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220070 Minsk, the Republic of Belarus, +375 (29) 102 63 25, maslove@tut.by**CULTURE, LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE:  
THE NEW REALITY OF THE MULTILINGUAL WORLD**

The material presents a review of a collective monograph, published by the British publishing house “Cambridge Scholars”. The monograph is devoted to the study of diverse links between very different cultural phenomena. The review describes the three sections of the 15-chapter-long monograph with descriptions of the methodology of the individual research. An attempt is made to analyse the trends in the scientific approaches of scholars from different countries and identify the directions of culture, language and literature research. This monograph presents the research conducted by three teachers working with the Department of Professional Foreign Language Training of Baranovichi State University.

**Key words:** multilingualism; language contacts; literary translation; audiovisual translation; foreign language teaching; intercultural competence; linguistic/multilingual competence.

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пр-т Партизанский, 26, 220070 Минск, Республика Беларусь, +375 (29) 102 63 25, maslove@tut.by**КУЛЬТУРА, ЯЗЫК И ЛИТЕРАТУРА:  
НОВЫЕ РЕАЛИИ МНОГОЯЗЫЧНОГО МИРА**

В материале представлена рецензия на коллективную монографию на английском языке, изданную в британском издательстве «Кэмбридж сколарз». Монография посвящена исследованию многообразных связей, существующих между различными феноменами культуры. В рецензии представлено краткое содержание трех разделов монографии, состоящей из 15 глав, с описанием элементов методологии авторских исследований. Сделана попытка провести анализ тенденций, проявляющихся в научных подходах ученых, работающих в далеких друг от друга странах, и определить магистральные направления будущих исследований в области культуры, языка и литературы. В данной монографии представлены результаты исследований трех преподавателей кафедры профессиональной иноязычной подготовки учреждения образования «Барановичский государственный университет», посвященные проблемам художественного перевода и иноязычной подготовки будущих учителей английского языка.

**Ключевые слова:** многоязычие; языковые контакты; художественный перевод; аудиовизуальный перевод; обучение иностранным языкам; межкультурная компетенция; языковая/мультиязыковая компетенция.

Библиогр.: 1 назв.

**Introduction.** The present paper aims to review the collective monograph *Quest for Connections in Language, Culture, Literature* published in 2024. The 247-page book contains 15 chapters prepared by experts who come from ten countries that include Albania, Belarus, China, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Japan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Slovenia, USA, and Uzbekistan. The materials fall into three major categories that deal with the problems of multilingualism (4 entries in Part One), literary translation (6 entries in Part Two), and language teaching (5 entries in Part Three).

According to the introduction, the primary purpose of the book “Quest for Connections: Language, Culture, Literature” is to provide a platform for an international team of researchers working in a variety of interrelated fields to present their novel views on the changing linguistic landscape, discourse and translation studies, diachronic evaluation of the quality of literary translations, and their teaching practices at the tertiary level. In summary, the volume presents a multicultural research team’s effort to develop a new understanding of how cultures, languages and literatures interact today. Thus, it makes sense to thoroughly analyze the content of the articles and find as many takeaway ideas as possible.

**Materials and methods of research.** The present writer will attempt to answer the following question: what are the current trends in culture/language/translation studies reflected in the reviewed volume? The critical analysis of articles' content will be employed. To do so, all the chapters will be divided into three major categories.

**Research results and discussion.** The chapters belonging to the first category address various aspects of multilingualism, the concept that has gained considerable traction in recent decades due to the process of globalization. For instance, **Elena Malashenko (Belarus)** emphasizes that the ideas of linguistic plurality have become increasingly prevalent these days. The author underlines that multilingualism plays an essential role in preserving and promoting linguistic and cultural heritage of minority languages and indigenous languages. At the same time, linguistic diversity may present challenges such as the emergence of language barriers, the practices of linguistic discrimination or marginalisation of minority languages. The author suggests several ways of preventing any negative consequences of promoting linguistic diversity stressing the obvious fact that multilingual individuals can navigate complex communication situations more effectively. Another telling example of a functioning multilingual society is presented by **Dmitriy Kiselyov (Uzbekistan)**. The author studiously follows the origin of the modern linguistic landscape in the country, which is a vivid demonstration of the complexities faced by the citizens of a country where a few different languages are spoken by various ethnic communities.

**Takanori Kawamata and Hiromasa Tanaka (Japan)** research into the problem of complex interactions between representatives of diverse linguistic, cultural and professional backgrounds in intercultural business communication. The authors argue that a tide of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity is sweeping across all societal sectors, which leads to increasingly intricate challenges and market demands. To navigate this landscape, individuals need the ability to generate creative solutions through communication. The research based on thorough analysis of interactions between university students from Georgia, Japan and Malta underscores the role of interpretation acts in forging bonds among community members. The researchers conclude that a shared language such as English as a lingua franca is of paramount importance. Their findings underscore the pivotal role of interpretation as a core competency that bridges linguistic, cultural and disciplinary divides.

However, any kind of analytical work presupposes the use of shared research instruments, one of which is the system of terminology. In the ideal world of science, such systems should be unified. That's why **Natalia Fenenko (Russia)** makes a commendable attempt to identify lacunae in terminology systems that exist in the works of French interpretative translation and Russian linguistic translation theorists. This paper presents a step forward on the path towards the unification of global translation studies terminology. It is quite likely that the ultimate unification of terminology used by researchers of various persuasions is a worthy goal, so more effort is needed in this direction. More importantly, time is an issue here, given the rapid progress made in the sphere of artificial intelligence, one demonstration of which is the growing capabilities of automated translation devices of all sorts.

However, human translators seem to still be able to uphold their superiority in the realm of literary translation that becomes the focal point of the second part of the volume under discussion. It contains six chapters dealing with various aspects of translation.

**Cui Boshi and Zhang Wei (China)** aim at sharing the beauty and meaningfulness of the Chinese poetry culture. A popular genre of the Chinese literature called Song Ci is discussed on the example of the works of Lu Yu, a poet of the Southern Song Dynasty whose 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary is to be commemorated in the year 2025. The authors provide a profound analysis of one of Lu Yu's poems, "Phoenix Hairpin", very well-known in Chinese literary and music culture. Several renditions of the poem into English are compared, which allows the reader to penetrate deeper into the intricacies of ancient Chinese poetry style and meaning.

**Thomas Beavitt (the UK)** presents the results of long-term collaborative work aimed at exploring and presenting relationships between two cultures and languages throughout history. The author's materials include lyrical poems on prophetic and Scottish themes written by the Russian poet

Mikhail Lermontov and an adaptation of a mediaeval romance composed by the Scottish bard and prophet Thomas the Rhymer. The author provides a brief historical background of prophecy in Scotland and Russia and analyzes the poets' works exemplifying it with the excerpts from his own translations of the poems. The author's design also involves song performances and film productions, which turns the research into an on-going project conducted in two countries permeated with historical and literary themes.

Russian literature has always enjoyed great popularity elsewhere in the world. The iconic works of 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian writers have not once been translated into many European languages. One such writer is Ukraine-born Nikolai Gogol whose works are saturated with multiple expressive means, which turns them into a true touchstone for literary translators. These challenges are explored by **Tatiana Syromiatnikova (Russia)** who compares German translations of several Gogol's novellas. The author presents keen observations on the subtleties of the original text, primarily the invectives found there, and the ways of translating these means of expression into a language that differs greatly from the original one.

Another view on translations of Russian literature is presented by **Yuri Maslov (Belarus)** who explores the quality of retranslations of one of Ivan Bunin's oeuvres published over a period of six decades. Bunin's prose, with its absence of a rigid plot structure, multiple epithets, and exceptional musicality, is also a challenge for any translator. The comparative analysis of the four translation versions of the story "Caucasus" reveals their finest nuances and allows to make a conclusion about the importance of a native speaker's review of the translation into another language as well as the necessity to deliver literary translation projects by multinational teams.

The analysis of translations of Soviet-era Russian literature is also found in the second part of the volume. **Anatoly Babushkin (Russia)** chooses the satirical novel "The Golden Calf" by I. Ilf and E. Petrov as an object lesson in literary translation from Russian into English. The author analyses the 2009 translation made by H. Anderson and K. Gurevich. In this text, the scholar pinpoints anthroponyms, an expressive element widely used by the original authors. A reliable classification is presented that includes anthroponyms ranging from the universally recognizable to imaginary, as well as ways to translate the names. The author concludes that rendering such names and preserving the comic effect requires a high level of creativity and an ability to skillfully diversify translation methods.

The modern-day translation phenomena are discussed in the chapter written by **Svetlana Semochko (Russia)** who studies linguistic peculiarities of subtitling animated and fantasy films. Primarily, the scholar describes the characteristics of audio-visual discourse and the audio-visual translation of animated films and its challenges. Subtitling is viewed as a hybrid form sharing common traits with dubbing and literary translation. The results of the research are based on the comparison of the original (English) and foreign language (German and Russian) subtitles of a particular animated film. The observations and comparisons demonstrate the inevitability of complex transformations in nominative and discursive strategies due to the linguistic asymmetry of the languages and numerous technical limitations in subtitling.

The third part of the volume deals with educational implications of multilingualism. **Baktygul Kurmanova (Kazakhstan)** describes the educational policy in her home country based on elaborate analysis of its ethnic structure. The signature trend is to provide all learners with an opportunity to master three languages — Kazakh as the state language, Russian as a means of inter-ethnic communication, and one foreign language. The author emphasizes the fact that indigenous languages of ethnic groups settled in certain districts of Kazakhstan are also part of the new curricula, now being designed and implemented across the country.

Teaching foreign languages seems to be the very sphere of education in which many applicable approaches can be tried and tested. The intricate relationship between learners' native language system and the newly acquired foreign language system is discussed using the example of Albanian schools. Two co-authors, **Merita Hoxha (Albania)** and **Lynn W. Zimmerman (USA)**, delve into the problems related to implementing the communicative language teaching approach. As is known, communicative teaching is sometimes understood, perhaps mistakenly, as the exclusive use of a target language. Such practices contribute to the emergence of a non-supportive learning environment,

especially at starting levels. The authors consider arguments for and against the use of learners' mother tongue in the classroom and present the results of their joint action research project. The project is aimed at examining the possible effect, both stimulating and otherwise, of using the native language of the learners in the language classroom. The results show clearly that limited use of mother tongue can facilitate a transition to the communicative way of language teaching and cultivate a more positive learning environment.

Higher education issues are also considered by several authors. For example, **Rumiya Tanga lycheva (Russia)** describes a creative technique developed by a team of educators to increase intercultural competence of students. The technique is based on the use of a cultural assimilator which is a variety of case study methods. The author describes a step-by-step program of activities that typically opens with a short story about a communication episode involving representatives of different cultures in a variety of settings (education, business, family and friends, everyday life, public space, etc.). The episode always reflects an underlying intercultural problem that requires an effective solution. The solutions are proposed and talked over by students and their teacher, and expert interpretations follow. In such a way it is possible to show ways and means for overcoming cultural differences and adapting to unfamiliar sociocultural contexts.

It is obvious that any kind of instruction described above requires a cadre of educators who are well versed in contemporary techniques. That is why teacher training is also one of the topics for discussion in the book. **Iryna Piniuta** and **Tetiana Piatakova (Belarus)** present the framework designed to develop pre-service teachers' plurilingual competence. It seems to be an approach that may ensure would-be teachers' ability to use languages for the purpose of communication within multilingual and multicultural contexts. The authors present the essence of plurilingual competence, which is seen primarily as an ability to effectively use several languages in learning, teaching and research. They also formulate the principles for developing plurilingual competence that include, among others, exposure to and instruction in multiple languages, immersion in real-world contexts and building positive attitudes towards language diversity. The strength of the chapter lies in the detailed description of sequences of activities based on a solid theoretical foundation.

Language teaching at university level has many facets. One specific area is explored by **Nataša Gajšt (Slovenia)**. The author presents the results of teaching business correspondence to non-native speakers of English. The scholar proposes a step-by-step terminology-to-letter-writing approach to teaching commercial terminology and commercial correspondence and describes the modules designed using this approach. The modules include a sequence of interconnected activities that include a variety of translation tasks. The material shows clearly that such an approach, if realized both collaboratively and individually, can increase the level of student language proficiency as well as cross-cultural communication skills.

Overall, the volume presents what seems to be a comprehensive picture of contemporary trends in academic studies in the given area. However, one can also mention certain limitations of the research presented in the book.

As far as the chapters in Part One are concerned, they are well grounded in statistical data but fail to graphically describe certain trends of today such as, for example, de-globalization. It could also be important to describe the multiple roles — and images — of English as the language of communication used by the members of very diverse communities. However, the chapter prepared by the Japanese researchers is a commendable exception.

As the chapters in Part Two describe various aspects of literary translation, they are less grounded in theorizing but more in analyzing actual translations. The quality of such studies may be decreased by subjectivity caused by the authors' idiosyncrasies. It seems that the authors managed to escape such a trap, but the reader would expect more information on the 'statistics' (the total number of micro-contexts, examples, etc.). That could certainly make the chapters look more convincing.

It should be noted that the chapters in Part Three, being generally praxis-oriented and helpful for educators working in any part of the world, are better equipped with quantitative data. The samples are sizable enough. As a result, the conclusions made by the authors can serve as a reliable starting point for discussion. At the same time, the authors understand clearly that theory, however well-

grounded, can hardly serve as the only instrument for professional development. As the Albanian American duet put it, the primary goal for any language teacher isto focus on up-to-date professional development through training and networking.

In fact, the entire volume is an attempt at promoting such networking on an international level. The research materials clearly demonstrate, for instance, that the time has come to start large-scale projects aimed at bridging the gaps existing between various schools of thought in foreign language methodology. The chapters written by Natalia Fenenko from Russia and Iryna Piniuta and Tetiana Piatakova from Belarus are evidence of that.

Curiously, the Belarusian duet works at the language department of the second youngest Belarusian university that can be viewed as an epitome of multilingualism. According to the authors, their research sample of 100 individuals comprises teachers and students who use as many as sixteen languages at different levels of proficiency. Besides Russian and Belarusian (native languages), the list of languages includes Latin, English, German, and Chinese (taught in the university) as well as Polish, Ukrainian, Japanese, Spanish, Turkish, Korean, Hebrew, Czech, French and Norwegian. In a sense, this kind of linguistic variety shows that any university elsewhere in the world is supposed to be ready to brave the new multicultural world.

**Conclusion.** One should thank the editors of the book, especially Dr. Elena Chaika from Voronezh State University who started the whole project in 2024. Reading the volume's chapters leads the reader to believe that the title hasn't been chosen randomly. The dictionary definition states that a quest is a long search for something that is difficult to find. Tremendous cultural work lies ahead for language/culture professionals in every part of the world. If someone reads this collection faithfully, the triune idea put forward by the editors becomes clear. In a nutshell, it is as follows.

The brave new world of multilingualism has arrived and is now a major factor shaping further development of human civilisation. The language environment in every corner of the world is a breeding ground for translation work, with or without the technology involved. Finally, better understanding between peoples and cultures is facilitated by well-designed and well-intentioned educational efforts that should start as early as possible. The collective author of this volume has proved all three theses by a variety of examples taken from research and observation.

However, every never-ending quest is a risky endeavour. No doubt, some of the ideas put forward by the contributing authors may generate criticism and debate. Moreover, the intellectual horizons of today's globalised world are somewhat cloudy. Yet this volume is an attempt, albeit a humble one, to give the right direction to the vessel of linguistic and educational thought. It is the direction to further productive research and scholarly discussion, despite the darkish skies or adverse winds. It is wonderful that this idea is fully shared by Cambridge Scholars Publishing, to which all the authors of the book express their most sincere gratitude. Such publications help build bridges between educational practices grounded in various cultural environments and scientific theories.

#### References

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