



**Linguistic Innovations In Romain Gary's Creative Laboratory**

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**ABSTRACT:**

In this article we study a new background revealed due to Russian translations made by N.Mavlevich in 2015 of the first unpublished novel by Romain Gary, holder of the two Prix Goncourt prizes for his novels *The Roots of Heaven* (*Les Racines du ciel*) and *The Life Before Us* (*La vie devant soi*) published under the pseudonym Emile Ajar. The empirical writer mentioned about his debut novel in the book *The Night is Calm* (*La nuit sera calme*) and his posthumous literary essay *The Life and Death of Emil Ajar* (*Vie et mort d'Emile Ajar*) thus giving a clue to understanding of his “creative laboratory” related to phenomenal literary mystification. We assume that language experts will be interested in studying of Romain Gary's linguistic biography who created his novels in English and French, considering the fact that Russia was the country where his linguistic development had started. By understanding the role and place of the author's creative laboratory in linguistics we can define relevance and academic novelty of suggested study. The study allows to analyse Romain Gary's creative works from a new perspective and goes beyond the existing method of obtaining knowledge. The main research objects include the author's language and linguistic behaviour of his characters that are featured with well-structured images evoked by Russian words kept in mind from childhood. This system of values is close to the Russian readers and is in tune with the spirit of the modern age. This aspect in the framework of the language-specific nature can be a subject for further research. Linguistic findings made by Romain Gary facilitated the development of the literary language and were focused on increasing of capabilities of the literary speech. Analysis of linguistic innovations in the Romain Gary's creative laboratory allows to receive important information about peculiarities of links between the cognitive and linguistic content discovered in linguistic facts and speech phenomena and make some crucial observations.

**Keywords:** Linguistics. Language. Education. Society. Russia. Migration. Identity .Reception of cultural heritage. Student. World Cultural Heritage. Diplomacy.



## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Romain Gary's phenomenal literary works are currently a source of great scientific value. On October 5, 2015, it was published a 255 pages long Russian translation of *The Wine of the Dead (Le Vin des morts)*, the lost manuscript by a French novelist Romain Gary (Gary,2015). The book was translated by Natalya Mavlevich with the age limit 12+. The novel was released under the author's real name - Roman Kacew. Romain Gary placed a great importance on his first novel in *The Life and Death of Emil Ajar (Vie et mort d'Emile Ajar)*, the literary essay written right before his death and addressed to future generations: "Finally, I have written a novel about fear. It has been my dream since I was 20 when I was working on *The Wine of the Dead (Le Vin des morts)*" (Gary,1991,10). The manuscript was given to a Swedish journalist Kristel Siiderlmiç as a sign of his love, was deemed lost for good. Meanwhile, in 1992 it was placed on an auction and bought by a French psychologist Philippe Brenot. On May 8, 2014 at the author's one hundred anniversary the book was finally released (Romain Gary,2014). Today, when the novel has come out it can shed the light on the writer's creative laboratory. The name *The Wine of the Dead (Le Vin des morts)* is metaphoric because its main idea is that the alcohol loosens the tongue and liberates human mind that is why the speech of characters is based on natural language. Tulipe, the main character of the novel, being drunk at the cemetery falls asleep and gets into the dead world. He is surrounded by grotesque characters – procuresses from the underworld of tolerance, policemen who beat the daylight out of the accused, whores and monks holding the Holy Grail and even the Lord looking like a man of loose morals. The book is hard to read, it is full of shocking sarcasm, blasphemy and echoes of Francois Rabelais, Raymond Queneau, Lautréamont and Céline. Linguistic findings of Romain Gary facilitated the development of the literary language and were focused on increasing of capabilities of the literary speech. Meanwhile, the most important thing is that the first book depicts the image of Ajar: Romain Gary often recalled the book when giving a clue to understanding of his literary mystification with Emil Ajar. The novel has always had its continuation – each time having a new title – but the idea of the first novel was successfully applied in linguistic innovations of the literary mystification.

## **2. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**



The text of the novel including all internal aspects and external links represents an initial reality that is given to the researcher and is important for the language expert. The mentioned above feature of the author's language and literary speech of characters outlines all other aspects of philology aimed at interpretation of linguistic, social, psychological and other context allowing to understand the new meanings of Romain Gary's literary laboratory.

### **3. MAIN BODY**

This book is important for our research because it serves as a starting point for the author in making further creative works. All novels by Romain Gary, in particular those written under the pseudonym of Emil Ajar (*The Big Hug (Gros câlin)*, *The Life Before Us (La vie devant soi)*, *Pseudonym (Pseudo)*, *King Solomon (L'Angoisse du roi Salomon)*) are based on the debut novel *The Wine of the Dead (Le Vin des morts)*. Romain Gary received the second Prix Goncourt prizes for Emil Ajar thanks to the real creative laboratory with unique language and linguistic innovations. Later on, many parts of *The Wine of the Dead (Le Vin des morts)* with peculiar language appeared in the books by Romain Gary, in particular, *Tulip (Tulipe)*, *A European Education (Éducation européenne)*, *The Company of Men (Le Grand Vestiaire)*, *The Roots of Heaven (Les Racines du ciel)*, *The Talent Scout (Les Mangeurs d'Etoiles)* etc. What prevails in other Ajar's books is the author's attitude to the language when he changes the quality of the word and adds a bit of grotesque according to traditions of the medieval literature. As for belles-lettres of the late XX – early XXI, there are certain procedures typical of the modern French – marginal phenomena (colloquial lexis, low-colloquial lexis, jargon words) are actively moved to the central sphere of communication which is an integral part of linguistic innovations. Use of graphons, the intentional distortion of orthography is the most remarkable linguistic feature of *The Wine of the Dead (Le Vin des morts)*. Later on, they will firmly establish themselves in the creative laboratory of the novelist where dialogues and communication between characters become the main point of style-forming approaches. Non-regular innovations have no strict formation rules – they emerge in different places and in various forms. They intentionally transform or reduce letters, drop parts of the word, fold the rhythm section into a single phonetic word, allow non-traditional French transcription of words borrowed from Russian or other languages. Graphons add an expressive meaning to the fiction work. The author makes a grotesque portrait of



characters whose familiar manner of speaking and low-colloquial words, including specific pronunciation, is the only natural form of communication. To illustrate this point, let us see the examples below: *Vive Madamelasous-préfette ! braillal'assemblée*(Romain Gary,2014,164) ; *etpuis, j'aiplusentenduquedesrrrac ! etdesbrroum ! etdespatatis ! etdespatatras ! etdesclaquementdelanguetdesc'est-y-bon !* (3, 140-141);*Chiche !* (Romain Gary,2014,123); Elle serait *pien* fière de son *ébouxprien* aimé (3, 106) ; on *fa d'enderrergomme* ça sous un *Arg de Driomphe !* (Romain Gary,2014, 105). Use of such linguistic transformation in the context is determined by the author's great interest in linguistic experiments, his aspiration to fully convey semantic and phonetic potential of lexis in a real-life communication.

#### 4. RESULTS

Romain Gary is one of those unique people who learned several languages in childhood which influenced his further development and the talent of writing with individual linguistic features. Language experts will be interested in studying of Romain Gary's linguistic biography who created his novels in English and French, considering the fact that he started learning languages when his mother Mina Owczyńska lived in Russia. Practically all Gary's works contain Russian words which can be misused sometimes. Russian was his native language but the author's mother did her best to eliminate her son's childhood memories about Russia to stop people treating him as an immigrant. In all spheres of life, including the art, politics or diplomacy, Romain Gary was bound to protect himself and prove that he was French. Even though he graduated from military school, had a regular officer rank and served with the Free French Forces, Romain Gary was not a naturalized citizen of France. To keep his dignity the novelist seeks salvation by means of dramatic identification, pseudonyms, literary mystification and linguistic experiments in his creative laboratory. In the interview titled "Translation is an unnatural business" Natalya Mavlevich, translator of Romain Gary's novels wonders how could the reader not recognize Romain Gary in Emil Ajar: the author enjoys changing masks but he keeps his style even under different pseudonyms (4). It should be mentioned that Romain Gary's works are hard to translate. Here it is worth mentioning an interview with the author taken by a Swiss journalist François Bondy when Romain Gary recalls how hard it was to translate his books from English into French. In 1963 he wrote a novel titled *The Ski Bum (Adieu Gary Cooper)* in the American slang. Romain Gary's non-standard



language is a creative mechanism pushing forward the author's artistic imagination thus helping to create his individual style. The main theme of the novel is the language or the language barrier to be precise when two people speak on the same language but fail to understand each other. The lady is fluent in five languages, knows Hebrew and Swahili, and is surprised at the elegant French of the African francophones who masterly use all turns of speech in past tenses and conjunctive mood. It is not the only novel by Romain Gary where he addresses to the language issue which is one of the key topics in Emil Ajar's works. Using the Russian and Polish, adding a bit of European humour from the American, British and French cultures he introduces in *The Dance of Genghis Cohn* (*La Danse de Gengis Cohn*) a unique intonation that was like a breath of fresh air to the modern French literature. Two years before the events occurred in May 1968, the French translation of this novel was the only one with elegantly used limerick, a classic English form of poetry which is obscene with humorous intent, that looks like a *parody* of both languages. It was the third book released after *Lady L* and *The Talent Scout* (*Les Mangeurs d'Etoiles*) that was initially written in English. According to Romain Gary, the French versions of his novels are not translations but full-value works being rewritten and improved so that they overshadow the originals. Over the time, he managed to expand themes and work on the literary language. For instance, it took six weeks to Romain Gary to finish *Lady L* in English. Meanwhile, the French version of the novel appeared in five years after the original and the author spent nine months to make it. What is written in French is hard to formulate in English. Trying to invent something new and unique in terms of literary language, Romain Gary draws inspiration from his *foreignness* in French literature: his linguistic creativity comes easily. First, he writes in one language and then finds a final way to convey its specific meaning in French (Romain Gary, 1974). It can be partially explained by the fact that each language is a unique system with its own elements and specific connections between – that is why intra-linguistic notions typical of units of a certain language are usually replaced with intra-linguistic notions of another language.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

Romain Gary's linguistic and creative laboratory is characterized with ambiguity, twisted bibliographic data regarding the date of birth and parents given at interviews, pseudonyms containing Russian, in particular, Shatan Bogat, Fosco Sinibaldi, Emil Ajar, etc. This specific feature of Romain Gary's literary works is marked in research carried out at our



university based on the novel *Lady L*. The national peculiarities of the characters and the author's mentality are conveyed in a psychological clue (Khabiboullina,2014). *Lady L* was released in 1963 by Gallimard and served as a parting gift to Gary's first wife Lesly Blanch, a British journalist and writer. The name of the novel is metaphoric and needs comments that will allow to expand the semantic space of the novel. Analysis can also include lexical, semantical and functional stylistic features of the original title (nominative, figurative and generating metaphor emerging from a cognitive metaphor). It reveals mechanisms of metaphORIZATION that lead to formation of new names. The French *L* (El') sounds soft and feminine like the French pronoun Elle (She) referring to Lesley Blanch. Her last name is also mentioned in the novel but in a different context. Blanch can be translated from French as "white". Grown up in a washhouse, Annette had a strong almost supernatural aptitude to cleanness (Europe,2014). It is interesting that in this novel the author addresses to the linguistic metaphor as a symbol of integrity of two languages in a single personality. The plot is based on a dialogue. In the novel, we encounter an English aristocrat who opens up to her friend Percy Rodiner telling him that she is not British but a French woman named Annette Boudin. Being an unquestioned authority among the British upper-class society for many years, she used to be a prostitute and an anarchist. Before she turned into Diana, the woman gained success and easily learned English, achieved elegance in speech and even thought though she could not get rid of her strong Parisian accent. At first, the process of her creative interaction with language and mental constructions resulted in a neurotic disorder and deviant behaviour: «elleavaitdelapeine à reteniruncertainm otbien frança is quiluimontaitaux lèvressetfaisaitsemblantdenepasavoirentendu » (Romain Gary,1990, 1062). Trans-individual and artistic world of the main character, her metamorphoses and language peculiarities are reflected in the aristocratic period of life where she is addressed as Lady L or Diana. She has no name but many faces. The woman lives in her own world that she constantly modifies by means of the English language and the native French. The central part of her world is defined by the proper name. It is not only the language that gets structured but the main character also changes with the help of the world around her. Thinking and keeping memories in French, she structures her speech in English, expresses meanings of words and imagines their definitions. When she dropped her mask thus proving her uniqueness and shocking with her disclosure, it was as if she broke the



harmony of epic laws. Like Romain Gary in his mystification with Emil Ajar moved into the sphere of daily communication with Paul Pavlowitch, the artistic game lost its attractiveness and uniqueness. After that, Romain Gary wanted to drop the mask that made him uncomfortable and caused neurotic disorders (Raphaël Leyris, 2014). Transcendence is given in a spiritual experience. Metaphorization describes characters and creates an atmosphere of game and mystification. Semantic recognition of a metaphor and interpretation of the literary text means a creation of the world in the eyes of the author. In the novel *The Life Before Us (La vie devant so)* the modern material for the so-called philological “laboratory” includes child speech full of euphemisms, exotic words, street language, jargon of prostitutes, drug addicts and criminals, mixture of Hebrew and Arabic, different religions and races. Use of onomatopoeic words is important for the semantic part of the word-and-speech forms, for instance: *Moilesdocumentsquiprouventdeschoses, j'enveuxpas, tfou, tfou, tfou, ditMadameRosa, enfaisantminedecrachercontrelemauvaissort, commecelui-ciexige* (Gary, 1991, 411). Onomatopoeic *tfou, tfou, tfou* adds an emotional effect to the colloquial expression *crachercontrelemauvaissort* (*word-for-word translation: “spit on bad fate”*).

## **6. SUMMARY**

Analysis of linguistic innovations in the creative laboratory of Romain Gary allows to get important information about specific nature of the interaction between the mental and linguistic content identified in linguistic facts and speech phenomena and make some crucial observations. The fact that Romain Gary did not write but tell his novels or better say dictated the text to his secretaries, has directly influenced his literary language. The sentences became more complicated and less connected, they contained many insertions and corrections. Despite this, language has remained the best tool of the writer. New research will help to analyse Romain Gary's creative works from a new perspective and goes beyond the existing method of obtaining knowledge ([http://www.lemonde.fr/livres/article/2017/08/24/francois-henri-deserable-sous-le-signe-de-romain-gary\\_5175865\\_3260.html?xtmc=romain\\_gary&xtcr=3](http://www.lemonde.fr/livres/article/2017/08/24/francois-henri-deserable-sous-le-signe-de-romain-gary_5175865_3260.html?xtmc=romain_gary&xtcr=3)).

## **7. CONCLUSION**



Any linguistic innovation starts with understanding of an individual linguistic identity. This outlook on the author's language and his linguistic experiments seems logical, and research in this area are quite perspective. Linguistic innovations in Romain Gary's creative laboratory are connected with a certain trait of his character i.e. the Russianness. The author's speech and way of thinking are marked with structured images evoked by Russian words remained in childhood memories (Myriam Anissimov, 2006, 194). This aspect in the context of language specific nature is the subject of our research. Thus, examination of facts that conditioned the process of creation and functioning of the author's language and literary speech of characters in the text along with the choice of language means that form the content plane and the verbal plane contributes to a better understanding of Romain Gary's creative laboratory and complete comprehension of information conveyed by the text.

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