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## Section 2: Literary Multilingualism: (Re-)Imagining Habsburg Multilingual Borderlands

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# Multilingualism in the Banat: A Focus on Intellectual Perspectives through the Analysis of Literary Works

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**Summary:** The Banat has been one of Europe's most multilingual regions since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century European intellectuals have been engaged in building nations, which has resulted in the marginalization of multilingualism in many forms. The monolingual literary novel has been described as one of the important instruments in this process. Phenomena remaining resistant to this idea are brought into focus through the analysis of multilingualism in four novels written by authors from the Banat. In this manner, the chances of multilingualism in the context of national cultures and intellectuals are examined. As a conclusion, it is argued that the multiplicity of languages in literature presents an opportunity for a better cross-cultural understanding.

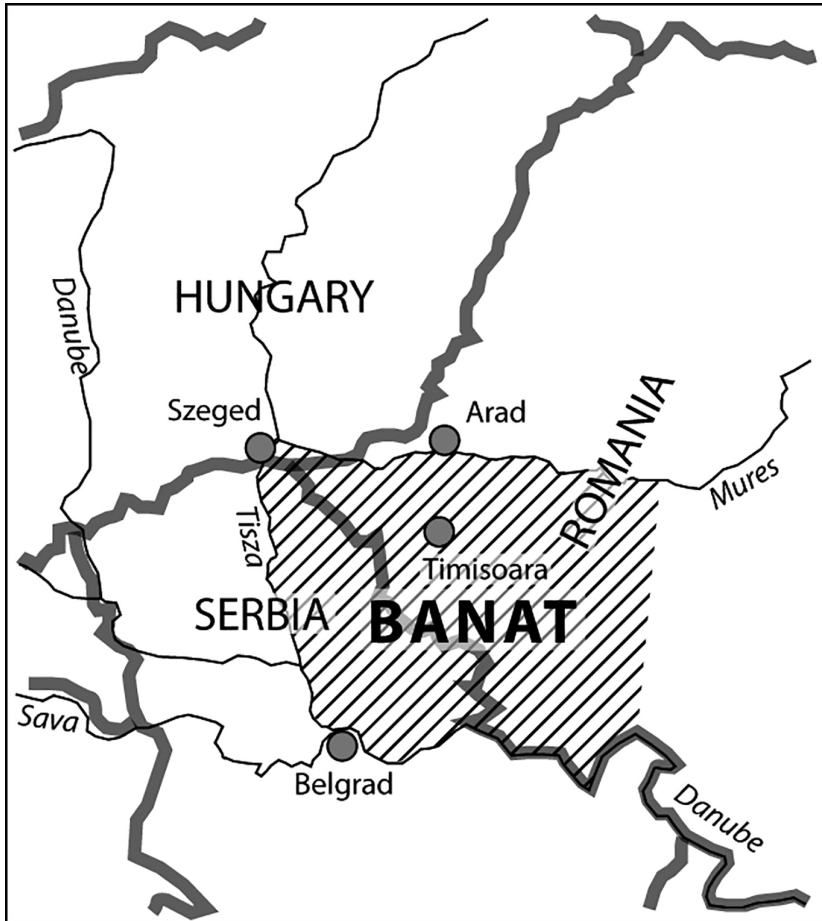
**Keywords:** The Banat, polyglot novel, Benedict Anderson, literary code-switching, language ideology

## 1 Introduction

The Banat is a historically multilingual region, which partly resulted from the Habsburgs' colonising policy of the formerly Ottoman occupied territory in the 18th century. The Banat was divided between three countries by the allied forces in the peace treaty of Paris (1920). Today parts of the Banat belong to Romania, Serbia and Hungary (See Wolf 2004 for details).

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**Figure 1:** Map of the Banat (created by Jari Järvinen)

Due to organised colonisation and spontaneous migration, the Banat gave home to a considerable number of Romanian, German, Hungarian, Serbian, Croatian, Slovak, Jewish, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Roma, Czech, etc. inhabitants. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Banat did not have a single national, ethnic, linguistic or religious majority; Romanians, Germans, Serbs and Hungarians formed the most numerous groups. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the size of minority groups decreased gradually. In its now largest part, the Romanian Banat, Romanians made up only 57 % of the population in 1930, whereas in the 2002 Romanian census (*National Institute of Statistics*), minorities presented only 16 % of the inhabitants in the region (see Wolf 2004 for details).

Among the inhabitants of the Banat, multilingualism is a widespread ideology; however, monolingual practices are often the reality. In line with the census

data and the author's fieldwork experience (see Laihonen 2009), everyday use of many languages has become rare today. However, multilingualism as a language ideology has survived as a positive feature of the local identity, present in explicit language ideological discourses of the local inhabitants (see Laihonen 2009; cf. Moise and Para 2014). For example, in interviews with local multilingual people (see Laihonen 2001) monolingualism was often described as a deliberate unwillingness to learn the language of co-inhabitants. At the same time, when describing actual everyday code choice, multilinguals often gave voice to monolingual norms as well (see Laihonen 2009). For instance, they considered it normal to have monolingual family members, and there was a politeness ideology (Gal 1988) according to which multilinguals should adjust the communication of the larger family to the needs of monolingual members.

There is further division between the "folk" and the elite ideas of multilingualism in the Banat. That is, even though in the everyday, mainly spoken language practices people are comfortable in switching and mixing languages, intellectuals in their public writings tend to strictly identify with one language and keep it separated from other languages both functionally and symbolically. From another point of view, the multilingual practices and ideologies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century intellectuals analysed in this article (see also Gal 2011) did not persist, but the grassroots "folk" multilingualism can still be witnessed in its vernacular, everyday forms and ideological constructions (see Laihonen 2009). As the author's doctoral dissertation (Laihonen 2009) showed, most of the previous research on the Banat has concentrated on the "national research" (see Kamusella 2019) of a given language and ethnic group. Hungarian, Romanian and German academic writings depict the Banat as an arena for languages in competition. Most writings construct a national (e.g. Hungarian/Romanian/German) discourse by isolating a certain ethnic group. Typically, the history of the group is described, mapping its ups (e.g. 'golden age') and downs. In these discourses, the groups are often connected to a larger, national context while the local perspective is often put aside (for details see Laihonen 2009).

The aim of this paper is to examine the intellectual processes that have in general led to the dissolution of the multilingual language ideologies in the Banat, with a focus on literary novels. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century, European intellectuals have been engaged in building monolingual nations (see Gal 2011 for alternative concepts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century), which has resulted in the fall of multilingualism in the intellectual traditions of East-Central Europe. My study of intellectual discourses is also a critique of Benedict Anderson's (1991) idea that a common standard language and monolingualism is the basis of the modern novel.

According to Anderson (1991: 4), "nation-ness as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts". In his view, they are imagined communities, that is, communities

of people that might never meet but that are united by consuming the same ideas and typically being the readers of the same kind of texts. This community was made possible by print capitalism, producing a reading public. In his words “[There were] two forms of imaging which first flowered in Europe in the eighteenth century: the novel and the newspaper... these forms provided the technical means for ‘re-presenting’ the kind of imagined community that is the nation.” (Anderson 1991: 24–25). His model presents an often-cited explanation of nationalism and communities today, and it is undoubtedly relevant in its major arguments in the case of the Banat, too. However, my analysis will bring into focus phenomena that remain opposed to his idea (see also Gal 2011).

Linguistically, Anderson has two disputable presumptions to his theory. First, he presumes the quite natural appearance of ‘print languages’. Secondly, he claims that “Then [in the sixteenth century] and now the bulk of mankind is monoglot” (Anderson 1991: 38). His argument is basically that publishing literature in the vernaculars instead of the former Latin *i*) made publishing profitable and *ii*) united the monolingual readers.

Some essays on language ideologies (Silverstein 2000; Gal 2017) remarked that Anderson had mistakenly described the construction of nation through a common language by ignoring that in fact, a common language has to be constructed first. That is, common languages are constructed by constant and never-ending standardisation, which results in a new social fraction of the community, not unity (see Gal 2017; for a more general discussion of language as a construct or language as real, see Bauman and Briggs 2003). A further superficial argument by Anderson is to presume the universality of monolingualism (cf. Gal 2011; 2017).

My goal in this article is to examine the above-mentioned claims on the empirical material of literary fiction on and from the Banat. I will show how multilingualism, which has its general place in past and present world literature (see Forster 1970; Knauth 2007; Lennon 2010), is an inherent part of literature on the Banat. It is actually inevitable that the historical societal multilingualism of the Banat will manifest itself in literature, too (cf. Lee 2015). To begin with, multilingual folklore and the presence of multilingualism and language diversity in the local folklore and local publications are quite common. Since these genres do not have a notable career in print capitalism (see Anderson 1991), I will present just one example of a multilingual riddle:<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Translations here and elsewhere are by the author unless stated otherwise. The orthography of the examples is reproduced identically to the work cited. Among others, non-standard forms have not been changed.

Am vezut un Krakenescht	I saw a crow's nest ( <i>Romanian/German</i> )
Siewe, acht junge drin:	Seven, eight nestlings were there: ( <i>local German</i> )
trei au murit.	three are dead. ( <i>Romanian</i> )
patru au fugit.	four flew away. ( <i>Romanian</i> )'
Hány marad?	How many are left? ( <i>Hungarian</i> )
(Klein 1993: 120)	

According to Klein (1993: 119), such folklore was very typical for the 19<sup>th</sup> century Banat. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, multilingualism was rather widespread in the local literary forums, too (see Gehl 1994).

19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century multilingual literary novels have widely been analysed in the works of immigrant authors living in the United States (e.g. Lennon 2010) and to some extent in the texts of Western European writers (e.g. Forster 1970; Knauth 2007). Attention has been drawn, among others, to their characteristics as language learning autobiographies or memoirs (see e.g. Pavlenko 2001; Kramsch 2004). Here I will examine four novels that have received a wider audience beyond the Banat. These novels describe life in the Banat and are all written by authors born there. These novels have been printed by established publishers in European centres outside the Banat. In other words, they are in general considered as part of (inter)national literatures, and as part of print capitalism as described by Anderson (1991), not as local, regional literature. I will focus on the texts and provide only short biographical notes on the authors.

At the text level, the focus of study is on passages dealing explicitly with language(s) on the one hand, and on literary code-switching on the other hand. For the analysis of metalanguage, I follow the approach of Language Ideologies (see Laihonen 2009). For this study, the relevant question is what presumptions the analysed passages point to, especially regarding the use of named languages, multilingualism and local language forms. For the analysis of code-switching, I will apply the interactional framework developed by Peter Auer (see Auer 1995). The basic insight that defines code-switching or code-alternation (including the insertion of single words) as a contextualization cue is applicable for fiction, too. This means that code-alternation does not have any referential, decontextualised, universal meaning (e.g. 'we code'). Rather, it calls for inference on its context. In other words, code-alternation 'punctuates' the text, calling for an interpretation on what kind of added meaning it brings to the text that something is said in another named language or local vernacular just here (Auer 1995: 123–124). In general, it is aimed for a discourse-based analysis of the four novels. A linguistic, structurally or grammatically focused analysis (see e.g. Gardner-Chloros and Weston 2015) is not among the goals of this article. My aim is to explore how the novels reflect (historic) multilingualism in the Banat and to examine the chances of multilingualism in the context of print capitalism and national cultures and intellectuals.

## 2 Four novels from the Banat

### 2.1 *A hét sváb* by Ferenc Herczeg

The first novel is *A hét sváb* ‘The Seven Swabians’ by Ferenc (Franz) Herczeg from 1916. The author was highly influential in the inter-war period; he served as the vice president for the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and was nominated for a Nobel prize in literature. The author (1864–1954) was born as a Banat German, or ‘Swabian,’ Franz Herzog and learnt Hungarian at school. He became the most prominent contemporary writer regarding the description of the world of the Hungarian gentry in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was also a celebrated figure in the Hungarian nationalistic discourse. Today, Herczeg is rather unpopular; literary historians consider him a “light-hearted chronicler of the decaying Hungarian gentry” as Czígány (1984: 231) put it. Even though *A hét sváb* appeared in a popular ‘books for the youth’ series in 2002, it is hard to find a contemporary Hungarian intellectual who has actually read it.

This book meets the typical characteristics of a nationalistic novel described by Anderson (1991). It tells the story of the 1848–49 Hungarian revolution, a major Hungarian national reference point today. The novel takes place in a small border town inhabited mainly by Germans and Serbians. Seeing the title “The Seven Swabians”, one could ask: what do seven Swabians have to do with a major historical Hungarian national event?

The novel clearly has Hungarian as its basic narrator language; other languages appear mainly in the dialogues (cf. Gardner-Chloros and Weston 2015: 186). Already on the second page, the Hungarian novel has the following expression: “Glückliche Reise!” (p. 6) displaying a multilingual scene. At the end of the novel, there is a four-page glossary of German, Serbian, Romanian, Italian, French, Latin and other expressions, for instance: *odbor* (Serbian: ‘committee’ p. 32), *fáta* (Romanian: ‘girl’ p. 134). The appendix list of “foreign expressions” is typical for the analysed novels (cf. Lennon 2010). For the analyst, such lists point to what the author and/or the editors consider as expressions belonging to another language. However, the list in *A hét sváb* contains expressions that are sometimes categorized as borrowings and thus included in the dictionaries of Hungarian, pointing to the difficulty of defining the borders of languages or codes (see Lee 2015). For analytical purposes, I accept the categorisations used in the published novels but do recognise the problems that go with it.

The novel includes a lot of dialogues, which are understood by the readers to have taken place in German, as it is obvious that the major figures of the novel are German speakers. The ‘seven Swabians’ are called Graf, Heim, Lutz, Haller, Hoffer, Holky and Salvator. They also share a German song which is given in four

German lines in the text (p. 35). There are actually very few recognizably Hungarian characters in the novel—most of them are nobility, such as count Esterházy (p. 10).

The text has some references to which language the characters supposedly speak. For instance:

A grancsárok szerbül beszélnek. ‘The border guard soldiers speak Serbian’. (p. 6)  
 Egyszerre azt mondta, szerbül mondta – Istenem, be szép ez! (p. 24)  
 ‘She suddenly said, and she did it in Serbian – Oh my God isn’t this beautiful!’  
 Mindent megértett, amit mellette beszéltek. Oláhul beszéltek. (p. 133)  
 ‘He understood everything they were saying next to him. They spoke Romanian.’

Cases indicating that a dialogue was in Hungarian are rare. However, in one case it is explicitly indicated, as Hungarian troops come to help the Germans (p.75):

– A város kommandánsával van beszédem! – kiáltotta magyarul a tisztt.  
 ‘I wish to speak with the commander of the city! – shouted the officer in Hungarian’

The fact that something is emphasised to have been said in the narrator language of the novel confirms the reading that most of the dialogue in the novel took place in some other language.

There are some examples of explicit dialect use, too. For instance, a colonel turns sentimental and states that the Germans have been mere guests in the Banat so far, but that now they have deserved their right to own land thanks to their heroic fight on the Hungarian side. This key message is highlighted and as such, elevated from the context by a mentioning of a code-switch:

Eddig úri német nyelven beszélt, de most a délvidéki svábok parasztdialektusán szólalt meg. (p. 113).  
 ‘Up to now, he spoke the German of the gentry, but now he changed to the peasants’ dialect of the Swabians in southern Hungary’

The main characters of the book are multilingual, since no comprehension difficulties are mentioned between the speakers of several languages: German, Serbian, Hungarian and Romanian. As it is pointed out, for instance, the Serbian commander knew perfect (educated) German:

Kitűnően beszélt németül, jobban, mint a bánsági svábok...(p. 123)  
 ‘He spoke excellent German, better than the Swabians of the Banat...’

To sum up, at first glance *A hét sváb* by Ferenc Herczeg appears to be a typical nationalistic novel as described by Anderson: It deals with nationally important events and personalities. It also provides a constructive story for the Hungarian nation by showing how Germans of the Banat can choose to be loyal to the Hun-



garian nation and join it. The novel is also more or less monolingual in its text. However, on a closer reading, it becomes obvious that large-scale code-alternation and reference to language use and multilingualism depicts a multilingual society, where it is a basic assumption that everybody in the community speaks and understands German, Serbian, Hungarian and Romanian.

## 2.2 *Die Glocken der Heimat by Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn*

The next work to examine is Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn's novel *Die Glocken der Heimat* ('The bells of homeland') first printed in 1911. Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn (1852–1923) was a German writer born in the Banat. After establishing a career in Vienna, he revisited the Banat and wrote several works on his original 'Heimat'. Even today Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn is an emblematic literary figure for the traditionally oriented Germans of the Banat (cf. Mariseşcu 2010).

Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn's novel describes the social structure and life of a German village, Karsldorf. As a kind of (language) political documentary, it focuses on the few intellectuals and schooling. The main issue dealt with in the book is *Magyarisierung*, 'Hungarisation'. It is stated that among the three thousand villagers, only a handful could understand or speak Hungarian. However, official matters were handled only in Hungarian, and from high-school level onwards, education was available only in Hungarian. Among the characters, the priest and a young schoolteacher are eager to send the Banat Swabian youth to Hungarian boarding schools in Szeged and Kecskemét. A senior teacher and some peasants are against their German-born children cherishing the Hungarian language.

There are several issues of language maintenance and shift discussed in the novel, but perhaps the most striking is the story of "Philipp Haffner": he was sent to a boarding school in Szeged when he was five years old on the advice of the parish priest. When his father comes to bring him home for the summer vacation after three years, the schoolmaster tells him proudly, that the boy, now called Fülöp, has not heard a single word of German during his stay. "In this way we make a Hungarian of him, that is our method" (p. 96). The schoolmaster also adds, that the next generation of Germans "should not only have a Hungarian mind, but also speak Hungarian" (p. 95). His peasant father answers: "yes, perhaps the gentry in the city, but among us that will not do" (p. 95). The boy no longer speaks German, but addresses his mother in Hungarian: "Anyám, drága anyám" 'My dear mother' (p. 99). In the village, his mantra is: "Én magyar vagyok" 'I am Hungarian' (p. 102). These longer passages can be seen to demonstrate and stress the warning message of the story. The first one indicates how the

‘mother tongue’ has changed while the second code-switch underlines the change of nationality (ethnic identity). In a similar way, the senior teacher makes the conclusion that there are many educated German, Slovak, Romanian and Serbian speaking officials, teachers, journalists, engineers, scientists, artists, writers, priests, politicians and even ministers who turned to enthusiastic supporters of Hungarianisation (p. 106). Finally, the worst for a German peasant is to see how this happens to his own son, one of many. As a solution, he takes his son back to the village school. However, even there, a junior teacher is a zealous ‘patriot’. For instance, he teaches the children Hungarian national songs. However, when a guest asks a local whether the children understand what they sing, the answer is: “Kein Wort!” (p. 63) ‘not a word’. Also telling is the case of a local baron, a cosmopolitan figure and a member of the Hungarian parliament. In his opinion, Hungary has a dark future because the Hungarian gentry now occupying most official positions is monolingual (p. 56).

Linguistically, the narrative is in standard German while the dialogues are mostly in dialect. Hungarian words, expressions and sentences are rather frequent, too. Most of the German dialect and Hungarian expressions are explained in the numerous footnotes. Some examples from the first 110 pages:

Klarinéni (p. 6) ‘Aunt Klari’; Szegény asszony (p.8) ‘Poor lady’; Tessék! (p. 10) ‘Please!’; Kár-olyfalva (p. 41) ‘Karsldorf’; Jólvan! (p. 46) ‘Fine!’; Kutja, Mamlasz, Szamár (p. 47) ‘A dog a calf and a donkey’; Nagyságos (p. 54) ‘Great lord’; Eljen! (p. 62) ‘Hurrah!’; Jo reggel (p. 66) ‘Good morning’; Bizóny (p. 75) ‘Indeed’; Soha! (p. 81) ‘Never’; Nem bánom (p. 81–82) ‘I don’t mind’; No hát, fiam, it van az apát! ‘Come my son, here is your father’ (p. 96)

These expressions can be interpreted in Auer’s (1995: 126) framework as lexical and idiomatic insertions displaying the speakers’ bilingual competence. In this novel, their transparent ideological indication is that the use of Hungarian infiltrates the local German and will result in a language shift and cultural Magyarisation among the younger generation if left unguarded.

To conclude, *Die Glocken der Heimat* by Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn describes a community of the Swabians in the Banat. This identity is constructed in contrast to the Hungarian identity. A basic difference to Ferenc Herczeg’s *A hét sváb* is that both groups, German villagers and Hungarian civil servants and gentry, are presented as monolingual. Societal multilingualism characterizes only the older intellectuals and the cosmopolitan aristocracy in this novel. Linguistically, this novel employs the language that presumably was spoken by the fictional characters. Local peasants use German dialect. Müller-Guttenbrunn’s widespread use of dialect in fiction has given an example for later dialect use in literature, typical for the Banat Germans (see Gehl 1994). Hungarian sentences are cited for those people who use mainly Hungarian. The local intellectuals typically use discourse

particles and phrases in Hungarian (e.g. *tessék* ‘please’, *bizony* ‘indeed’). Perhaps especially the longer Hungarian expressions can be interpreted as “warning examples” of how *Magyarisierung* proceeds at the level of everyday language use in the Swabian community among the intellectuals and the youth. That is, in the *Bells of Homeland*, bilingual passages indicate a conflict and competition between German and Hungarian.

### 2.3 *Tibold Márton by Károly Molter*

The novel *Tibold Márton* by Károly Molter (1890–1981) takes us to the neighbouring Bácska, which had the same characteristics as the Banat. This autobiographic (on the author, see Benkő 1994: 627–628) novel from 1937 tells the story of how the German (Swabian) Martin became Hungarian Márton. Most of the 400-page novel is about language. The boy Martin grows up in a multilingual environment with German, Serbian and Hungarian. Furthermore, also German and Hungarian dialects as well as standard varieties are used and often referred to. At school he learns Hungarian. His family supports his ambition to become Hungarian, even though they hardly speak any Hungarian. Martin’s grandfather was a hussar in the Hungarian revolution, and the family thus sympathised with the Hungarian nation. After finishing primary school, Martin was sent to a Kecskemét high-school. In this Hungarian speaking town, he is supposed to finance his studies by teaching German to Hungarians. There he makes Hungarian friends and becomes more and more involved in Hungarian culture. After his final exams in Kecskemét, Márton is accepted to the University of Budapest to study German and Hungarian. Meanwhile, he visits home several times. He first fancies a local German girl, then a Hungarian baroness. Finally, after graduating, Martin gets a job in Transylvania, where he marries a local Hungarian (Szekler) girl.

During this *Bildungsroman*, Martin/Márton learns to use different languages in different ways. As a young boy, he learns Hungarian national history at school in Hungarian. However, his grandfather’s stories of the 1848 revolution in German make a bigger impression on him. “He learnt history from his grandfather’s German words, not from the Hungarian history lessons at school”. Tutoring his first private students in Kecskemét, he first tries to speak German with them. However, they mock him, and as a result, later he speaks less and less German. He still tries not to forget his German roots. He states that “only a miserable person of little faith forgets his mother tongue” and that he should master both German and Hungarian at the same level. As a university student of German and Hungarian in Pest he takes every effort to avoid speaking German with his private students; instead, he discusses German literature in Hungarian with them. Later he begins to teach a German boy

Hungarian, of which he is very proud (156 p). After graduating, he briefly works as a correspondent for a German newspaper. Even though it pays well, he decides to resign, since he ‘wanted to continue his life in Hungarian, among the Hungarians’ (“magyarul akarta életét folytatni, magyarok közt”) (p. 309). Finally, as a teacher, he sides with those who think that German should not be spoken even during German classes (p. 328). Finally, after WWI, Márton’s family remains in Bácska, where they live “as Germans among Serbians.” Márton in turn ends up living as a “Hungarian among Romanians” in Transylvania (p. 395).

Linguistically, the novel widely cites German and Serbian utterances. For instance:

- Gospodi pomiluj! (p. 16.) ‘God Help!’ (Church-Slavonic)  
 Ein feuriger Ungar! (p. 22) ‘A furious Hungarian’ (German)  
 Hab’ heimweh (p. 63) ‘I am homesick’ (German)  
 Der Herr Baron wird doch keine Knödel essen! (p. 216)  
 ‘The Sir Baron will never eat dumplings!’ (German)  
 Bezsi dalje! (p. 336). ‘Out of the way!’ (Serbian)

The book contains a six-page appendix titled “the Hungarian translation of foreign language texts”. Beyond simple quotations, which can be seen to elevate the expressions from their context in different ways (Auer 1995), there are examples of other types of code-switching, too:

- (Martin’s father speaks to the Hungarian schoolmaster in Kecskemét)  
 – Martin jó és engedelmes fiú lesz itt is. Odahaza war er der “jeles!” (p. 59).  
 ‘Martin will be a good and obedient boy. At home war er der [he was the] “primus”’

Here the quoted part can be interpreted as a display of Martin father’s restricted competence of Hungarian, as the *war er der* ‘he was the’ is given in German. In the next example, Martin’s attempts to speak German with his private student’s fail:

- (Martin tries to speak German to his private students in Kecskemét)  
 – Heisse Martin Tibold – ‘My name is Martin Tibold’ (German)  
 – E’ Bolond, ne! – ‘Hey you crazy!’ (Hungarian)  
 – Tisztára nincs ölég esze! – ‘He is out of his mind!’ (Hungarian)  
 (p. 60)

This example presents a clear case of what Auer (1995: 127ff) calls language negotiation. Here Martin makes an attempt to teach his private students German in German. While Martin speaks German, the students throw insults on him in Hungarian until he gives up using German.

Finally, later in the book, Martin himself initiated a code-switch from German to Hungarian with a German girl back home in Bácska:

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| – Kommst mit?                         | – ‘Will you come with me?’ (German)          |
| Martin magyarul folytatta:            | ‘Martin continued in Hungarian.’ (Hungarian) |
| – A lutheránus templom felé menjünk?  | – ‘Shall we go towards the Lutheran church?’ |
| ...A lány is áttért a magyar szóra... | ‘The girl switched to Hungarian as well’     |
- (p. 131)

In this case there is no conflict involved in the language negotiation. Rather it indicates a significant display of identity. That is, Martin has changed his preferred language of interaction with a local girl from German to Hungarian. As in this example, there are frequent references in the book regarding which language was used.

A part of the German texts is in dialect. Also, the Hungarian dialogues include a lot of dialect use. For instance, while Martin is in Kecskemét, even the teachers speak a local dialect. After graduating, Martin returns to the school one last time and meets his schoolmaster: “Először életében ő-zött. – Mi lösz belőlem, igazgató úr?” ‘He spoke with ő-s for the first time in his life – what will become of me, sir?’ (p. 135). As we see, in a sentimental moment, he uses the local dialect.

While in Budapest, Márton has a German landlady. When they first meet, Márton addresses her in the Swabian dialect, and when this is not successful, he tries standard German, to which the landlady responds (with a Swabian accent):

- Kérem, ez Magyarország fővárosa! Itt mindenki magyarul beszél!
  - De magának rossz a kiejtése, néni!
  - Meglehet. Mégis magyarul beszélek. Az úrnak jó a kiejtése, annál inkább élhet a magyar szóval.’
  - Stimmt! – Nevetett Márton e furcsa hazafiasság hallatára.
- ‘– Please, this is the capital of Hungary! Here everybody speaks in Hungarian!
  - But you have a bad accent, madam!
  - It can well be. However, I still speak Hungarian. You don’t have an accent, sir, you should speak Hungarian all the more.
  - That’s right – laughed Márton at that curious patriotism’ (p. 136).

Here, after a described interactional language negotiation, the social preference of using Hungarian rather than German in Budapest is expressed explicitly. However, Martin’s humorous response displays some distance to the underlying language ideology.

Finally, *Tibold Márton* discusses the *Bells of Homeland* by Adam Müller-Guttenbrun, too. Márton gets the books from a German lady while he is studying in Budapest. He reads them first with nostalgia and enthusiasm since the books remind him of his golden youth and *Heimat*. However, “to his delight, he realised that the writer must have lost his sense of reality at some point.” The book went into excesses in cheap hatred towards other people. “Márton discovered one pre-

judiced statement after the other. [...] How did that Guttenbrunn hate the Hungarians [...], then how cold heartedly he wrote about the Serbs and those poor “Valachs” that lived on the other side of the Maros.” (p. 178). Finally Márton sighed: “thank God, this gentleman was only partially right! Where he was hostile, he had not a single true word”.

To conclude, Tibold Márton tells the story of a German boy that became a Hungarian intellectual. Unlike the *Seven Swabians*, or the *Bells of the Homeland*, it includes a lot of pondering and has many ambivalent points on the linguistic and national identity. Márton remains a multilingual, multicultural Hungarian right to the end (“I will never become ... a first-class Hungarian that excludes others”, p.118). He exemplifies those men, typically intellectuals, in the Banat and Bácska, who were in the position to choose their national and linguistic allegiances. Or in the case of a writer, his or her ‘language loyalty’ (see Forster 1970). In the time-space of the novel, Hungary loses Bácska and Transylvania in the First World War, and they become parts of other countries. After finally finding his home in Transylvania (now Romania), Márton says, “I am happy to hear German on a visit in Jena, because that language is my window to the west”. That is, unlike in the *Bells of Homeland*, becoming a Hungarian learned person does not mean a total language shift to Hungarian.

## 2.4 *Herztier* by Hertha Müller

Finally, I explore a recent novel from the 2009 Nobel Prize winner Hertha Müller. I briefly examine her book *Herztier*, translated into English as: *The Land of Green Plums*. Hertha Müller became famous first as a member of young German writers in Timișoara/Temesvár/Temeschwar, Romania. Her stories present a critical view of the Banat German community. The German village idyll as described by Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn is ruined in the hands of Hertha Müller. She points to the ethnocentric and controlling character of the Swabian community and the family. Also, the ballast of the SS past of the fathers, combined with atrocities in totalitarian Romania, make the life of young Banat German intellectuals unbearable in *The Land of Green Plums*. Linguistically, Hertha Müller breached the tradition of dialect use in her novels. Instead, she experiments with her own individual style, lyric prose. As Hans Gehl (2002: 288, 301–302) points out, in mainstream traditional German circles, Hertha Müller was received with a shock, and she is more or less a *persona non grata* for several *Heimat* organizations still cherishing the traditional Banat German identity. Hertha Müller moved to Berlin in 1987, and she has since then acquired a wide international audience (cf. Mariseșcu 2010).

*Herztier* tells the story of a few German students, following them from university in Timișoara to work and finally to exile in Germany. The students wish to break out from the Swabian village and family community, but memories and parental letters haunt them also in the city. At the university and at work, they are harassed by the secret police (Securitate). Some of them collaborate with the police while others are driven to suicide.

Even though the book has a highly critical view of being “a Swabian”, all the main figures are German. This confirms Gehl’s (2002: 288) statement that assimilation to the Romanians is not part of the critical view of the Swabian community in Hertha Müller’s prose. The Romanian characters in the book are negative or ambivalent. First, there is the Securitate officer. Secondly, there is a Romanian friend of the narrator, Tereza, who betrays her, but is still considered a beloved friend. The distance between Germans and Romanians is expressed in a letter from the narrator’s mother:

Frau Margit hat mir geschrieben, daß du mit drei Männern gehst. Gottseidank sind es Deutsche, aber verhurt ist das trotzdem [...] Gottbehüt, daß du mir eines Tages einen Walach vorstellst und sagst: Das ist mein Mann. (*Herztier*, p. 174–175).

Frau Margit has written me a letter. She says you’re going out with three different men. Thank God, they’re all German, but it’s whoring, isn’t it? [...] God forbid that you appear on my doorstep with some Romanian and say: This is my husband.’ (*The Land of Green Plums*, p. 165).

This refers to the fact that from a traditional point of view, having one Romanian man is worse than having three men at the same time.

Research on *Herztier* (e.g. Glajar 2004) has widely discussed Swabian, German and Romanian identities. Hungarian references have usually been neglected. However, the novel has nine code-switches to Hungarian compared to only two to the ‘Swabian’ dialect and one to Romanian.

To begin with, the landlady of the narrator in Timișoara is Hungarian, Frau Margit. Frau Margit wanted to have only Hungarian or German tenants:

Es ist nicht einfach, ein deutsches oder ungarisches Mädchen zu finden, was anderes will ich nicht in meinem Haus (*Herztier*, p. 187).

It’s not easy to find a German or a Hungarian girl, and I’m not having anything else in my house (*The Land...*, p. 177–178).

Frau Margit spoke German with the narrator (p. 129). She is very religious and does her prayers in Hungarian (p. 130). Also, several utterances from her are marked with Hungarian expressions. For instance:

Ich studiere, wo a fene dieser Fetzen liegen kann [...] (*Herztier*, p. 131)  
 I wonder what a *fene* [the devil] I could have done with that rag this time. (*The Land...*, p. 121)<sup>2</sup>  
 Frau Margit las jedes Wort auf der Tüte und sagte: Édes draga istenem. (*Herztier*, p. 150).  
 Frau Margit read every word that was written on the bag and said: *Édes draga istenem* [my sweet Lord].  
 (*The Land...*, p. 141)  
 Nem szép, sagte sie (*Herztier*, p. 164).  
*Nem szép* [They're ugly], she said (*The Land...*, p. 154)<sup>3</sup>  
 Aber ein kicsit beten mußst auch du. (*Herztier*, p. 182)  
 But you should at least pray a *kicsit* [little bit] yourself (*The Land...*, p. 173)  
 Frau Margit hatte gesagt: Nincs lóvé nincs muzsika, aber was soll man machen, wenn du jetzt kein Geld hast für die Miete. (*Herztier*, p. 187)  
 Frau Margit had said: *Nincs lóvé nincs muzsika* [No money, no music], but what can be done, if you don't have any money now for the rent? (*The Land...*, p. 177)

All Hungarian expressions are quotations of Frau Margit, they belong to her character. They constitute one-word Hungarian expressions or longer passages. The linguistic identity they project for Frau Margit is different than the Romanian characters since no code alternation to Romanian appears in the novel.

Frau Margit does not want men in her apartment. When the narrator's friend Kurt comes, she does not speak with the narrator for four days. Then she suddenly says:

Ich möchte keine kurva im Haus [...] Wenn du mit diesem Kurt nicht ins Bett steigst, dann ist das nur eine ide – oda. [...] nur gazember haben rote Haare. (*Herztier*, p. 133)

I don't want any *kurva* [whore] in my house [...] If you don't go to bed with that Kurt of yours, then it is just a *ide – oda* [waste of time] [...] men with red hair are all *gazember* [good-for-nothings]. (*The Land...*, p. 123–124)

Here and elsewhere, Frau Margit allies with the narrator's mother questioning her aberrations from traditional morals. Perhaps this points to the fact that most Germans and Hungarians are Catholics in the region whereas Romanians belong to the Orthodox Church.

*Herztier*, as the other books, has a lot of references to the use of other languages. There is also a brief passage of not knowing the linguistic identity of a

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<sup>2</sup> Here and elsewhere, I have used the English translation of *Herztier*. However, in *The Land of Green Plums* the Hungarian expressions have been italicized, translated on the spot or simply erased. For presentation purposes I have revised the English translation so that it includes the Hungarian expressions identically to *Herztier*. I have provided their English translations, taken from *The Land of Green Plums*, in square brackets. In the final section of the paper, I have some remarks on translation of polyglot texts in general.



person. The seamstress has just moved to Hungary and left her children behind. Her grandmother takes care of them:

Die Großmutter spricht mit den Kindern ungarisch, hast du gewußt, daß die Schneiderin Ungarin ist, warum hat sie das verheimlicht. Weil wir nicht Ungarisch sprechen, sagte ich. Wir sprechen auch nicht Deutsch, sagte Tereza, und wissen doch, daß du eine Deutsche bist. (*Herztier*, p. 219)

The grandmother talks to the children in Hungarian, did you know the seamstress was a Hungarian? I wonder why she kept that a secret. Because we don't speak Hungarian, I said. We don't speak German either, said Tereza, and yet we know, that you're German. (*The Land...*, p. 209)

Here we find disinterest in the linguistic identity. It seems the narrator does not care about what mother tongue people have; it is treated as a practical and personal issue.

To conclude, *Herztier* by Hertha Müller is a work written in lyric prose, and it has a fragmentary structure. However, it still deals with many regional and traditional issues and includes a lot of meta-language, that is, passages reflecting on which standardized language or local vernacular language is used by whom in which situation. Even though much less than in the previously analysed works, here we find as well the simultaneous use of two languages as a linguistic practice. Hertha Müller's prose deconstructs rather than constructs an imagined community. The deconstruction of the Swabian identity is done through criticism of the village, dialect, family heritage and traditional values. Instead, the life of individuals comes to the fore. In the text, the relationships between a group of young German intellectuals and the village-based Swabian community, the Romanian dictatorship and its representatives as well as the few Hungarian characters are examined in a highly artistic form.

### 3 Discussion

These novels point to multilingual characteristics of literature in East-Central Europe. They are often read in a realistic, autobiographical way. The novels have been written by authors born and raised in the Banat. Since the novels have the Banat as their theme, it becomes inevitable that they get interpreted to display the multilingual experiences of the authors. Following Claire Kramsch, the novels display how the authors have lived these languages, and the multilingual passages are "associated with events and emotions that they have experienced in those languages" (Kramsch 2004: 3).

The analysed novels do not fit entirely the picture by Anderson even though they discuss central issues of nationality and are constructed as a *Bildungsroman* with more or less monolingual ends. The major reason is that they resist monolingualism. Or in other words, they do not fall for what Knauth (2007) calls *nihililingualism*, that is, “the tendency towards the ‘nihilistic’ dissolution of the many languages in silence.” Instead, widespread use of meta-language on language choice and intratextual multilingualism create a multilingual framework in the analysed novels. We can add that total *nihililingualism* would include the silencing of local language forms, too. That is a total purity of language. All these novels, however, reflect upon local vernaculars. They hardly follow any nationalistic stereotypes often maintained by some traditionally-minded intellectuals. We can even find the glorification of Hungarian “dialects” (*Tibold Márton*) and the criticism of local Swabian varieties (*Herztier*) (cf. Laihonen 2009). This feature can be seen as a part of general reflectivity in the novels towards languages and language use.

Furthermore, even if the authors have moved to national centres (Budapest, Vienna, Berlin), and their works have typically a readership elsewhere than in the Banat, they still presume a readership open to multilingualism. Translation is a focal issue for the multilingual novel. The way a passage in another language differing from the original language of the novel is translated is very revealing. According to Lennon (2010: 10), in the U.S., foreign language (other than English) passages in “trade-published books” are short, and they are clearly marked (e.g. by italics) and instantly translated. It is intriguing that the English translation of *Herztier – The Land of Green Plums* follows just this practice. Lennon (2010: 82–83), gives an European example, too. In Ögzdamar’s *Mutterzunge* Turkish passages are immediately paraphrased in German.

The investigated novels follow a different pattern; they (with the exception of *Die Glocken der Heimat*) have lists of expressions from other languages with translations into the base language at the end. This practice might be disturbing for the monolingually oriented reader, since it encourages the reader “to know or to learn the languages of the source, instead of or prior to translation.” (Lennon 2010: 78).

For the Banat they construct a multilingual community. For instance, *The Seven Swabians* offers an eye-opener towards 19<sup>th</sup> century multilingualism in Hungary. To some extent, literary multilingualism in the era of the Habsburg Monarchy has already been acknowledged, for instance, in the case of Kálmán Mikszáth (see e.g. Hegedűs 2010). However, so far, such studies have been more of an exception. Perhaps there is a general need for studies in the area of collective cultural multilingualism in East-Central Europe.

The novels are all written in autobiographic tone, so they can all be read as subjective stories. In line with Pavlenko (2001), it is obvious that these stories should not be treated as historical facts or ethnographic data even though all the

four novels undoubtedly provide a wealth of information on the Banat considering multilingualism and multiculturalism there. That is, the autobiographies are selective and follow discursive conventions tied to literary genres and traditions. However, they provide valuable insight on how Banat-born intellectuals view the use of different languages and how they include (or silence) them in their writing.

The examined novels focus on intellectuals. In this manner, they discuss the possibilities and lives of intellectuals in the Banat and from the Banat. It is typical that these multilingual intellectuals have to take sides during the story. For Ferenc Herczeg's and Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn's positive characters it is a clear choice. For Károly Molter and Hertha Müller, there is a lot of hesitation and second thoughts. The society and the national centres as well as monolinguals presume that an intellectual can only be either German or Hungarian. For instance, the Securitate officer states: "Our art is made by the people ... Since you write in German, why don't go to Germany?" (*Herztier*, p. 197; *The Land...*, p. 187). The cosmopolitan intellectual is often presented either in the form of a Jewish or an aristocratic character in the first three novels. In *Tibold Márton*, they are actually tied together where the Hungarian baroness marries a Jewish merchant.

There is a clear tendency among the Banat intellectuals to become loyalists of a single nation. Perhaps, from that perspective, multilingualism in literature is only temporary. However, as Hertha Müller's *Herztier* shows, the high reflexivity and frequent reference and discussion of languages as well as occasional intratextual code-switching and code-mixing can promote the acceptance of collective multilingualism and the positive ideologies about using, learning and reading in many languages. Simultaneously, it shows that the multiplicity of languages in literature should not be regarded as an obstacle of cross-cultural understanding but as an opportunity "for a better understanding" (Knauth 2007). In the Banat, the positive folk, everyday ideologies towards multilingualism (see Laihonen 2009) give good foundation for such literature. Whether this kind of cultural product, together with the exemplary folk ideologies, might lead to a revival of multilingualism in the Banat, or at least promote the use of many languages in institutional, educational, academic or business contexts is of course a different question.

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