (Zabus 2007:4), “Africanized” English (Todd 1984:299), “decolonized” English (Salman Rushdie, quoted in Dissanayake 1985:233; Mwangi 2004:67) and “new English” (Achebe 1975b:62). The proliferation of terminology and the problem of finding one term that is value free surely reflects the fact that the very making of a distinction between the “language of the centre” (Ashcroft et al 2002:37) and the “english” of the former colonies is value laden, as it inevitably posits British English as the original and the newer “englishes” as derivatives and thus implies a hierarchy, rather than the parity of all forms of English.