BG Pulse Journal USA
ISSN:1947-2536 http://www.bgpulseusa.com/index.php/bg
BG PULSE JOURNAL

ARTISTIC AND STYLISTIC FUNCTIONS OF FOREIGN-LANGUAGE INSERTIONS IN "TRAVELS WITH CHARLEY IN SEARCH OF AMERICA" BY JOHN STEINBECK

Dvoryashina Victoria Sergeevna
Senior Lecturer, Department of World Literature,
Uzbek State World Languages University
terra-dvs@mail.ru

Abstract. The article examines the artistic and stylistic functions of foreign-language insertions in the travelogue "Travels with Charley in Search of America" by John Steinbeck. The aim of the study is to identify the role of these elements in shaping the image of the country and expressing the author's idea. The objectives include analyzing the stylistic, characterological, and conceptual information conveyed by foreign-language insertions in the text of the travelogue. The methodological framework is based on linguostylistic and contextual text analysis, as well as a linguacultural approach. The study establishes that foreign-language insertions in "Travels with Charley" contribute to conveying local color, serve as a means of character speech representation, and also express the author's evaluation. As a result, it is concluded that these elements not only lend a distinctive quality to the narrative, but also facilitate the раскрытие (revelation) of the idea of the multinational nature of the United States and the search for national identity, occupying an important place in the author's conceptual framework of the work.

Key words: John Steinbeck, travelogue, culturally marked elements, space, foreign-language insertions, stylistic function.

Introduction

Travel writing, as a genre documenting a traveler's attempt to interpret the surrounding natural and cultural environment, creates a multifaceted, dynamic, and inherently unfinished image of a familiar or unfamiliar land, region, or country [3]. The geographical scope of the traveler-author's route and the intended audience (compatriots or foreign readers) often determine the ways historical and cultural information about a particular country or region is presented in a travelogue. Such information may be delivered extensively, accompanied by detailed commentary and numerous explanations, or incorporated into the narrative economically and selectively. In the latter case, each textual element acquires increased semantic significance and assumes a particular hierarchical value. Culturally marked elements play a particularly important role here: proper names (for example, the official nicknames of American states in *Travels with Charley in Search of America*), culture-specific realia (names of dishes, animals, newspapers, etc.), quotations, graphic emphasis, and other stylistic devices.

Results

Foreign-language insertions in John Steinbeck's *Travels with Charley in Search of America* function not only as a linguistic manifestation of one of the most significant genre characteristics of travel writing but also as a distinctive feature of Steinbeck's individual style. They demonstrate the author's ability to convey profound meanings through concise expression and to combine apparent narrative simplicity with keen observation and critical insight.

The inclusion of European words and expressions contributes not only to the narrative's vividness and authenticity but also to the representation of America as a unified organism – indivisible despite the uniqueness of its regions and states, and distinctive despite its historical ties with Europe.

At the same time, in his attempt to preserve linguistic distinctions gradually disappearing into the past, Steinbeck employs foreign-language insertions as a stylistic device through which he communicates his concern about the growing power of technological civilization, a force capable of erasing individuality and weakening the human connection with the land.

Discussion

John Steinbeck, an American writer, journalist, and recipient of the 1962 Nobel Prize in Literature, invested *Travels with Charley in Search of America* with both his love for his native country and his concern for its future. The book combines a profound understanding of the historical exploration and unification of North American territories with an awareness of the logic underlying social transformations and their consequences. According to Lowell Wyse, Steinbeck sought to construct a model of reality in which the large-scale experiential image of American space would emerge at the intersection of geographical representation and the depiction of human interaction with nature, encompassing a variety of local images [4].

Within this mosaic of local realities, each possesses its own linguistic specificity. Through this linguistic uniqueness, space acquires a historical and cultural dimension, while language difference itself becomes a means of representing the distinctive character of various American regions. At the same time, the route and the authorial presence serve as unifying elements, binding together the constituent parts of this multifaceted image. Steinbeck seeks to test the durability of traditional American national traits and identify broader transformations in public consciousness that drive large-scale changes in the country, "making it tick" and offering insight into its future.

Travels with Charley demonstrates a dynamic interaction between the author's voice and the voices of contemporary America represented by ordinary inhabitants of rural and provincial communities. Steinbeck recreates the sound of their speech with remarkable precision, paying attention to pauses, sighs, intonations, "code words," repetitions, sentence structure, and other linguistic features. Every intonation reveals the speaker's emotional state, while every word may disclose family history, cultural roots, and contextual information necessary for understanding the interaction.

Among the most vivid and meaningful linguistic devices employed for characterization are foreign-language insertions represented by words, phrases, and concise statements in European languages such as French, Spanish, and German.

S. Vlakhov and S. Florin identify several functions of foreign-language insertions, including the creation of authenticity and local color, the projection of erudition and education, as well as comic and satirical effects [1]. Linguistic studies further emphasize that their inclusion in a text may be conditioned by stylistic and genre-related features of discourse [2, p. 86].

The foreign-language insertions used in Steinbeck's travelogue reflect the multinational composition of American society and underscore the country's cultural heterogeneity. As the author travels across different states, he encounters representatives of diverse ethnic communities whose speech retains traces of their native languages. Foreign words and expressions help convey local specificity and create an effect of narrative authenticity. They also reinforce the documentary quality traditionally associated with travel writing as a genre.

Steinbeck frequently introduces French, Spanish, and German expressions while reproducing the natural speech patterns of his interlocutors. These elements perform a characterological function by revealing the origins and social identities of particular individuals. Through foreign-language vocabulary, the author also evokes the historical development of various regions of the United States.

French cultural references, for example, evoke Louisiana's colonial past and prepare readers for the perception of the complex and historically conditioned social atmosphere of the Southern states, particularly the contrast between refined European cultural traditions and the vulgar rhetoric of activists opposing equal rights for African Americans. Spanish expressions point to the distinctive cultural heritage of the American Southwest and reflect a particular worldview characterized by emotionality that nevertheless coexists with a pragmatic ability to "do business." Consequently, foreign-language insertions function not only as markers of cultural memory but also as a means of expressing the author's evaluation of social phenomena and events.

Moreover, foreign-language elements frequently create an ironic effect. Steinbeck employs them to emphasize the discrepancy between official patriotic discourse and the actual diversity of the country. In some cases, foreign words convey shades of alienation or distance between the author and the environment he observes. In others, they express the writer's sympathy toward representatives of other cultures, such as French Canadians.

Stylistically, such insertions contribute to the polyphonic quality of the narrative by expanding its intonational range. They enrich the text lexically and make it more flexible, expressive, and engaging. Equally important is their symbolic function: through linguistic diversity, Steinbeck affirms the idea of America as a space of cultural interaction and coexistence. At the same time, foreign-language elements reinforce the theme of the search for national identity embedded in the very conception of the work.

Thus, in *Travels with Charley*, foreign-language insertions perform not only descriptive but also conceptual functions, becoming an important means of articulating the author's worldview.

References

1. Vlakhov, S., & Florin, S. *The Untranslatable in Translation*. Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniya, 1980. 343 p.
2. Narochnaya, E.B., & Shevtsova, G.V. Foreign Words in Contemporary Russian Journalism. *Language and Culture*, 2009, No. 4, pp. 84-97.
3. https://www.svoboda.org/a/1610207.html
4. Wyse, Lowell. "A Pattern of Reality": Writing Place in *Travels with Charley* and *A Russian Journal*. *Steinbeck Review*, 2023, Vol. 20, No. 1, pp. 30-45.