Multilingualism in minority literatures from a Finno-Ugric linguist's point of view

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Abstract. Multilingualism is an elusive concept, and attempting to define it also highlights the in-built paradox: celebrating the reality and omnipresence of multilingualism often implies questioning language borders, but language borders are essential for defining multilingualism in any of its forms. This question is particularly acute in the case of minority languages, many of which are poorly or only recently standardized, so that definition and demarcation issues play a central role in language planning. Minority languages are often regarded as ethnic attributes rather than tools of communication, and connected to purported ethnocultural features in a vulgar-relativist way. Perhaps for this reason, their presence in literary contexts is often understood as a realistic, authentic representation of "other" languages and their use. On the other hand, the planning of the Finno-Ugric minority languages, typically taking place within monolingualist and prescriptivist Eastern European linguistic cultures, is characterized by monolingual purism, which may trigger reactions to the perceived "artificial" character of the literary language. These two tendencies, authenticity and purism, also affect the interpretation and reception of literary multilingualism.
Understanding the relationship between linguistic reality and its literary representations is crucial for the understanding of literary multilingualism. For this, in turn, the tools of both literature research (multilingual mimesis) and linguistics (the actual forms and uses of the "other" languages) are needed.

The elusive multilingualism

Multilingualism in our days is omnipresent. Only a few major nation-state languages such as English are strong enough to maintain the illusion of an intact, completely monolingual world at least in certain environments, for certain groups of people, and even these monolingual worlds are continually challenged by the presence of migrants and minorities and also by the new diversity and mobility of linguistic resources, the often-mentioned "superdiversity" (Vertovec 2007, Blommaert & Rampton 2011). Multilingualism is glorified as a goal of educational policies and at the same time, especially in political discourses around immigration and the integration of migrants, portrayed as a handicap for minorities and migrants, for the society a problem to be solved (cf. e.g. Busch 2011). Yet, multilingualism itself characteristically escapes definitions, for a number of reasons.

First, lay people often understand "multilingual" as denoting a person who masters two or more languages on the so-called native-speaker level (an idea already strongly contested in research, see e.g. Ardila & Neville 2003). This would mean that there is a clear distinction between language acquisition (preferably or exclusively in early childhood, leading to so-called native-speaker competence) and language learning later in life (which, as most of us who have studied languages can confirm, is often experienced as problematic and may never lead to native-like competence). This distinction corresponds to the intuitions of many lay people, and also to the classical Chomskyan ideas of parameter setting and the critical age hypothesis. However, this

thought, together with the whole concept of native speakerhood, itself a product of historical and ideological developments (see e.g. Davis 1991; Hackert 2012: 12–14), is increasingly contested in linguistic research. Many researchers (see e.g. Rampton 1995) would rather break "native speakerhood" down into parts such as "expertise" (how well I master the language), "involvement" (how much I really use the language, how important it is for me and my everyday life) and "identification" (do I consider the language "my own" or not), and even these components are complex and difficult to grasp. (Language expertise, for instance, has many different dimensions and criteria; see e.g. Cummins 2003.)

In classical autonomous linguistics, monolingualism was methodologically primary (first find out how one system works, before you start doing research on the interaction of systems) and therefore considered ontologically primary as well. In sociolinguistic (see e.g. Heller 2006) and applied-linguistic (e.g. Herdina & Jessner 2002, Dufva & al. 2011) research, in contrast, this approach is criticized for its monolingual bias. These post-structuralist and usage-based approaches emphasize that human language faculty is essentially multilingual; multilingualism is not a special case nor an anomaly but a natural point of departure. Many researchers also focus on the "polylanguaging" (see e.g. Jørgensen 2008, Jørgensen & al. 2011, Antia 2015) of multilingual speakers. In this view, multilingual language users are not switching between completely distinct, different systems but rather drawing from their coexisting and intertwined linguistic repertoires (Sarhimaa 1999: 306-307), employing "whatever linguistic features are at their disposal with the intention of achieving their communicative aims" (Jørgensen 2008: 169-170), or "simply communicating in patterns that [are] familiar to them" (Garner 2004: 212).

Not only is individual language knowledge and thus, individual multilingualism rather a continuum than a clear yes/no question. Similarly, societal or contextual multilingualism can also be defined in a variety of ways. How many active users must a language have to be "present" in a community? How much do they have to use the "other" languages – in speech or also in writing, for communication or only for symbolic purposes (and how do you draw the border between these two)? And how do you define a (speaker) community in our world where people can be interconnected in many diverse ways? In connection with the "cultural turn" in the humanities (Best 2007), even the idea of languages as clearly delimitable entities is being questioned. In this constructivist view, languages are merely social constructs and their borders are nationalist or colonialist artefacts (cf. Makoni & Pennycook 2007, Ansaldo 2010), produced by language policies by way of "atomization of speech forms" (Antia 2015: 479).

Furthermore, multilingualism in literature can be defined and approached in a variety of ways (see e.g. Laakso 2012): both as explicit presence of substance from different languages and as more indirect references, structural or semantic, to other languages. An often-used model to describe the various forms in which other languages can be mimetically represented in the text has been introduced by Meir Sternberg (1981). Sternberg's four different techniques can be ordered on a continuum (as in Londen 1989: 145; see also Sternberg 1981: 232) from homogeneous medium (pure monolingualism) to heterogeneous medium, as follows:

(homogeneous medium)	(monolingual text/world), "homogenizing convention" or "referential restriction"
explicit attribution	explicit, direct statement on the presence of another language: "He spoke in French..."

conceptual reflection	"intratextual translation... producing the impression of heterolingualism through culturally typical (or typified) topics, interests, attitudes, realia..."
verbal transposition	"interference": orthographic/phonetic idiosyncrasies, grammatical deviances, stylistic features "contrary to the spirit of the language"
selective reproduction	selected elements of the other language (can also include manipulated or inaccurate representations)
(heterogeneous medium)	(bi-/multilingual text; Sternberg: *vehicular matching*)

In practice, however, these techniques often overlap and co-occur. For instance, it is quite usual that characters who speak with an orthographically rendered foreign accent also use occasional words of another language in their speech. Moreover, both ends of this continuum are problematic. What is a heterogeneous medium or a truly multilingual text, how can such texts be distinguished from "selective reproduction" or defined? (This reminds of the problems which the linguistic research of code-switching has had with defining the matrix language and the embedded language, as in Myers-Scotton's famous Matrix Language Frame model; see e.g. Myers-Scotton 2002 and, for criticism, e.g. Auer 2013.)

True "vehicular matching", representing multilingualism in a multilingual text, "suiting the variations in the representational medium to the variations in the represented object" as Sternberg (1981: 223) defines it, is rare. Some examples can be found; from the Finno-Ugric point of view, particularly interesting are the multilingual plays performed in Hungarian school theatres in the 18th century. These often clearly mirrored the multilingual world of their actors and audience: the old Kingdom of Hungary in which Latin was the language of education and administration, coexisting with a multitude of vernacular languages (Hungarian, German, Romanian, many Slavic language varieties...). Czibula (2012) gives a beautiful example of vehicular matching by systematic replacement in the play *Joseph Sold by His Brothers* by András Dugonics (1762). In this Biblical setting, Hungarian replaces Hebrew as the language of Joseph and his family, Latin is the language used in the Pharaoh's court and also as an international lingua franca, and the Ishmaelite merchants in the following scene speak German.

> ISMAELITA SECUNDUS
> *Ach, Himmel, was sehe ich! [...] Saget uns was das für eine Lantschafft seye, in welcher wir uns befinden, welche Gegend des Himmels uns umschließe und wer ihr seyet, oder ob einer unter eich zu finden ist der unsere sprach redete...* ['O heavens, what do I see! (...) Tell us, what are the lands where we are, what region is this surrounding us, and who are you, or is there anyone among you who speaks our language?']
> GÁD
> *Micsodát, mit mond kigyelmetek?* ['What, what are you saying, sir?']
> ISSACHAR
> *Látom én, nem tudnak azok emberül*. ['I see, they don't speak like people.']
> GÁD
> *Mein Herr, wir können nichts taits reden.* ['Sir, we not can speaking German.']
> ISMAELITA SECUNDUS
> *Erit fortasse inter vos, qui vel latina lingva loqvatur?* ['Is there perhaps somebody among you who speaks Latin?']
> GÁD

Illa quidem vobis servire possum. ['In that, indeed, I can serve you.']

At the other end of the continuum, we have seemingly monolingual texts without any visible traces of another language. However, even in such cases literature scholars may expect or hope to see "echoes" from another language "haunting the text" (Tidigs 2014: 52, with reference to Wirth-Nesher 2006), even if there are little or no linguistically attestible traces of interference nor even explicit references. A famous case in point is Franz Kafka, a German-language author whose works have inspired many scholars to look for the echoes of Hebrew or Yiddish. Although Kafka claimed a Jewish identity and showed an active interest towards Hebrew, he was primarily socialized in German and Czech and never mastered a traditional Jewish idiom to an equal extent (Nekula 2007). His problems with the German language were rather due to a folk-linguistic, nationalist equation of language with identity. Kafka's problem, being a German speaker without belonging to the German nation in the German nationalist sense, has been amply commented both by himself and his biographers and researchers, and it seems that here, again, researchers of literature and cultural studies want to see an elusive something, a cultural construct or an idea which they want to call *language*, like Deleuze and Guattari (2004: 109) when writing about Kafka:

> To be a foreigner, but in one's own tongue, not only when speaking a language other than one's own. To be bilingual, multilingual, but in one and the same language, without even a dialect or patois.

From the point of view of an empirical linguist, this is hot ice and wondrous strange black snow. What is called "multilingualism" seems to mean multiple and controversial attitudes or stances towards the idea of a language rather than a multiplicity of languages or codes. Even academic philologists cannot resist the temptation to confuse these two. This, in turn, shows the immense symbolic potential of the concept of "language". We want to essentialize, define borders between groups and identities, invent traditions and imagine communities over and over again, and language, even an imagined language, is perhaps the most powerful means for this.

Thus, never mind how fuzzy the language borders in reality can be and how elusive the representations of multilingualism in literature, language borders are real for language users, and crossing them has significance. Speaking of languaging instead of language, of polylanguaging, multiple language resources or intertwined linguistic repertoires instead of "languages" does not alter the fact that multilingual people often have clear ideas of which expressions belong to which "language", and that they can choose to cross or not to cross the borders, sometimes with a clear purpose in mind. In written literature, the crossing of language borders becomes particularly significant: the choice of language is made explicit and visible, detached from the time and locality of an individual communication situation and explicitly connected to various dimensions of language planning and language policies, the images and roles of languages as we want to know them.

Minority languages and authenticity: modernization (literarization) vs. "bastardization"

The question of defining the borders of a language becomes particularly interesting in connection with minority languages and the institutions of written literature. Typically, if minority languages have a written standard and a written tradition, this tradition is

younger and weaker than that of the majority language, sometimes struggling with language planning issues such as orthography or the development of vocabulary. The changing orthographies and orthography debates around the development of South Estonian (Võro, Seto) literary languages are a good example.

Now the general folk-linguistic view of most European lay readers seems to be that a "real" language is a system with a "grammar" and a clearly defined orthography, with rules which define what belongs to the language and what does not, and this is precisely what distinguishes "real" languages from "dialects" which do not have "rules". This is shown both ways: minority language activists often invest a lot of effort in creating a standard which can be taken seriously. And majority language users do not see any need to follow the rules when using the minority language, even a standardized one, as in this example from Sweden:

> *Pappa kallade sig för mästerkock. [...] Och det var han som tillagade sillakkanlaatikko, sillådan, vår finska specialitet som fick smaklökarna att svalla.*
> 'Daddy called himself a "master chef". [...] And it was him who made the *sillakkanlaatikko* [recte: *silakkalaatikko*], the herring casserole, our Finnish speciality which made the taste buds go wild.' (Susanna Alakoski, *Svinalängorna*)

In her prize-winning novel about a girl's childhood in a Finnish immigrant family in a Swedish suburb in the 1960s and '70s (Alakoski 2006), the immigrant author Susanna Alakoski uses a handful of Finnish words, many of which are incorrectly spelt. Of course, it is natural that Alakoski, raised and schooled in Sweden, struggles with the Finnish orthography. (In press interviews, she has repeatedly commented on the fact that she never received any formal education in her heritage language and thus, her Finnish skills remained deficient.) What I find interesting is the impression that the spelling of the Finnish words has not been checked – which I imagine would be the normal procedure, if an author would use French or German phrases in the text. A reader who masters written Finnish will feel irritated or even offended by the incorrect spellings and interpret them as a signal of Finnish being "degraded" to something less than a "real language". This, of course, can also be understood as an illustration of the degraded position of immigrant Finnish in Sweden or even, as Alakoski herself has hinted in an interview, as a kind of a covert protest (covert, because it remains invisible to most Swedish readers).[1]

Regarding minority languages as just "dialects" which do not have or do not need "rules", of course, relates to the idea that a regulated standard language is one of the hallmarks of a civilized culture and a civilized society. In this view, less regulated languages are "othered" and positioned outside civilization. This, again, can be and often is understood as degradation, an inferior position. In European literature, there is a long tradition of *Tölpelpoesie* (cf. Wintermeyer 1995: 80): minority languages, dialects or pidginized or creolized language varieties are only allowed to appear in a fool's gown, emphasizing and illustrating the less intellectual and less sophisticated characteristics of their speakers, and often employing a narrator – that is, the author himself will not

[1] Many Finnish critics have paid explicit attention to the incorrect Finnish spellings in Alakoski's novel. Alakoski herself has claimed to have used the incorrect spellings on purpose, to show how the lack of formal education in the mother tongue affects migrant children's language skills. In press interviews, she has told that despite her requests, she never received Finnish *hemspråk* (migrant children's heritage language) teaching in her school years. (Johansson 2008: 17.) In her opinion piece on social classes in today's Sweden, Heidi Avellan (2007; my translation) notes that "the Finnish spelling errors in the book irritate [...] until I start reading them as class markers."

assume the role of the carrier of the comic features (cf. Kalda 1996). To use but one famous example: *Die oberpahlsche Freundschaft* by the Baltic German author Jacob Johann Malm from 1818, a poem sometimes understood as documentation of "Halbdeutsch" as spoken by half-educated Estonians (Ariste 1981; see also Lehiste 1965), is rather a caricature of an Estonian peasant's stupidity. The narrator-protagonist describes, in systematically broken, accented and grammatically simplified German with occasional nonce loans from Estonian, his trip to Oberpahlen (Põltsamaa) to meet his friend; the "programme" of the visit includes stupid jokes, naïve gossip, drinking and playing cards, which leads to a fight. The poem ends with the narrator sadly stating: *Tas ast tu arme Jaan / Won oberpahlse Wreind!* 'That's what you got, poor John / from your friend in Oberpahlen!'. In other words, the narrator, addressing himself with a characteristically Estonian name, once again defines the frame and the vantage point of the reader: this is how the story of the funny, stupid Estonian peasant ends (and both the author and the prospective readers are reminded of their "superior" position).

Or, to give another famous example from Sweden: the anonymous poem *Alle bedlegrannas spegel* from the 17th century, investigated in detail by Forsman Svensson (1997). This is a didactic story of a choosy young lady who, after rejecting the proposals of many good men, finally gets her due punishment. A Finnish suitor appears, a seller of wooden buckets and tubs, speaking broken Swedish and personifying all stereotypic qualities of a Finn: he is jealous and violent, and after killing the poor girl, he will return to Finland where nobody can find him, as Finns usually do after committing crimes in Sweden. Quite obviously, 17th-century Swedes have had a clear idea of what kind of broken Swedish Finns speak. The text shows some typical phonetic interferences such as the devoicing of stops or the simplifying of word-initial consonant sequences. And it seems that the Swedish readers are expected to know some Finnish or "Mock Finnish" words: in this example, *jumalaksi* (God-TRANSLATIVE) and *Tokholmis* (Stockholm-INESSIVE) carry authentic but syntactically out-of-place inflectional endings, and *mino* [*minu*] (Fi. *minun* 'my, mine', Swed. *min*) for 'I, me' looks like an authentic "docking" solution typical of pidginized interlinguas (cf. Laakso 2001), while the enigmatic phrase *kusa samra,* often starting the Finnish character's utterances, seems impossible to interpret and might even represent a Swedish stereotypic idea of "how Finnish sounds".

Här frijar en Finne.	**Here comes a Finnish suitor.**
Kusa samra [= ???] effter thet wari so taxi [= ? dags]	??? after it has been to that time [?]
At mino hälsa jumalaxi	that me greet 'with God'
Mino kuta [= skuta] pläga runka	My boat use to rock
Mino köra [= göra] wackra punka [= bunkar]	Me make pretty buckets
Mino wara wackra kara	Me have pretty tubs
Mino plä Tockholmis fara	Me use to travel to "Tokholm"
Mino wara wackra lechte [= släkte]	Me be of fine family
Mino pekära [= begär] Jungfrw dil [= till] ächte	Me ask you, maiden, to wife
[...]	[...]

The literary use and reception of less well standardized and less regulated languages shows the effects of the ethnolinguistic assumption (cf. e.g. Blommaert & al. 2013: 4), the idea that there is an essential connection and a one-to-one correspondence between language and ethnocultural identity. This, in turn, may work against the literary use and standardization of minority languages. If they are organically and essentially

connected to the traditional way of life in traditional communities, their mere use and appearance in the context of literary civilization is "wrong", as Kaija Kuiri writes in her essay on the use of Finnish dialects in modern Finnish literature, typically as a means of humour (and in comparison to the use of Latin in our times):

> "The comic effect shows that we are used – quite correctly – to linking the dialect to the description of certain walks of life. When dialects are used for speaking about a phenomenon of high culture, we have a conflict which breeds humour. There is nothing bad in this practice in itself, but analytically thinking, especially with a sociolinguistic approach, we can claim that it represents a kind of a forgery. Language is always connected to a community and its culture, and now dialects are being planted into a "wrong" culture." (Kuiri 2004: 9, my translation)

In other words: in the eyes of an outsider, even a philologically educated outsider, the use of dialects in a non-authentic context is "unnatural", not the "real thing" any more. This is precisely the issue with which many minority-language activists are struggling now: extending the sphere of language use outside traditional contexts, with all the standardization and lexical renewal it involves, leads to what the end users of the language experience as unauthentic, "castrated language" (Koreinik 2013: 91) or simply "not their language" (cf. Puura & al. 2013: 141). Although most mainstream linguists either stay aloof or actively support modern language revitalization and the active language planning measures it requires, sometimes even professional linguists may join the chorus of those who believe that developing written languages for basically non-written cultures will only create a "bastardized" culture (Nikolaeva 1995).

Bridgeheads in literature: Visible and subversive roles of minority languages

Expectations on linguistic authenticity mean that the role which minority languages can play in a multilingual text is heavily restricted. Reflecting the typical total asymmetry of majority and minority languages in society (majorities have more resources in all respects, in terms of political power and representation, in the world of finance and money, in education and culture, etc.), minority languages are not on the same level as concerns their roles in literature. As concerns the literature written in the minority languages, its genres and topics may be restricted by what is experienced as "natural" for the language – for instance, it is difficult to write realistic prose with a modern urban setting in a language which is mainly used in traditional rural communities, as is the case with most if not all Finno-Ugric minority languages of Russia. And in the literature written in majority languages, the appearances of minority languages are few and far between, also restricted by what the speakers of the majority language can be expected to understand.

The total asymmetry of power also includes understandability. Modern minorities are bilingual and often automatically expected to master the majority language, while majorities only seldom have any skills in the minority language. In minority literatures, elements from the majority language can be freely inserted and used; even if the narration is subject to the homogenizing conventions of the prescriptivist linguistic culture, as is the case with the minorities of Russia, in the dialogue, the omnipresence of the majority language can be freely represented, as any prospective reader is bilingual in Russian. In fact, in these literatures, mimetic conventions based on linguistic realism seem to be overriding the homogenizing

conventions of narration. Gavrilova (2013) gives a wealth of examples of code-switching into Russian in modern Mari literature, from ritualized phrases, greetings, exclamations and address forms up to complete dialogues in Russian. In this example (from a story by V. Berdinskij, published in 2010, quoted from Gavrilova 2013: 34, with my translation), Russian is obviously the only realistic choice for this historical battle scene. As the Mari language never was in official use in the Russian or the Soviet army, Soviet officers speaking Mari is an impossible thought, and so only the narrator's comment is inserted into the Russian dialogue in Mari:

> *– Откатить пушки налево!*
> *– Товарищ капитан, надо стрелять, – ӧршдымӧ лейтенант тудын ваштареш лие, – раздавят!*
> *– Слушай приказ: немедленно поверните пушки налево и вон туда, в то логово, понял, сопляк!*
> '– Move the cannons to the left!
> – Comrade captain, we must fire, – the clean-shaven lieutenant objected [only this five-word phrase is in Mari], – they'll crush us!
> – This is an order: quickly turn the cannons to the left and over there, towards that hole, d'you understand, you snot-nose!'

In majority literatures, in contrast, elements from less widely understood languages appear in positions which are less relevant for the communication of information contents, for instance, in symbolic and socially indexical uses such as greetings, or in exclamations, swear words or other expressions of emotions. Or they can be used for realia and cultural specialities such as religious traditions or ethnic cooking (cf. the "herring casserole" example above), in which case they are often explicitly explained in the majority language as well. And, of course, there are cases in which elements from the minority language can be used for targeting specifically the minor part of the readership which understands the message.

In addition to the previously mentioned example, the incorrect Finnish spellings in Susanna Alakoski's *Svinalängorna,* I could illustrate this with another prize-winning novel from Sweden, Mikael Niemi's *Populärmusik från Vittula* (2000), which, in turn, brought a lot of publicity to the Meänkieli-speaking or Tornedal Finnish minority in Northern Sweden. The novel includes a lengthy description of "ethno-stress", the feeling of being different and somehow inferior to normal Swedes; some try to solve this problem by moving to the big cities of the South, but only those who return in a coffin can finally rest in peace.

> Med tiden förstod vi att vår hembygd egentligen inte tillhörde Sverige. Vi hade liksom kommit med av en tillfällighet. Ett nordligt bihang, några ödsliga myrmarker där det råkade bo människor som bara delvis förmådde vara svenskar. [...] Vi var inga. Våra föräldrar var inga. Våra förfäder hade betytt noll och intet för den svenska historien. Våra efternamn kunde inte stavas, än mindre uttalas av det fåtal lärarvikarier som sökte sig upp från det riktiga Sverige. [...] Vi hade de sämsta resultaten på Standardproven i hela riket. Vi hade inget bordsskick. Vi hade mössan på oss inomhus. Vi plockade aldrig svamp, undvek grönsaker och hade aldrig kräftskivor. Vi kunde inte konversera, inte deklamera, inte slå in presenter eller hålla tal. Vi gick med tårna utåt. Vi bröt på finska utan att vara finnar, vi bröt på svenska utan att vara svenskar.
> Vi var ingenting.

> Det fanns bara en utväg. En endaste möjlighet om man ville bli någonting, om så det allra minsta. Nämligen att flytta. [...]
> De enda som återvände söderifrån var de som dog. Trafikoffren. Självmördarna. Och med tiden även de aidsdöda. Tunga kistor som skovlades ner i tjälen bland björkarna på Pajala kyrkogård. Hemma igen. *Kotimaassa.*
>
> 'As times went by we understood that our home region didn't really belong to Sweden. As if we had been included by accident. A northern appendix, some unpopulated swamps where a few people happened to live, people who only partly managed to be Swedes. [...] We were nobodies. Our parents were nobodies. Our ancestors had no significance at all for the history of Sweden. Our surnames could not be spelled, not even pronounced by those few substitute teachers who found their way here from Real Sweden. [...] In the standard exams we had the worst results in the whole country. We had no table manners. We wore our hats even indoors. We never collected mushrooms, we shunned vegetables and never threw crayfish parties. We didn't know how to converse, how to recite poetry, how to pack a present or make a speech. We walked with our toes pointing outwards. We spoke broken Finnish but were no Finns, we spoke broken Swedish but were no Swedes.
> We were nobodies.
> There was only one way out. One single chance to become something, however petty. Namely, to move south. [...]
> The only ones who returned from the south were those who had died. Victims of accidents. Suicides. And later on the AIDS victims as well. Heavy coffins which were buried into the frozen earth between the birch trees in the cemetery of Pajala. Home again. *Kotimaassa.*'

The Finnish-language elements in the novel are very few and far between, but here, a Finnish-speaking reader can grasp an additional meaning. The word *kotimaassa* 'in the homeland', of course, emphasizes the return into the home of the heritage language, but it can also be understood as a sarcastic pun. Literally, it means '(with)in the soil of home', and underlines the idea of a feeling of homelessness, not-belonging, to which death is the only remedy.

In some cases, however, the language barrier between minority and majority varieties is low, thanks to close relatedness, and allows for more material from the minority language to leak in. This is the case with many language forms which were traditionally regarded as dialects or "patois". Karelian, despite being the titular language of the Republic of Karelia in Russia, suffered from exceptionally capricious language policies almost throughout the whole Soviet era and never had a chance to develop a viable written standard language.[2] Instead, with the exception of a couple of years in the late 1930's, Finnish and Russian were used as official languages in the Karelian Soviet Republic, and Karelian, although officially acknowledged as a language in population censuses and statistics, had no written standard use. Correspondingly, most writers in the Republic of Karelia used either Russian or Finnish. The latter was a convenient choice for speakers of the Northern or White Sea Karelian dialects, which are linguistically very close to Finnish. And because White Sea Karelian and Finnish are

[2] For an overview of the situation and history of the Karelian language in Russia, see e.g. Karjalainen & al. 2013. Note that in Finland, also home to a small autochthonous Karelian minority, Karelian was officially acknowledged as a minority language only in 2010; before that, it was not even listed in official censuses or population statistics.

mutually more or less intelligible, authors could use White Sea Karelian in their dialogues, thus – as Mišin (1999) points out – providing the Karelian language with a bridgehead in literature long before it was officially acknowledged as a full-scale language.

One of the most productive and popular White Sea Karelian authors, Ortjo Stepanov (1920–1998), told the history of his home village in a series of novels, published in one volume in 1979 with the title *Kotikunnan tarina* ('Story of my home region', Stepanov 1979). The novels are a typical product of the Soviet era: they deal with politically central processes, that is, the first decades of Soviet power and collectivization as well as World War II, but the really dangerous part, the Great Terror of the 1930's is practically left out. Latter-day critics have sometimes directly accused Stepanov of "not telling the whole truth", but this means ignoring the severe political circumstances and the dangers which a writer of his generation faced. In fact, Mišin (2005) notes that in the post-war Soviet Union, critical or dissident literary activities were only possible in the anonymity of large, urban communities; there were no Solzhenitsyns or Pasternaks in the countryside where "government organs functioned smoothly and alertly". While the novel perhaps lacks real dramatic tension and some of its characters are schematic and uninteresting, its greatest merits are seen in Stepanov's expert and authentic description of Karelian peasants' life and in the Karelian-language dialogue.

In Stepanov's novel, the dialogue is really largely in Karelian. The numerous ethnic Finns (teachers, representatives of the Soviet government or the Communist party, often emigrated from Finland after the civil war of 1918) speak Finnish (Stepanov even makes some linguistically inaccurate attempts to imitate spoken Finnish dialects[3]), and the Russian characters' dialogue is also translated into Finnish. Educated Karelians are free to choose between Karelian and Finnish. Finnish is the language of schools, education and political propaganda, of literature and progress, and some characters even use Finnish given names or Finnicize their names. The village girl Marppa, after getting some formal education, starts insisting on being called Martta, and later on we see another Karelian girl, Jelena, at a teachers' college in Petrozavodsk where everybody calls her Helena.

Jelena's aunt writes a letter to her in a mixture of Finnish and Karelian (this is also explicitly mentioned in the narration); obviously, she has only learnt to read and write in Finnish but her knowledge of the written language is not very deep. An excerpt of the letter is included into the text. In the following example, the Karelian elements clearly deviating from Finnish are underlined; the impression of Karelian admixture (if we look at this text from the point of view of Finnish) is actually created with just a few inflection endings and the emblematically Karelian pronouns *mie* 'I', *sie* 'you', *ken* 'who' (instead of *minä, sinä, kuka*), while most of the linguistic material could actually be classified to either of these languages.

Kirje oli Malanien kirjoittama. Se oli puoleksi suomea, puoleksi karjalaa.

[3] 'In the word *rahatimies* [= *rahtimies,* 'freight wagon driver'] as in many other words, Kalle pronounced a superfluous vowel between the consonants, which created additional syllables and made his speech somewhat choppy.' (Stepanov 1979: 25, my translation.) In some Finnish dialects epenthetic vowels are inserted between certain word-internal consonant sequences beginning with *h*, *n* or *l* (such as *-hl-*, *-nh-* or *-lp-*), but *-ht-* does not belong to these, and **rahati* instead of *rahti* 'freight' as well as some other word forms also uttered by the character Kalle, a Finnish migrant worker, such as **itise* instead of *itse* '(my)self', are completely unauthentic.

"... Kun ukolla sanottih, että sie olet mennyt Petroskoihin, hän nosti kovan metelin. Huusi miula: muka me hajoitamme perhettä. Kenpä muka lähtee nyt nuottaa soutamah? [...]"
'The letter was written by Malanie. It was in half Finnish, half Karelian.
"... When they told the old man that you had gone to Petrozavodsk, he made a real fuss. Yelled at me: we, he said, are breaking up the family. Who will row the boat for the seine fishers? [...]"' (Stepanov 1979: 112)

The dialogues, however, do not attempt to reflect any mixed codes in speech: for the Karelian characters, speech situations imply a simple choice between Finnish and Karelian. The language choices are not always explicitly commented on, but at least in the case of one character, the reasons are obvious and the language choice seems to carry a covert significance. Miikkula Nättijev, a poor but ambitious young man, hardened and embittered by the desperate poverty of his childhood, is gradually turning into something like a "bad guy", representing the negative sides of the Soviet system and personifying Stepanov's very cautious criticism: an unscrupulous Communist who misuses the system for his personal revenge. He is first seen at the very beginning of the story as a young boy who speaks Karelian like everybody else in the village. After a few years and some political education in the city, Miikkula, now the secretary of the local party organization, only speaks Standard Finnish with everybody. His language shift is not explicitly commented on, but it contrasts sharply with the other younger Karelians who speak Karelian with each other and Finnish with ethnic Finns. It is difficult not to draw the conclusion that Miikkula actually hates his Karelian roots and the community which treated him and his poor mother badly in his childhood.

In this example, Miikkula is talking with Veikko Kallijev, an intelligent and likeable Karelian who (having very little formal education) systematically speaks Karelian, although he is even higher in the party hierarchy than Miikkula. In this confrontation, Finnish represents the inhumane sides of Socialism, while Karelian symbolizes solidarity, common sense and honesty.

– Mutta Hirssolan jääräpää ei tunnusta Neuvostovaltaa! Miikkula huudahti. – Hänen takiaan ei kylässä ole perustettu tähän asti kollektiivitaloutta.
– Yhen Ontonko tähe, Veikko hymyili. – Jätä ukko rauhah. Anna eläy kuin tahtou. Ei hiän kahta ikyä elä.
'– But the pig-headed old man from Hirssola won't acknowledge the Soviet power! Miikkula exclaimed. – Because of him, no collective farm has been founded yet in our village.
– Just because of one Ontto? Veikko smiled. – Leave the old man alone. Let him live as he wants. He won't live longer than one man's life.'

Similarly to the "class marker" protest in the incorrect Finnish spellings of Alakoski's *Svinalängorna,* or the additional sarcasm hidden in the untranslated word *kotimaassa* in Niemi's *Populärmusik från Vittula,* the social significance of Miikkula's language choice is only obvious to insiders or experts. And in the literary circles of the former Soviet Union, where Finnish, just like Karelian, was a small and stateless minority language, these insiders were a tiny minority within a minority. In an article celebrating Stepanov's 75th birthday, Nieminen (1995) claims that Stepanov's novels, although some of them have been translated into Russian, have not received all the attention they would have merited, because the "rich White Sea Karelian dialect (sic)" of the dialogue is lost in translation. In other words, without official recognition the Karelian language, even if it

was standing on firm ground in its "natural" context, as part of the description of traditional communities and their culture, could not keep even the tiny bridgehead which its Northern dialects had achieved in Soviet literature.

Approaches to literary multilingualism – especially in Finno-Ugric literatures

It is time to start pulling the strings together and to tackle the big question: why and how should we investigate multilingualism in the literatures of Finno-Ugric minorities, and what can this research give to the research of literary multilingualism or even literary linguistics in general? As we know, multilingualism in literature is not a new phenomenon: maccaronic texts (conscious mixing of languages, in Sternberg's [1981: 224] terms, "vehicular promiscuity") or translingualism (authors using multiple languages, also other than their "mother tongues") have centuries-old traditions in Europe (for an overview and typology, see e.g. Knauth 2004), and since the groundbreaking work of Forster (1970), multilingual texts and multilingual authors have been investigated from different angles.

To mention but a few approaches: From a simple empirical linguistic point of view, the mechanisms and motivations of code-switching in written texts can be investigated in principle with the same tools as in spoken code-switching. In addition to Gavrilova's (2013) article mentioned above, Heli Laanekask (2003) has done some pioneering work in analysing the use of Estonian and German in the correspondence of Estonian nationalist intellectuals in the 19th century. Occasionally and anecdotally, literary language contact phenomena have been commented on in linguistic literature, and sometimes, as in the case of *Halbdeutsch* in Estonia and Latvia, the literary reflections of contact varieties have pretty straightforwardly been understood as documentation of the linguistic reality – rather than caricatures, mimetic representations.

In his foreword to a new edition of Samuli Paulaharju's collection of horror stories in Lapland settings, *Tunturien yöpuolta* ('From the night side of the hills', first published 1934), Veli-Pekka Lehtola (2000) credits Paulaharju for documenting a language variety long since extinct: a Finnish-Sámi interlingua, or Finnish with strong Sámi interference (both direct code-switches into Sámi and Sámi-accented Finnish words), as still spoken by some Sámi a hundred years ago. This language appears especially in one of the stories, featuring an old Sámi with supernatural forces. The local pastor has shot one of the Sámi sorcerer's reindeer which came to graze on his fields, and the sorcerer puts a curse on him which makes the pastor dance and hop to the lake shore and get drowned, just like the poor reindeer did in its agony. In the following example, Sámi words (some of which are cognates with or loanwords from Finnish and therefore identifiable) are highlighted with ***bold italics***, Sámi phonetic interferences (such as *hiva* instead of Finnish *hyvä* 'good') are *italicized.*

> – ***Muhto*** mie sanoin: Älä ammu ***pohtso***a! Sie ammuit *ahka*ni ***pohtso***n... *Hiva* ***pohtso***, luja *härka*. Mie näin: se *hippi* ja taajoi... ***manai jauri ja jaami... Pärkalak, pahpa,*** sie! [...] ***Kuula*** sie, ***pahpa***... sun kolosti *keu*! Se oli *ahka*ni *härka*. Se *hippi* ja taajoi ***ja manai jauri***... Siekin piät *hippiman* ja taajoman ja... ja...
> ['***But*** I told you: Don't shoot the ***reindeer***! You shot my *old woman*'s ***reindeer***... A *good* ***reindeer***, a strong *buck*. I saw: it was *jumping* and dancing... ***went [into] the lake and died... Damn*** you***, priest***! (...) ***Listen, priest.***.. this will *end up* badly for

you! It was my *old woman's buck*. It was *jumping* and dancing ***and went [into] the lake***... You too shall *jump* and dance and... and...']

Actually, Samuli Paulaharju (1875–1944) is now mainly known as a field researcher who collected a wealth of folklore and ethnographic data and published descriptions of the history and traditional way of life of the people of the Far North. The story collection *Tunturien yöpuolta* was his first and last attempt as a fiction writer, not very successful in the eyes of contemporary critics, and it seems that even today's readers tend to interpret Paulaharju's text rather as ethnographic or even linguistic documentation.

Literary multilingualism has been taken at face value not only in linguistics but also in literature studies, where, as Tidigs (2014: 89) has pointed out, even some *bona fide* scholars have explained the mixing of languages simply as a literary reflection of the author's own multilingualism. (In countries like Finland, this might also have been due to the central role of biographic approaches in literature studies.) And, as we have already seen, for minority literatures, the issue of authenticity and representativeness in the tradition of realism has been of major importance. Minority and migrant literatures in particular are expected to reflect and represent the reality, including the linguistic reality, of the minority group at issue (and from the majority's point of view; cf. Tidigs 2014: 84) – in the same way as woman writers traditionally have been evaluated on the basis of how "truthfully" their texts reflect a woman's psyche or the feminine world view (for the generic reader, who, of course, is a man).

In literature research, on the other hand, the issues of multilingualism have also been approached from the viewpoint of essentialized identities (dubbed "language", as in Deleuze and Guattari's idea of being "multilingual within one language") and "multiculturalism" (cf. Domokos 2012). Focusing on extralinguistic factors behind linguistic phenomena may open new views, but this research also risks missing the substance of multilingualism and getting stuck in folk-linguistic speculations (cf. Laakso, forthcoming). Furthermore, it does not necessarily help in solving the in-built conflict of constructivist research into multilingualism: while claiming to question the existence of language borders ("languages are just ideological constructs"), it inevitably reproduces them, and transferring the idea of language as an entity to the idea of culture as an entity does not really remove this problem.

So, finally, what can the Finno-Ugric minority languages and literatures offer to the research of literary multilingualism? First of all, as in many other aspects as well, the Finno-Ugric minority languages are underrepresented in international research, that is, either not studied at all or only studied within the national traditions. Moreover, most if not all of them are spoken in monolingual and prescriptivistic linguistic cultures characterized by a strong emphasis on the importance of the national language, often also a tradition of linguistic purism. This goes for Võro and Seto in Estonia as well as for the Sámi languages in the Nordic countries, for example, and – in a somewhat different way – also for the minority languages of Russia. All these contrast sharply with the language situation and literary language tradition of Western European languages, in particular, English, for which no comparable tradition of centralized and state-controlled language planning nor linguistic purism to a comparable extent exists. One could expect that this be reflected in the requirements for linguistic homogeneity. Will authors educated in the spirit of puristic and nationalistic language planning apply the homogenizing convention more strictly (either write in language A or in language B, but not mix them – as Ortjo Stepanov, for instance, does with Finnish and Karelian)?

In the Finno-Ugric minority literatures, thus, we see a particularly interesting clash between the usual authenticity expectation – minority literatures are expected to

represent ethnographic authenticity, show a truthful image of their speakers' life from their perspective – and the ambitions of language planning, including the ideals of purism. For the authors of these minority literatures, "a real language" is an "ideal code" with "minimal variation in form" (Haugen 1966: 931), and in order to warrant its use in literature, the language should legitimize itself as a "real language", both pure and complete, able to express basically anything and everything. However, in the real life of these minority communities, the majority language is omnipresent and there are contexts (such as the military language in the Mari example above) in which the majority language is the only option.

Moreover, in some of these countries, the tradition of realism is deeply rooted in the national literature. Finland is probably an extreme example: a relatively young tradition of literature which, actually, was created as part of the Romantic Nationalist awakening and the nation-state project in the 19th century, to assist in the identity-building of a young nation by means of realism and authenticity. In a slightly different form, the authenticity expectation was also supported in the former Soviet Union and its satellite countries by the requirements of Socialist realism (which, in certain respects, actually conserved the ideals of Romantic nationalism). For the most part of the 20th century, multilingualism in the young literatures of most small Finno-Ugric nations could only exist under the strict ideological control – as pointed out earlier, in rural and peripheral areas particularly strict – of the Soviet authorities, in a framework which prescribed "Socialist content in a national form".

The "national form", as a kind of constructed authenticity, also determined the genres and forms of literature, and the boundaries of literature as well. In the 1920s and 1930s, as Karelian did not exist as a literary language, instead of written literature "folklore" was collected in Soviet Karelia which fulfilled the same ideological requirements of national form and Socialist content. The following example (from Evseev 1968) represents a reuse of the formulae of traditional Karelian epic folk poetry, now praising the deeds of a contemporary hero, Toivo Antikainen.

Oli armas Antikainen	The dear Antikainen was
vojennoin komandaizen ke	with his military squad
vilul talvel hiihtämäs	skiing in the cold winter
dorogattomie kohtie myö.	in pathless lands.
Hiihti soile, hiihti maile,	He skied to swamps and dry lands,
hiihti hiiloi kangahile,	he skied to barren (?) moors,
suot sorahtih, muat d'yrähtih,	the swamps resounded, the lands thundered,
valgozet vastah kajahtih.	the Whites returned the fire.

(Toivo Antikainen (1898–1941) was a Finnish communist who after the civil war of 1918 emigrated to Russia and became famous as the leader of the Red Army squad which defeated a Finnish military expedition in 1922.) Recalling the traditional criteria of folklore (cf. e.g. Ben-Amos 1971), this text is perhaps schematic and "collective" in the sense that it is ascribed to the whole imagined community of Karelians, but, published in a book, it is no more oral, and certainly it is not anonymous, except that the author's name, well known to those who wrote the text down, is or can be left out. And most certainly, this text is not multilingual and could never be, except for modern terminology *(vojennoi komandaine* 'military squad') which in the Karelian language must be borrowed from Russian. This is perhaps an extreme example of literature which for political reasons could only exist within very strict homogenizing conventions, or, in

Sternberg's terms, referential restriction. But to a lesser extent, the same rules applied for all minority languages in the Soviet Union.

And finally, Finno-Ugric minority languages are interesting in how they challenge the borders between languages. Of course, many of these languages coexist with a dominant language which is not related to them at all. But there are also cases such as the Sámi-Finnish interlingua: Sámi languages and Finnish are not mutually intelligible, but there are some cognate words which still sound fairly similar (Fin. *kuule* – Northern Sámi *gula* 'hear!', 'listen!'), lots of loanwords in either direction and even some shared grammatical elements such as the past-tense *i* (Fin. *meni* – Northern Sámi *manai* '(he/she/it) went'), so that the imagined language of the old man in the above example from Samuli Paulaharju can actually contain quite a lot of Sámi material embedded into Finnish. And, finally, some Finnic minority languages are closely related to Finnish or Estonian or even traditionally considered dialects rather than languages. As we saw, many readers and critics of Ortjo Stepanov's novels interpret the White Sea Karelian dialogue as "dialectal", conceptually at the same level with the Finnish dialects as used in Finnish literature – and linguistically, the relationship is fully comparable.

Similarly, Meänkieli or Tornedal Finnish in Northern Sweden belongs linguistically to the continuum of the Finnish dialects of the Far North. In Sweden, it has been standardized and developed into a literary language with the name *Meänkieli* ('our language') also in order to highlight its conceptual separation from Finnish as the national language of Finland. However, in Finland quite a few activists now use the name *Meänkieli* when speaking of the dialect spoken on the Finnish side of the Torne valley, a language variety which has usually been considered a dialect of Finnish but which, of course, also belongs to the same originally seamless dialect continuum with the dialect of the Swedish side. For instance, the Finnish writer Rosa Liksom, one of the pioneers in the "serious" use of dialect in literature (and a proficient language user at that, cf. Mantila 1993), has herself stated that her childhood home was "in the Meänkieli area", and Finnish critics quite customarily use the term Meänkieli when speaking of the "dialect" elements in her works.

In other words, multilingualism in literature, even if we only think of the "selective reproduction" end of Sternberg's continuum, actually covers another dimension of distinctness or difference vs. sameness, also forming a problematic continuum. How this continuum is divided into languages (and how we define languages as opposed to dialectal or stylistic variation within one language) is constrained partly by political and cultural conventions (for instance: Karelian is not a language, therefore it will be treated like a dialect), partly by real linguistic facts: from a certain point on, the demarcation of languages turns from an issue of politics and identities (as in the case of White Sea Karelian or Meänkieli) into a linguistic question. But it is not just that the demarcation of languages in literature is problematic: literature, in fact, is what makes, defines, and legitimizes a language. Only a language with a real literature is a real language.

And finally, a related but distinct dimension is the understandability within the often asymmetric conditions of societal multilingualism. In Mari literature, you can use Russian elements fairly freely, because the readers will understand them, and at least partly, you can do the same with Swedish in Finnish-language literature. But embedding Finnish into Swedish (in Sweden) requires care and caution, and sometimes, as in the case of the herring casserole, explicit translations and explanations. This is also connected to the conventions of literature: in many Eastern European countries, it is – or has been – obviously normal to translate and explain foreign words in footnotes, in today's Finnish literature, this would create an ironic effect.

With this, I have come to my final point. Multilingualism in literature is a complex phenomenon with many dimensions, and understanding them properly needs expertise in many fields of research. In linguistic studies, multilingualism in literature has either been neglected – also because of spoken and "spontaneous" language use has been regarded as the primary object of linguistic studies – or simply treated as documentation of real-life multilingual phenomena, forgetting or ignoring the intentions of the author and the conventions of literature. Literature studies, on the other hand, are not really interested in the substance of multilingual texts but in something beyond the text, an abstract construct sometimes labeled "language" or "culture", and in the interpretation of the poetic uses of language material. Without linguistic expertise, however, literature scholars run the risk of missing important aspects, or getting lost in the same wonderland of subjective, folk-linguistic interpretations in which multilingual authors often wander. A better understanding of multilingual phenomena in literature would need true interdisciplinary cooperation, and at least in the case of the Finno-Ugric minority literatures, this work has not even begun yet.

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