Research Article

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Multilingualism in the Romanian translation of C. N. Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*: Sociolinguistic considerations

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Abstract: This article investigates the translation of multilingual fiction from English into Romanian by setting it under the lens of the novel *Purple Hibiscus* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. The novel comprises three language varieties spoken by the Nigerian Igbo ethnic group. Bearing distinct sociocultural features, the interlingual transfer of the three language varieties (Nigerian English, Nigerian Pidgin English, and Igbo) impacts the preservation of the information relative to cultural items and to the social configuration of the local community. The sociolinguistic configuration of the text under analysis is first presented and exemplified as they integrate into the sociocultural context and are subsequently discussed by analysing relevant examples to illustrate the effectiveness of the translations. This descriptive approach to the translation envisages the detection of strategies adopted with a view to observing and preserving the author's intentions, namely those of exhibiting Nigerian traditions and the contemporary sociolinguistic picture. The findings indicate that the translation of three language varieties posed different kinds of problems and required different translation strategies. The conclusions comprise some possible solutions for the translation of multilingual fictional discourse and its sociolinguistic features.

Keywords: multilingual fiction, sociolinguistic features, Nigerian languages and language varieties, translation

1 Introduction: Theoretical framework

As has been recently confirmed, "[t]he analysis and understanding of multilingualism, and its relationship to identity ..., make it a complex and challenging problem that requires insights from a range of disciplines" (Ayres-Bennett and Fisher 2022). This very assertion can justify the present research, which sets out to investigate the occurrence of multilingualism – as an object of sociolinguistic description (Bhatt and Bolonyai 2022) – from an interdisciplinary perspective, namely its intertwining with Translation Studies. In what follows, they will be briefly touched upon as far as it is relevant to support this research.

1.1 Multilingualism in fiction

Multilingualism has been described as "the use of more than one language within a given spoken or written text" (Bleichenbacher 2008, 7). In Grutman's (1997, after Meylaerts 2006) previous denomination of multiple language use within the same community, *heterolingualism* is defined as the phenomenon that "refers to the

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use of foreign languages or social, regional, and historical language varieties in literary texts" (in Meylaerts 2006, 4). This means that multilingualism (or heterolingualism) is understood as the presence of either several languages and/or several language varieties of the same language in the same community whether in real life or the fictional lives of narratives. As for English, "whenever it occurs in the world nowadays, [it] occurs in a multilingual environment and as part of multilingual repertoires. … [W]henever we look at English, we also need to look at the other languages with which it co-exists and co-occurs" (Blommaert 2012, 2).

Being widely present around the world, multicultural and multilingual communities have oftentimes been depicted in the literature. Moreover, multilingualism in fiction has become an ever-increasing phenomenon that plays a significant part in mirroring traits of the societies where multilingualism is present (Chan 2002, Lewis 2003, Pym 2004, Arcia 2012). Whether multilingualism occurs in instances of transpassing national borders or within domestic areas, it implies, as mentioned earlier, the co-existence of two or several languages (Agbo and Plag 2020) and/or language varieties (Mesthrie 2008). Transposed in the literature, multilingual realities entail the creation of fictional characters that either speak one single language or language variety according to their social and cultural belonging or two/several of them, whereby they adapt to the social or cultural context in which they act. Thus, adopting one language (variety) instead of another is determined by individual abilities or social-related options or constraints. Alternatively, some writers resort to the inclusion of words and phrases in a language (variety) different from the main language of the narrative usually to provide a cultural imprint to their fiction. The co-existence of languages (language varieties) in Adichie's fictional world will be subsequently discussed from a translational perspective.

1.2 Translation of multilingualism

Given the above considerations, it is obvious that the translation of literary works comprising multilingualism plays an essential role in spreading sociolinguistic and cultural information around the world. Translation Studies does prove interest in investigating the transfer of multilingual literary discourse even if it seems to have a long way ahead in responding to the increase of multilingual fiction (Chan 2002, Lewis 2003, Pym 2004, Arcia 2012). However, the past few decades have witnessed a considerable increase in academic publications dedicated to the research of translation that has to tackle multiple languages, sociolects, or dialects (Delabastita 2002, Delabastita and Grutman 2005, Meylaerts 2006, Hodson 2017, Beseghi 2017, Ranzato and Zanotti 2018, Pérez and de Higes Andino 2019, Murphy Rodríguez 2019).

The motivation to investigate how multilingualism manifests in Romanian translation has been triggered by several considerations posited in the literature, which hardly sound optimistic. One of them is Derrida's view on the translation of multilingualism, according to which translation "can do everything except mark [the] linguistic difference inscribed in language …, it can get everything across except this: the fact that there are, in one linguistic system, perhaps several languages or tongues" (1985, 100). In addition, while striving to obtain enhanced readability of target texts when multilingualism is concerned, the strategies oftentimes adopted by translators are 'standardization' and 'neutralization' of the second (or even third source) language or language variety. The result is a target language version devoid of the double or multiple linguistic nature inherent in multilingualism, which, in its turn, (partly) erases the identitarian or societal characteristics of the respective multilingual communities. As Arcia puts it, the translation thereby fails to take into account the phenomena of 'system' blending and 'group membership affiliation' embedded in the use of several languages, including their implications within a speech community (2012, 66). Instead, from a linguistic point of view, it creates a static and homogeneous social system in the target text, which prevents the target readership from grasping the entire sociolinguistic milieu and from discovering both the whole individual, social, and cultural portraits of the characters and the otherness component pictured by means of multilingualism and code-switching (Chan 2002).

2 Research objectives and methodology

Taking account of the above scholarly contributions, this study aims at investigating the translation strategies of multilingualism from English into Romanian, evaluating their effectiveness in relation to the purposes lying behind the use of multilingualism in fiction, and suggesting possible strategies with a view to coping with those purposes. The ultimate aim of the translation, i.e. having the Romanian readers fully experience the multilingual implications embedded in the source language text, is implicitly assessed.

To this end, the investigation is grounded on relevant instances of multilingualism that have been extracted from the novel *Purple Hibiscus* by Adichie (2003). The examples are examined in parallel in the English source text and its Romanian target text, titled *Hibiscus purpuriu,* translated by Melania Maria Goja and published by RAO International Publishing Company, in 2011. The choice of this novel rests on its comprising two English language varieties – Nigerian English and Nigerian Pidgin English (as classified by Mesthrie 2008) – and the Igbo language, all of them having sociolinguistic implications. This means that they act as language variations, which requires particular concern in any translational attempt. The research stages entail a comparative approach to the extracted multilingual instances from the original and their translations into Romanian, followed by a descriptive observation of the extent to which the two English language varieties and the Igbo language are dealt with in translation. The way this affects the depiction of the realities reflected in the source language text related to the individuals and the speech communities situated in the Nigerian region of Igbo is also discussed.

3 Research preliminaries and analysis

3.1 Multilingualism in *Purple Hibiscus* by C. N. Adichie: Sociolinguistic considerations

Sociolinguistics deals with the individual and social language variation, which "not only pertains to the depiction of local colour, but plays a key role in distinguishing and individualizing the various characters of a work of literature" (Bonaffini 1997, 280). Considerations relative to the connection between language and social belonging situate language at the core of local practices by which "relationships and identities are defined, negotiated and resisted" (Norton and McKinney 2011, 77). The movement called the 'multilingual turn', posits that language is displayed as situated social practice (May 2013, Conteh and Meier 2014, Meier 2017), while multilingualism exhibits individual, heterogeneous, and dynamic identities (Meier 2017). This is no less true in the literature engaged in exploring multiple identities and multilingualism as the expression thereof. Moreover, literary works, despite being *fictional*, play a crucial part in revealing the peculiarities of multiple identities, the manifestation of multilingualism, and their social implications.

As for modern African literature, it can hardly be discussed without foregrounding the *Language Question*. It "dramatizes the problematic relationship between (written) African narratives and the colonial legacy" (Anyokwu 2011). One such case is related to the languages or language varieties spoken in Nigeria, where there is an inevitable interaction between English and several indigenous languages spoken and where Nigerian speakers developed their own varieties of English. While the local languages persist, these varieties reflect the speech patterns and habits of thought of the speakers, on the one hand. On the other hand, all these languages or language varieties that co-exist carry sociolectal value are sociolinguistic variations.

The setting of the novel *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, which is set under the lens of this research, is the present South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria, a region predominantly inhabited by the Igbo-speaking ethnic community (Okali et al. 2001). The novel showcases the Nigerian situation, including its multilingual society, Adichie, providing a picture of Nigeria, its culture, extended family matters, human desires, and the cultural clash of African and Western norms. Some of the themes present in the novel are male domination, discrimination against women and races, religious fanaticism, and autocratic leadership.

While touching upon these issues, Adichie resorts to sociolinguistic variation of indexical nature in her characters' speech interactions as a significant and subtle device meant to render implicit societal realities. As Eckert observes, the sociolinguistic variation is used as stylistic practice with its variables gaining meaning (2016). They enable the readers' identification of distinctive social groups in a stratified society, the members of each stratum using one particular variation only or switching from one to another according to the interlocutors, their needs, interests, emotions and social contexts in which they interact. By employing such sociolectal verbal encounters, one notable achievement of the novel is its mirroring the division of the social context by social classes distinguished by age, religion, gender, education, and social status.

The novel displays an interplay of the Nigerian variety of English, the Nigerian Pidgin English and Igbo, while the languages are foregrounded in turns and to different extents. Being particularly foreign to the world, Igbo draws attention. It occurs naturally and unexpectedly inserted in the flow of the dialogue as the native language of the local characters and the instrument by which the indigenous sociocultural habits protrude from greetings, conversations within families, and closely befriended or related social groups.

Nigerian English, despite the lack of "a description of an acceptable standard Nigerian English" (Agbo and Plag 2020, 352), is a "recognizable and highly distinctive variety of English" (Gut 2008, 40), deriving from "English, which has become 'nativized', 'domesticated', 'indigenized', and it has taken on distinctively Nigerian quality" (Jowitt 2019, 26 after Agbo and Plag 2020, 355). Indeed, in Nigeria, "the rules of English typical in native situations have been influenced and modified under pressure from cultural practices of the Nigerian environment" (Aboh and Uduk 2016, 8). In terms of its users, it is the language of the upper classes, the university English, and the closest to standard English. Its adoption reflects the speakers' imitating the desired or imposed British English. The social classes linked with the use of Nigerian English are constituted in (and in effect of) the postcolonial period and are made up of people belonging to younger generations, attending elitist schools and university studies. It is also the language of the Christian God and the language of power, politics, and of the elite. Apart from its being used by certain characters of *Purple Hibiscus*, it is also the language of the narrative, in fact, a first-person narrative realized by a 15-year-old girl, named Kambili.

If Nigerian English is mainly the language of the newly formed, postcolonial elite, *Nigerian Pidgin English*, which has no official status, is the most widely spoken variety, especially in informal conversations. It is the domesticated English, adapted to the Nigerian environment, which exhibits significant deviations from standard English in grammatical, discursive, semantic, lexical, and phonological nature. In *Purple Hibiscus*, it is rather marginal, chiefly used by illiterates, such as labourers, market women, and artisans.

Possibly the most interesting linguistic presence is the domestic Nigerian region-related language, *Igbo*, the vernacular. As Igboanussi states: "There is today, the distinctiveness of Igbo English writers, which manifests itself in experimentation in language, in recreating distinct Igbo discourse in English, and in stylistic innovations" (Igboanussi 2002 in Anyokwu 2011, 81). In Adichie's novel, Igbo is the language best preserving and revealing the local flavour through its ethnic and domestic-rooted cultural texture. Traditional practices, rituals, and beliefs come thereby to the fore and the most authentic feelings and emotions are voiced in Igbo. The frequency of the occurrence of Igbo words generated the idea of "Igbonizing the English language or/and Englishizing the Igbo Language" (Onukaegu and Ezeki 2010 in Anyokwu 2011, 86). Although almost everybody resorts to Igbo at times – especially intermingled with the Nigerian English discourse, in personal addresses marking family relationships and hierarchies – the language associates with the elderly members of the community and, implicitly, with the heathen. It is at least partly due to Adichie's innovative and experimental use of Igbo that her novel carries stylistic distinctiveness.

In the multilingual Nigerian society discussed previously, the mixing of codes is inevitable and occurs especially in informal settings. Here are some illustrative examples:

(1) *"Nne, ngwa. Go and change."* (Adichie 2003, 10).
(2) *"Have you nothing to say, gbo Jaja?"* (Adichie 2003, 18).
(3) *"Mba, there are no words in my mouth."* (Adichie 2003, 18).
(4) *"Let me stay in the car and wait, biko."* (Adichie 2003, 34).
(5) "*Nne, this is your study time."* (Adichie 2003, 42).
(6) *"Good evening, Papa, nno."* (Adichie 2003, 47).

3.2 Analysis of the translation into Romanian

This section aims at presenting an analysis of how the two English language varieties and Igbo manifest in the Romanian translation of Adichie's novel *Purple Hibiscus* (2003). Subject to analysis are examples selected from the novel, which are discussed comparatively in the English source text and its translation into Romanian made by Melania Maria Goja (2011). Sociolinguistic aspects are also touched upon when relevant in terms of translation and transfer of sociolectal, idiolectal, or dialectal information.

3.2.1 Translation of Nigerian English

As previously stated, Adichie's novel is a first-person narrative expressed in Nigerian English, which makes it the predominant language of the novel. Besides, since Kambili, the narrator, is part of the postcolonial, educated elite striving to consolidate their social and political position via the use of English as close as possible to standard English, a considerable part of the dialogue is uttered in Nigerian English as well.

Due to the fact that it is close to British English, Nigerian English is not only covert for non-native speakers of English, but also its identification might pose difficulties even to a trained translator. In addition, even when Nigerian English is obvious in the source language text, its structural distinctiveness might not be transferable to a target language due to structural differences. However, when Nigerian English displays lexical particularities as compared to standard English, we hypothesize that their expression in Romanian might be possible. Here is an example worth discussing:

(7) "If some **Big Man** in Abuja has stolen the money, is the V.C. supposed **to vomit** money for Nsukka?" Obiora asked. (Adichie 2003, 101)

" —Dacă vreun **ștab** din Abuja a furat banii, ar trebui **să-i scoată** vicecancelarul de la el **din burtă** pentru Nsukka? întrebă Obiora." (Adichie 2011, 100)

The translator's version is an inspired solution in terms of domestication (Venuti 2008) by using the noun 'ștab' (bigwig) and the phrase 'a scoate din burtă' (to get out of one's belly – Romanian idiom). Thereby, both meaning and social reality are effectively rendered in the target language, and native speakers of Romanian are familiar with both of them. What fails to be transferred though is the reference to the Nigerian sociocultural reality which manifests in distinct terms: 'Big Man' and 'vomit' are obviously Nigerian English linguistic outcomes attached to the Nigerian social and cultural milieu. This distinctiveness is erased in translation.

To continue adopting Venuti's translation strategies (2008), opting for foreignization in contexts with pregnant sociocultural imprints could be a solution. Since Nigerian English displays a degree of foreignness to speakers of standard English, the foreignization strategy adopted in translation would render the alien feeling. The compromise seems to be the desirable solution in this situation (and possibly other translations dealing with multilingualism) even if it affects the naturalness of the target language. Thus, the verb 'to vomit' could be translated as 'a vomita' into Romanian, which would transfer the semantic load in a distinctive way to the Romanian target language while also enabling the recuperation of sociocultural information. Alternatively, the strategy of borrowing could be a solution for 'Big Man' as it can be understood by most Romanians as 'a rich or a powerful man' (explained by Aboh and Uduk 2016, 7), while also preserving the Nigerian sociocultural lexical marker.

3.2.2 Translation of Nigerian Pidgin English

The second variety of English, Nigerian Pidgin English, exhibits evident differences from standard English and the above-discussed Nigerian English. Its distinctiveness resides in a range of deviations from both, manifested at a grammatical, phonological, and lexical level, which impacts the translation. One interesting example is the Pidgin English word 'Fada', standing for 'Father' and referring to a priest. The character referred to is a constant and important presence in the postcolonial social picture, where the adherence to Catholicism is a

mark of maturity and openness for adaptation to the modern world. Despite this and the fact that Nigerian English is the language of the newly emerged upper classes, the priest is referred to and addressed in Pidgin English as 'Fada'. This reminiscence of the traditional world is treated in three different ways in the Romanian translation when 'Fada' is concerned:

(8) *"I remember the first one that came to Abba, the one they called **Fada** John"* (Adichie 2003, 103).

" Mi-l amintesc pe primul care a venit la Abba, cel căruia îi spuneau **Fada** John." (Adichie 2011, 63).

Example (8) is not translated, but left identical in the Romanian version, with no explanation of its meaning, leaving the Romanian readers with no clue of the character's identity. In example (9), the translator approaches the matter similarly by leaving the word untranslated:

(9) *"Ah! Ah! **Fada**!"* (Adichie 2003, 248).

"Ai! Ai! **Fada!**" (Adichie 2011, 170).

As compared to example (8), here, the translator adds an explanatory footnote, namely: "Phonetic transcription of 'father' – priest in Nigerian English (translator's note)" (my translation). This explanation is over 100 pages away from its first occurrence in the novel. The third and fourth times 'fada' appears, it is translated into Romanian. Here is one of the examples for illustration:

(10) *"Did you say he is a **fada**?" "Yes." "A real Catholic **fada**?"* (Adichie 2003, 261).

"— Ai spus că e **părinte**? – Da. – Un **părinte** catolic adevărat?" (Adichie 2011, 178).

Although example (10) is fully explicit in translation, the language particularity is erased. So, the semantic enhancement compromises the linguistic imprint and the cultural flavour.

Informal dialogue is often provided with a touch of local authenticity by the author's inserting Pidgin English. It is the case of greetings, for instance:

(11) "*Omelora! **Good afun, sah**!*" (Adichie 2003, 67).

The Romanian version is identical, with no translation provided (Adichie 2011, 41). The clue comes from the footnote stating: "Nigerian transcription of 'Good afternoon, sir!'" (my translation).

(12) *"**Gudu morni**. Have you woken up, eh? Did you rise well?"*

*"**Gudu morni**. Did the people of your house rise well, oh?"* (Adichie 2003, 70).

"— **Bună dimineața**! Te-ai trezit, ai? Dormiși bine?

— **Bună dimineața**. Da' oamenii din casa ta dormiră bine, ai?" (Adichie 2011, 43).

The greetings in example (12) are translated and accompanied (in the first instance) by a footnote explaining: "In the original, '**Gudu morni**' – variant of 'Good morning' in the Nigerian English dialect" (my translation). In addition, in order to indicate non-standard language, the translator resorted to the inclusion of dialectal grammatical features in some of the verbs and to a colloquial manner of questioning to compensate for the typical Nigerian '*oh*'.

Examples such as the above ones are numerous: words or phrases in Nigerian Pidgin English translated into Romanian but with no indication relative to the language variety, which reduces the reception of the local feeling.

Besides greetings, Pidgin English occurs in the speech of simple people, during times of political and social tension, for example:

(13) *"[…] We wan people who dey wear clean underwear, no be so? Abi the Head of state dey wear common underwear, sef, talkless of clean one? No!"* (Adichie 2003, 281).

"— Vrem oameni care poartă izmene curate, nu-i așa? Abi, șeful statului, ei poartă izmene obișnuite, să nu mai vorbim de curat? Nu!" (Adichie 2011, 172).

The standard English version would be: "[…] We want people who wear clean underwear, is it not so? Is it not so, does the Head of state wear even common underwear, not to talk of clean ones? No!" Although the original utterances exemplified under (13) bear heavy Pidgin English marks, the translation above does not provide any indication of a non-standard language variety. In contrast, a few pages away, the following one does:

(14) *"[…] How you go just come enter like dis? Wetin be dis?"* (Adichie 2003, 284).

"— Cum să veniți și intrați așa? Unde mai văz't aș' ceva?" (Adichie 2011, 174).

The standard English version of the questions expressed in Pidgin English in example (14) would be 'How could you just enter like this? What is this?'. This time, the translation into Romanian, is definitely deviant

indicating a rather uneducated speaker or a foreigner not able to handle the language variety. It might be the best possible solution, but in the English original the speaker did prove to be able to speak English correctly. This is just an example of characters switching to more colloquial or informal varieties (Pidgin English or Igbo) when under pressure or in emotional struggle.

3.2.3 Translation of Igbo or Igbo in translation

Igbo is the endogenous language used in *Purple Hibiscus*, which mixes with the two English language varieties previously discussed. It occurs mainly in dialogic interactions but, at times, also in the narrative. It draws attention due to its alien nature, systematic use, and frequent semantic opaqueness. Hence, the semantic flow of the novel does obviously not rely on Igbo, but this local language has a substantial contribution to the construction of the cultural and social contexts instead. Indeed, it is the language in which cultural items are expressed (traditional rites and rituals, food items), but more so social-related aspects. Even though Igbo is banned by Kambili's father as the exponent of the elite, the imperialistic-derived aristocracy, and considered the language of heathenness and primitivism, it is very commonly used in personal address, in expressing orders and exclamations. The fact that the characters employ Igbo in such circumstances effectively pictures the remnant archaic social structure and hierarchies of the Igbo community.

What is particular about Igbo is that it is embedded in the narrative and in the dialogue so naturally as if it were perfectly understandable, whereas many times its meaning remains hidden or can be inferred at its best. Other times, the author doubles the Igbo words or phrases in English enhancing the reader's understanding. These peculiarities of the use of Igbo in the original novel are largely preserved in the translated version, which entails the preservation of the semantic, cultural, and sociolectal values as such. In what follows, a few examples are discussed in an attempt to illustrate the above assertions:

(15) *"**Omelora**!"* (Adichie 2003, 66).

'Omelora' is the manner of addressing people having authority in a community in which hierarchy is strictly observed. It is preserved as such in the translation as many times as it occurs in the source text. Its meaning is explained within the narrative, when Kambili relates the way her father was appointed manager and gained the title of 'Omelora'. Another title of superiority is 'Oga', the meaning of which comes to light from the contextual narrative as well. This makes its preservation in translation natural along with the adjacent intra-textual explanation:

(16) *"He was saying that Big **Oga**'s assistant—Ade Coker referred to the head of state as Big **Oga** even in his editorials."* (Adichie 2003, 247).

In Adichie's novel familial address in Igbo is always present; the participants in the dialogue call each other by naming the interlocutor's relationship to them ('my husband', 'my child', 'my sister', *etc.*). Examples (17) and (18) embed the explanations:

(17) *"She did not call him by his name, she called him '**dim**', 'my husband'[...]"* (Adichie 2003, 288).

(18) *"[...] **nwanne m nwanyi**—my sister"* (Adichie 2003, 310).

As compared to the two examples above, in example (19), the meaning of 'mwa m' can be easily inferred from the context as meaning 'my child'. This is valid in the Romanian target language text as well, where the Igbo words did not need translation:

(19) *"I joke with you, **nwa m**. Where would I be today if my **chi** had not given me a daughter?" Papa Nnukwu paused."* (Adichie 2003, 102).

"— Eu glumesc cu tine, **nwa m**. Unde aș fi astăzi, dacă **chi-**ul meu nu mi-ar fi dăruit o fiică? Papa-Nnukwu făcu o pauză." (Adichie 2011, 62).

As for the Igbo 'chi' in example (19), its meaning – 'my God' – (Anamelechi 2009) remains hidden or is revealed by repetition in five different contexts throughout the novel. It is made clear neither in the source text nor in the target text as was the case with the previously analysed instances. In Romanian, it acquires determination with the definite article added after a hyphen.

In contrast, 'Chukwu' – 'The Supreme God' – (Anamelechi 2009) is explained in English in the original novel and translated together with its explanation into Romanian:

(20) *"This is what our people say to the High God, the **Chukwu**," Papa-Nnukwu said."* (Adichie 2003: 101).
"— Asta spune poporul nostru către Marele Zeu, **Chukwu**, zise Papa-Nnukwu" (Adichie 2011, 62).

Greetings are also often expressed in Igbo. The respectful salute below is explained in the very context in which it appears:

(21) "I watched Aunty Ifeoma sink to one knee and say, '**Igwe**!' in the raised voice of a respectful salute, […]" (Adichie 2003, 115).
"Am urmărit-o pe tușica Ifeoma lăsându-se într-un genunchi și spunând **Igwe**!, cu vocea ridicată într-un salut respectuos […]" (Adichie 2011, 70).

Adichie's procedure of code-mixing by means of glossing is illustrated in examples (16), (17), (18), and (20). This procedure entails the author's intra-textual translation from Igbo into English. This procedure remains valid in the Romanian version where Igbo is translated into Romanian.

4 Findings and discussion

The analysis section presented a set of examples that were found relevant to illustrate how the translation into Romanian succeeded in rendering the multilingual environment and the sociolinguistic but also cultural implications embedded in the English original version of *Purple Hibiscus* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Nigerian English, Nigerian Pidgin English, and Igbo were treated in turn so as to shed light on the peculiarities of each of them both in the source text and in the target text.

As stated in the research preliminaries section, Nigerian English, the first-language variety examined, is the language of the narration and the main language of the dialogue. Therefore, and due to the fact that it bears distinctive features as compared to the standard English language, it requires particular attention in translation. Its depiction and understanding depend on the reader's/translator's understanding of the socio-cultural environment which deployed it. Nevertheless, the analysed translation instances highlighted the fact that, albeit compromising the naturalness of the target language, it is (at least sometimes) possible to render sociocultural values of the language. To this end, as discussed in the analysis section, the translation strategies that can be resorted to are foreignization and borrowing. What results from these strategies are lexical items that provide the target text with an alien feeling which could serve as an indicator for some sociocultural reality that attaches to the source text and context. When language constraints prevent the recuperation of the full sociolinguistic picture in translation, the novel's overall context enables the depiction of the social classes that typically adopt Nigerian English in their speech. It is used by the educated people, the younger generations, and the politically influential members of the community. Therefore, the sociolectal information in the translation is mostly derivable from the social context that is consistently and effectively pictured even if the language of translation is characterised by standardisation.

Nigerian Pidgin English is the language variety posing the most difficulties in translation. This is due to the fact that its deviant nature from the standard language is so obvious that it cannot be ignored or unwillingly omitted. From a translational viewpoint, many words or phrases that are in Nigerian Pidgin English in the source text are translated into Romanian without enabling the recuperation of the linguistic specificity whatsoever. The loss thereby generated affects not only the linguistic level but also the sociolectal one, in which the choice of the language or language variety places the characters in certain social layers and leads to a fairly accurate social context in terms of its diversity. By reading the translated version, Romanian readers witness not only a simplified text but also a simplified, flattened, an implicitly distorted social environment. But the compromise that the translator of *Purple Hibiscus* made is to be appreciated since it generally manages to avoid neutralizing the non-standard language.

At a closer reading, the translation strategies exhibit some inconsistencies. To mention one of them, 'Fada' is treated in three different ways in the translated version: the first leaves the word untranslated and provides no means of decoding its meaning; the second preserves the word in its original Pidgin English form as well, but offers also an explanation in a footnote; the third comprises the intra-textual translation of the word 'fada' (by 'părinte'), making it thereby perfectly comprehensible but devoid of its linguistic and cultural imprint. A

possible solution to establish a balancing act among language, cultural and social information would have been the preservation of the word 'fada' in all its occurrences, with its first occurrence explained in a footnote.

The third language examined is Igbo, the Nigerian vernacular, has not been translated into Romanian, which is why we can speak of *Igbo in translation* rather than *the translation of Igbo*. It is an essential decision as the Igbo language is tightly attached to the Igbo culture being the sociolect of the core origins of the community, generating also the novel's distinctiveness.

Despite the somewhat reduced (socio)linguistic and cultural impact of the translation, the translator's thoughtful work is demonstrated by the 25 footnotes attached to the translation, as compared to the source language text which has no footnotes at all. The translator's footnotes pertain either to cultural realities or to linguistic matters which are expressed either in Pidgin English or in Igbo in the English source text.

5 Conclusions and translation suggestions

Multilingualism carries important distinctive sociocultural information which requires a clear and coherent strategy in translation, applied consistently. A thorough and holistic analysis during the pre-translation stages should increase the chances of creating a translation that is as faithful as possible from a linguistic, semantic, sociocultural, and stylistic point of view.

Both English language varieties and Igbo reflect distinct sociocultural information. Therefore, the translations devoid of the sociolectal, idiolectal, or dialectal values of the source text might enhance the readability and offer a more fluent and comprehensible reading, but at the same time, they reduce the local colour embedded in the novel. This is its central theme, and its aim is the acculturation of Nigerian traditions along with its sociocultural environment.

At the same time, untranslatability is what translators inevitably face sometimes, which calls for means of compensation to reduce the losses. Translation is to a large extent a matter of compensation, compromise, approximation, and/or recuperation of losses, which requires flexibility, creativity, and a dynamic approach. Some possible solutions to deal with multilingualism in the translation of Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* are the following:

a. Glossing (linguistic apposition) of the Igbo words in as far as this is deemed necessary to enhance readability. It is one of Adichie's code-mixing procedures that can be borrowed by the translator and extended to the target language text to compensate for possible losses.
b. Footnotes can be used the first time when a foreign word or phrase occurs in the text where its preservation as such is desired to render the local specificity.
c. A glossary could be attached to the translation to make the Igbo and Pidgin English words or phrases understandable.
d. Borrowing and foreignization can be resorted to in the translation of language varieties such as Nigerian English.
e. A translator's foreword, introduction, or translator's notes can be added for clarification.

These possibilities (and perhaps others) for enhanced comprehension of the target text might be opted for even if Adichie did not provide any of them. For example, a very helpful glossary of terms is available online and is created by an academic for her American students in African literature (Anamelechi 2009). Apart from all this, let us bear in mind that the reader's full participation is also an endeavour (so over-explicitation is not desired either) and that 'dissimilarities' and 'linguistic and cultural differences' need to be signalled (Venuti 2008, 264).

All in all, when dealing with the translation of Adichie's multilingual novel, accuracy includes revealing individual or group identities accurately, which requires strategic and systematic translational approaches. As Cincotta puts it, given the limits and constraints faced in translation, the process inevitably becomes a 'difficult balance between faithfulness and creativity' (1996, 5).

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