



Language as a means of survival and disintegration of identity in works of migration themes

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Abstract. The purpose of the study was to identify the features of the functioning of language as a marker of identity and a means of hybridisation in the literature representing the experience of migration. In the course of the research, methods of qualitative content analysis of literary texts with a focus on the language strategies of characters and discursive analysis were used, which allowed for identifying narrative mechanisms of identity formation. The study was conducted in an interdisciplinary paradigm that combines the approaches of cultural philosophy, semiotics, and postcolonial criticism. The analysis was based on digital text processing and manual semantic encoding of key fragments related to the topics of exile, language conflict, hybridity, and self-presentation. As a result, it was determined that linguistic hybridity in a literary text is not only a means of expressing transcultural experience but also a tool of resistance to assimilation. Ukrainian texts are dominated by the theme of loss of linguistic integrity and internalised identity crisis in the context of a sociolinguistic gap. Language is represented as a space of internal conflict between memory and adaptation, in which personal disintegration unfolded. Instead, the Latin American context demonstrated language strategy as a form of political gesture: colonial layering on the hero's linguistic body generated narratives of translation, splitting, and release through multilingualism or inversion of linguistic hierarchies. Comparative analysis allowed for identifying models according to which language in the literature of migration experience performs a dual function – as a traumatic consequence of expulsion and as a means of symbolic resistance and preservation of subjectivity. The practical importance of the study is the possibility of applying its conclusions to the humanitarian interpretation of migration culture,

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the formation of cultural memory policy, and the development of educational approaches to the topic of identity in a globalised world

Keywords: discourse of exile; semiosphere; linguistic and cultural instability; hybrid subjectivity; diaspora; communication; resistance

Introduction

In the literary studies of the last two decades (2000-2020s), the issue of language as a native speaker, representative or identity destabiliser in the context of migration experience has become particularly important. Global migration processes caused by both geopolitical events and socio-economic transformations have increased research interest in how language practices are reflected in fiction, in particular, in texts representing the experience of exile, emigration and intercultural dialogue. Special attention in this context was drawn to the problem of the relationship between language and identity, and the role of the literary text in understanding hybrid, transcultural, or crisis identities in the literature of different regions.

In scientific discourse, the examination of issues related to the functioning of language in the context of migration and transformation of cultural identity has become more active. One of the most important areas was the problem of linguistic self-expression in the process of cross-cultural interaction. In this context, T. Karmadonova (2023) traced the dynamics of identity formation of Ukrainian migrants in the context of cultural dialogue, drawing attention to the change in communication strategies depending on the socio-cultural environment. The author focused on the multi-layered nature of self-identification, where language performs the function of integration and adaptation.

S. Bybyk (2022), who analysed the functions of language as a marker of identity in the texts of Ukrainian migration prose, worked directly with the problem of linguistic representation of nationality. The author has shown that

language in such narratives performs not only an identifying but also a sacralising role, accumulating the experience of cultural memory and historical continuity. In this case, the writer's word becomes a space for preserving the collective experience of exile. A peculiar aspect of migration language dynamics was highlighted by O. Shevchuk-Kliuzheva (2024), who concentrated on the transmission of linguistic identity within the family. The researcher traced the relationship between language practice and the formation of internal cultural integrity, stressing the importance of the language environment for stabilising or modifying self-perception in migrant generations.

The consideration of cultural affiliation in the literature of the diaspora found a conceptual embodiment in the study by L.J. Neufeld (2022), who analysed the "off-home" image as an artistic metaphor for the simultaneous loss and reconstruction of identity. The author focused on the importance of language choice as an instrument of symbolic return or alienation, particularly in the context of Latin American Jewish literature. On the other hand, H.R. Sottong (2025) addressed the subject of transnational cultural heritage, exploring Dante's reception in Argentine literature as a means of forming a modern cultural identity. Author's analysis showed that literary language in this context serves as a symbolic intermediary between historical memory and modern national identity. The study conducted by M. Palmer (2022) presented an analysis of the self-representation of Arab migrants in Argentina who structured their identity through postcolonial and orientalist images. The author

underlined the role of language as a means of cultural positioning, pointing out the specifics of language interaction in a multicultural space.

The problem of bilingualism and oral speech as identification factors was highlighted by M. Hudoušková (2024), who analysed Cuban-American literature through the prism of biaculturation. The study indicated that language in such texts acquires a multifunctional meaning, not only as a means of communication but also as a symbol of internal conflict and creative adaptation. H. Ruiz (2022) presented the standpoint of the borderline narrative, having reviewed the image of identity against the background of imaginary and physical border crossings. The author demonstrated how linguistic ambivalence becomes part of the artistic construction of the migration experience, reflecting the struggle between the imaginary cultural heritage and the desire for integration.

Language ideologies and their influence on the formation of cultural affiliation were investigated in the paper of C. Despaigne (2024). Examining the experience of returning migrants to educational structures in Mexico, the author analysed how the language environment affects the process of readaptation and identity renewal under local pressure. In turn, W. Lam & M. Christiansen (2022), who considered digital platforms as a space for constructing identity in a transnational environment, established that language manoeuvring becomes a tool for personal autonomy and a way to build new forms of belonging beyond traditional ethno-cultural boundaries.

The analysis of the above-mentioned Works has shown the presence of several research gaps associated with insufficient attention to the comparative assessment of literary texts representing the experience of migration in the Ukrainian and Latin American contexts. In particular, the scientific field noticeably lacked a comprehensive approach to understanding linguistic hybridity as a means of artistic representation of a changed or split

identity. The focus of existing studies was mainly on linguistic or socio-cultural aspects of speech functioning, while the analysis of language as an artistic tool of self-reflection and self-identification remained fragmentary.

In this context, this study aimed to identify how language functioned as a means of survival or disintegration of identity in the prose of migration themes of Ukrainian and Latin American authors, and how cultural hybridity, exile, and linguistic adaptation were represented through the artistic narrative. In accordance with the goal, the following tasks were set: analyse the key theoretical approaches to the concept of migration identity within the framework of cultural philosophy and postcolonial theory; examine the language transformation and hybridisation of identity in the works of Ukrainian and Latin American authors representing the experience of migration; conduct a comparative analysis of the functioning of language as a marker of identity, a means of resistance and self-reflection in both literary contexts.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted between September 2023 and April 2024 as part of an interdisciplinary analysis of migration identity in the philosophical, cultural, and literary dimensions. A comprehensive methodology was applied, including content analysis of literary texts, elements of semiotic, discursive, and comparative analysis to achieve a holistic consideration of the problem. The philosophical and cultural basis of the study was formed by the texts of postcolonial theory and semiotics of culture. Key conceptual works were analysed: E.W. Said (2023) and H. Bhabha (1985). Special attention is paid to the works of S. Hall (1997) and Y. Lotman (1984). The choice of these sources was determined by their decisive influence on the formation of theoretical approaches to the analysis of identity, cultural hybridity, ambivalence of language structures in the diaspora and colonial context. The studies by

H. Bhabha and S. Hall allowed to outline the theoretical framework of the concepts of “hybridity”, “borderland”, and “diaspora” as productive literary representations of the language break for understanding. The methodology of Y. Lotman became the basis for analysing the boundaries and interaction of semiospheres, and therefore for identifying conflicts between the language codes of characters in a literary text.

The material basis of the empirical level of the study was six works of art that demonstrate the representation of linguistic hybridity in the context of migration experience. The Ukrainian segment of the corps includes works of Yu. Andrukhovych (1997), S. Andrukhovych (2019), S. Zhadan (2010). To Latin American – J. Cortázar (2004), R. Darío (2025), and R. Zafra (2020). The criteria for choosing literary texts were: the presence of an artistic representation of the experience of migration, exile, or hybrid identity; a noticeable role of the language element as a factor in the formation or destruction of the character’s identity; belonging to two cultural and regional literary systems – Ukrainian and Latin American, which allowed for a relevant comparison.

As part of the content analysis, key fragments of literary texts were identified, in which the speech behaviour of the characters recorded a gap, transgression, or resistance. Special attention was paid to lexical markers of multilingualism, code switching, references to the inability to express, internal monologues and replicas reflecting the narrative tension between private and social language. For this purpose, digital text analysis tools were used, in particular, AntConc and Voyant Tools. They were used for contextual search of key tokens, repeated phrases, and phrases related to the topics of language, exile, body, and identity. Individual semantic groups were also manually encoded for deeper semantic analysis.

Semiotic analysis enabled the consideration of language structures as sign systems integrated into a broader cultural context,

where they acquire conflicting or oppositional meaning. It was established how language functioned in works as a boundary structure that separates identities or, conversely, serves as a means of their interpenetration. A special place was occupied by the analysis of latent meanings associated with metaphors of language, body, exile, and silence, which turned out to be repeated images in the works of both literary spaces. As part of the comparative analysis, the functions of language in Ukrainian and Latin American prose were compared to identify common strategies of language resistance and differences in artistic modelling of identity. Genre features, language stylistics, intertextuality, and cultural symbols were accounted for. A comparative matrix was used, which included the following parameters: language function (communication/resistance), type of linguistic hybridity, connection with physicality, role of colonial memory, aesthetic status of language instability. The study combined the analysis of theoretical sources, structural interpretation of literary texts, and a comparative approach, which allowed systematising the material in an interdisciplinary framework.

Results

Theoretical approaches to the representation of migration identity in the literature

The concept of migration identity in modern humanitarian knowledge is considered as a complex, dynamic structure formed in the process of intercultural interaction. In the context of migration, identity loses the status of a stable, unified category and acquires signs of flexibility, multilayering, and situativeness. Both the subject’s self-image changes and the mechanisms of self-determination themselves through language, narrative, memory, spatial, and cultural affiliation.

One of the central concepts in this discourse is hybridity, which H. Bhabha (1985) interpreted as the result of the intense

interaction of cultural systems in the colonial and post-colonial contexts. Hybridity is not a simple combination of elements of two cultures, but is a process of creating a new identity that is formed in the space of conflict, ambivalence, and shifting values. Such identity cannot be reduced to any of the “original” cultural codes – it is constructed in an interstitial space where established hierarchies are destabilised. In fiction, this phenomenon is represented through linguistic polyphony, mixing of codes, stylistic heterogeneity, variations in cultural references, and gaps in narrative. Hybridity in prose appears as not only a meaningful but also a formal category – as one that structurally affects the organisation of the text. In this regard, the concept of Third Space related to hybridity, also proposed by H. Bhabha, is extremely important (Rutherford, 1990). This space is a symbolic territory where different cultures do not just co-exist, but interact, giving rise to new forms of meaning and identity. The third space is not a geographical or national feature – it represents a zone of intercultural exchange, where the hard boundaries between “own” and “foreign” are deconstructed. In a literary text, the third space can be modelled through narratives about transit, temporary stay, expectation, language, or cultural misunderstanding. It is in this space that a new subject is formed that thinks outside the binary categories of national, linguistic, or racial identity.

Another fundamental concept is exile, which is found in the writings of E. Said (2023), viewed as a crucial experience of modernity. According to the author, exile is not only a physical loss of the motherland but also an existential state of constant alienation and instability. Such a subject is always “in between”, in a situation of broken belonging: it does not fully integrate into the new environment, but it cannot return to the previous one. Exile, according to E. Said, creates a special epistemology – the position of an external observer who is at the centre

of discursive conflicts. In literature, this is reflected in the motives of disorientation, speech loss, memory distortion, and disruption of the integrity of the narrative. The language of the exile is no longer the language of the house, but a language that simultaneously preserves and distorts memories, includes and excludes them. In this context, there is a need to refer to the category of linguistic survival – a term that covers both adaptive mechanisms and internal conflicts associated with being in a multilingual environment. Language survival involves both a gradual change in language dominance and the desire to preserve the native language as an element of the cultural core. In prose, this is often represented by the polyphony of voices, the switching of codes, the fluctuation between stylistic unity and the fragmentation of language expression. Language survival is also a constant balance between the need for communication effectiveness and the fear of losing cultural identity. In a literary narrative, such manifestations become not only thematic figures but also formative components that determine the rhythm, syntax, and style of the text.

A theoretical tool for a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of linguistic and cultural interaction is the concept of the semiosphere developed by Y. Lotman (1984). The semiosphere is defined as the space within which all sign systems of culture function. It has an internal structure: the core (dominant, “own” codes) and the periphery (marginalised, “foreign” signs). Migration, in this context, means moving an individual from one semiosphere to another, which requires them to transcode the usual meanings, adapt to a new symbolic logic. In a literary text, this manifests itself in the form of intertextuality, a gap between language design and semantic expectations, and a multi-level play of signs. Language fragmentation, misunderstandings, polylogical structure – all this indicates the presence of a hero or narrator in the zone of tension between semiospheres.

A substantial addition to these theories is the approaches of S. Hall (1997), who saw identity as a process of permanent reconstruction. S. Hall argued that identity is not an a priori entity, but is formed as a result of articulation, that is, through the discursive design of experience, language, culture, and history. In a migration situation, such articulation often turns out to be contradictory: the subject constructs himself through comparison with another, in a constant movement between cultural systems. Identity, as S. Hall states, is the result of positioning, and it is through language – as a carrier and mediator of culture – that the subject performs this positioning. In a literary text, this logic is manifested in autoreflexivity, changeability of focus, and discursive tension between different levels of narration.

Thus, the involvement of the concepts of aforementioned works creates a comprehensive analytical model for interpreting migration identity as a dynamic, hybrid, and meaningfully saturated phenomenon. In the literary space, these concepts allow tracing how experiences of exile, adaptation, resistance, and reinterpretation of belonging are translated through language, narrative, and art form.

Ukrainian experience of migration and language in literature

Over the past decades, the Ukrainian literary tradition has formed an expressive field of representation of the experience of migration – both external, caused by political or economic factors, and internal, associated with individual disorientation in the post-Soviet socio-cultural space. The central motive of such prose is speech – as a means of adaptation, alienation, internal isolation, or resistance.

In the novel by Yu. Andrukhovych (1997), language performs an ambivalent function – it is both a means of escape from the dominant cultural system and a mechanism for survival in a new language environment. The character-storyteller, poet and artist Stanislav

Perfetsky, while in Venice, feels like a language exile, capable of excessive language flexibility: “I speak with an accent, but I can speak any of the languages that are understood here... I never belonged to any of them entirely”. This fragment illustrates the hybrid linguistic identity of the hero, which functions according to the logic of H. Bhabha (1985): hybridisation does not appear here as integration, but as a constant switching between codes, none of which is stable or “native”. Language in the work of Yu. Andrukhovych is a tool for imitation, grotesque, and theatricalisation of the personality, which allows one to avoid the final definition. It serves not for communicative effectiveness, but for building an image, playing with identity, as it is emphasised in episodes with a deliberate violation of stylistics: “he switched from Latin to Polish, from Polish to Ukrainian, from Ukrainian to English and back, interspersing all this with splashes of Italian swearing...” (Romanenko, 2022). This linguistic polyphony correlates with the theory of the semiosphere of Y. Lotman (1984): the hero moves between different semiotic fields where none of them can be fully mastered, and therefore each new “entry” involves transcoding, loss, and sometimes conscious distortion. In this context, language is a means of simultaneous survival and distancing, a marker of non-dependence and inner freedom.

A different model of linguistic alienation is demonstrated by the prose of S. Zhadan (2010), in particular, the novel “Voroshilovgrad”, where the language environment functions as a field of destruction of familiar cultural structures and self-determination. The hero Herman returns from Kharkiv to the industrial Eastern Donbas, which appears as a semi-marginal, heterogeneous space. From the very first pages of the novel, speech is recorded as distrust: “I haven’t spoken Ukrainian with them for a long time – I had to translate my own speech”. This fragment reflects the experience of internal migration, in which linguistic identity does not correlate with

geography but appears as a factor of social adaptation. Here, the Stuart Hall logic is triggered, for which identity is the result of positioning in a discursive field. The hero, changing his language strategies, does not so much adapt as articulate his own uncertainty, an attempt to maintain autonomy in the conditions of blurred boundaries between “own” and “foreign”. In the novel by S. Zhadan, language is often presented as an external factor: characters think using it, but do not trust it. In dialogues, the strategy of avoiding direct utterance, shifting to everyday jargon, and fixing on nonverbal language is noticeable. This linguistic alienation is also supported through formal techniques – syntax breaking, sentence fragmentation, and intonation instability. Thus, language here is not a guarantee of identity, but rather its “deficit”, a trace of the past or a remnant of an unformed subject.

In the work of S. Andrukhovych (2019), migration issues take on a deeper body and gender dimension. The story is built around the internal emigration of women within the borders of Austrian Galicia in the early 20th century. The main character, Steph, lives in a “different” house, plays the role of a maid, but the narrative reveals her inner resistance. One of the forms of such resistance is language transgression – the deliberate appropriation of someone else’s voice, including through writing: “I wrote in German, because this is the only way I could say something that I did not allow myself out loud”. Here, language acts not only as a means of communication but also as a mechanism for going beyond the established social roles. It becomes a form of symbolic expulsion from the culture of silence imposed on women – and a means of creating a new space (the concept of a “reformatted” Y. Lotman semiosphere, where rhetoric replaces the role model). Polylinguism in the text of S. Andrukhovych does not demonstrate language proficiency as an advantage, on the contrary, it shows a split identity: between Steph as a subject and Steph as a “body” in the service of someone else. In addition, in

the prose of S. Andrukhovych, speech interacts with physicality: the narrative voice constantly connects internal speech with physical reactions – trembling, stuttering, muteness. This correlates with E. Said (2023) ideas about exile, both as a geographical loss and as a loss of the body in speech – a state in which the subject is forced to move away from the “natural” form of self-expression. Through a multi-level language structure, the novel creates an image of a woman whose identity unfolds in bodily speech, hidden and interrupted.

In each of the considered texts, the Ukrainian language functions not as a stable element of cultural affiliation but as a space of tension, adaptation, and resistance. It is a game, an escape strategy and simulation, a marker of disorientation and language breakdown in internal migration, a means of breaking through social and gender constraints, where polyphony becomes a way to articulate trauma and exile. Such a diverse approach allows viewing Ukrainian migration prose not only as a thematic representation of displacement but also as a structural laboratory of language transformation and hybrid identity in the context of cultural stratification.

Linguistic identity in the Latin American prose of migration experience

Latin American prose, formed in the context of colonial heritage, internal migration, and transcultural movements, contains rich material for understanding linguistic identity. In the works of J. Cortázar (2004), R. Darío (2025), and R. Zafra (2020), language appears not as a stable means of communication, but as a space of internal crisis, cultural hybridity, and a means of articulating exclusion. The analysis of the selected authors demonstrated various aspects of the functioning of the language in the context of exile, colonial heritage, and intersectional experience.

In the prose of J. Cortázar, in particular, in the novel “Rayuela” (2004), multilingualism

and self-translation are the main artistic strategies. The hero, Horacio Oliveira, lives between Buenos Aires and Paris, between Spanish and French, between the cultural memory of Latin America and the intellectual space of Europe. In the fragment: “And then she spoke to me in French, even though I knew that she was doing it so that someone outside the door would not hear and still say painful things to me in Spanish”, there is a simultaneous use of French and Spanish, which not only denotes a communicative situation but also captures the dual identity of the character. Language here becomes a way of separating the private and the public, internal, and external. This linguistic bifurcation corresponds to the hybridity model proposed by H. Bhabha (1985): the subject finds itself in constant motion between codes that never merge into a single whole. In many episodes of “Rayuela”, J. Cortázar simulates language shifts and fluctuations. Character lines are accompanied by switching languages, interweaving French sayings, and sometimes Latin or English. This creates a sense of language instability that confirms the concept of Y. Lotman (1984) on the tension between semiospheres: broadcasting takes place in a constant transcoding environment, where no system is completely independent of the subject.

In the work “The Veil of Queen Mab”, R. Darío (2025) masterfully unfolds the theme of linguistic ambivalence as the embodiment of colonial heritage and simultaneously as a space of intellectual resistance. The image of language as the “only weapon against the shadow” functions here not only as a poetic metaphor but also as a key to understanding the existential crisis of the subject formed in the context of cultural subordination. Spanish, which became the language of self-expression for R. Darío, turns out to be controversial – it simultaneously legitimises the colonial heritage and allows it to be criticised from within. This dual status of language in the work creates a space of symbolic exile, in which the subject is deprived of direct

access to his “own” language roots, but at the same time receives an instrument of reflection and reassignment of experience. The function of language as a channel of interiorised struggle is manifested through allusions to the European literary tradition, which intersects with Latin American historical memory in the text. R. Darío does not just criticise colonialism – he transforms its language tools, introducing new meanings into them that can undermine hegemony. “The Veil of Queen Mab” asserts the postulate of language as an ambiguous but productive space of hybrid identity formed in response to loss, challenge, and pressure.

The third area of analysis concerns the creativity of R. Zafra (2020), in particular, the “Story of a Woman with No Name” collection. The central novel “My Mother’s Voice” highlights the intersection of linguistic, cultural, and gender identities. The main character works in an environment where English (the language of school), Spanish (the language of home) and an intuitively felt “inner language” that no one hears co-exist. In one of the key fragments, it is written: “before me, English was spoken at school, Spanish at home, but my body thought in a language that no one wanted to hear”. There is a radical distinction between verbal and bodily experiences: no available language can accommodate the fullness of experiences. This gap corresponds to the concept of S. Hall (1997) on identity as articulation: the subject is in a field of conflicting discourses, each of which only partially allows self-expression. In the novel “No sabré decirlo”, the tension reaches a climax: “There are words that do not fit English, and in Spanish they are too difficult for me”. Here, the language boundary appears not only as a grammatical barrier but as a manifestation of structural exclusion. Thus, R. Zafra represents the experience of a subject for whom none of the languages are safe or representative. Conditional “body language”, which appears in the text as an intuitive source of meaning, clearly indicates the need for

alternative articulation. At the formal level, the style of R. Zafra demonstrates code switching, fragmentation, and syntax opacity. These techniques form a specific artistic space in which linguistic instability and semantic ambiguity are not defects, but forms of true expression. Writing becomes a bodily gesture, a polyglossic action that takes the experience beyond the unified language code.

Thus, in the prose of aforementioned authors, language is not limited to a means of transmitting content. It acts as a dynamic structure: both barrier and resource, inheritance, and resistance, exclusion and self-representation. All three authors demonstrated that linguistic identity in the Latin American context is formed in conditions of deep cultural conflict, where language does not guarantee expression, but allows searching for it. In this context, the artistic text becomes a laboratory of linguistic hybridity, where the subject redefines themselves through linguistic multiplicity and crisis.

Language hybridity as a space of cross-cultural identity

Within the framework of cross-cultural prose, language acquires a special status – as a communication tool and a symbolic space where traumatic experiences, cultural gaps, and self-reflection processes intersect. In the cases of both Ukrainian and Latin American artistic writing of migration topics, the language fabric of the text becomes an indicator of hybrid identity, which is formed in the conditions of splitting between the “home” and “foreign” code. Common to authors from different contexts

is the appeal to linguistic multicodularity as a strategy for representing a subject that cannot be placed within a single semiosphere. However, there are fundamental differences in the artistic interpretation of the conflict between the native and acquired language, in the ways of fixing speech injuries, and in the functions of speech as a support or as a channel of assimilation. The implementation of a comparative analysis allows tracing how language becomes both a symptom of exile and a resource of symbolic transformation, opening up new perspectives in understanding hybrid identity in the literature of the diaspora.

In the process of comparative analysis of Ukrainian and Latin American prose devoted to migration, both structural and semantic parallels in the representation of language conflict can be traced. In both cultures, language takes on a functional, but above all, a symbolic dimension, reflecting the ambivalent experience of the subject, torn between cultural codes. Ukrainian authors mainly interpret language tension through the prism of internal migration, social marginalisation, and the postcolonial state associated with the loss of cultural support and attempts to rethink themselves within the hybrid space. In turn, Latin American writers focus on the traumatic experience of colonial heritage, where language acts as a tool of dominance, but simultaneously as a potential for resistance. As a result, an expanded field of observation was formed, where language appears as an arena of struggle for identity: between one’s own and imposed, memory and oblivion, bodily and narrative (Table 1).

Table 1. *Comparative matrix of language conflict and hybrid identity in Ukrainian and Latin American prose*

Parameters	Ukrainian prose	Latin American prose
Migration type	External and internal migration (post-Soviet context)	External migration, diaspora, colonial heritage
Nature of the language conflict	Internal division, alienation, instability	Conflict between the language of the coloniser and the subject
The role of language in identity formation	Identity as a movement between discourses	Language as a political and personal resource

Table 1. Continued

Parameters	Ukrainian prose	Latin American prose
Language strategies of heroes	Switching, fragmentation, avoiding direct speech	Hybridity, overload, multilingualism
Language as a space of exile	Yes, due to the loss of cultural soil and language disorientation	Yes, especially in the context of the colonial past
Language as a form of resistance	Language as a form of survival and distancing	Language as an instrument of decolonisation
The use of code-switching	Yes	Yes
Physicality and language	Language is associated with bodily experience (S. Andrukhovych)	Body language as an intuitive dimension of identity (R. Zafra)
Genre structure	Polyphony, fragmentation, intimacy	Compositional discontinuity, internarrativeness

Source: compiled by the author based on H. Gairaud Ruiz (2021), S. Revutska (2022)

The analysis shows both obvious intersections and substantial differences between the Ukrainian and Latin American traditions of representing language conflict. In both cases, the language functions as a symptom of exile and hybridity, but its cultural load differs greatly. Ukrainian prose is characterised by an emphasis on internal disorientation, the gap between cultural memory and new sociolinguistic conditions. Here, language often reflects a personal identification fracture, in particular, through internal monologues, body reflection, and genre polyphony. Instead, in the Latin American context, the language crisis is usually caused by colonial heritage: the conflict unfolds between the language of the dominant culture (Spanish, English) and “internal” or “bodily” speech, which seeks alternative ways of expression. Language hybridity in this case is not only an adaptation but also a political gesture of resistance, an attempt to rewrite the history of dominance.

These differences do not negate, but rather reinforce, a common structural mechanism within which language ceases to be a transparent communication tool. In the literature of migration experience, it appears primarily as a key marker of identity, which is in a state of constant tension. It performs a dual function – on the one hand, it represents the experience of traumatic eradication, and on the other, it becomes an instrument of resistance, preservation, and restoration of subjectivity. This

ambivalence of the language code is evident in both Ukrainian and Latin American literature, where language practice is formed on the border of cultures, traditions, and power structures. The traumatic dimension of language is primarily associated with the experience of colonisation, assimilation, forced emigration, or internal exile. In this context, the language undergoes deformation, loss of primary function, alienation, or fragmentation. It can be perceived as alien, imposed, or not accommodating individual experience. This often leads to a split in speech consciousness, an internal crisis of expression, or even temporary speech silence. A person who has experienced migration finds themselves in a space between languages, where neither of them provides full self-expression, creating a sense of existential incompleteness. Thereby, it is language – despite its complicated, fragmented position – that can become a means of internal resistance. It is able to represent cultural memory, intimate experience, and physicality that do not find a place in dominant discourses. Through writing, language play, and the transformation of syntax or lexical structures, authors redefine language as a field of struggle for the right to be heard. In this sense, speech performs not only a communicative but also an identifying, even therapeutic function. It becomes a way to restore integrity, actualise a forgotten or repressed part of the self (Ahlgren, 2021).

In both literary traditions, Ukrainian and Latin American, the experience of colonial or post-colonial conflict is common, in which language appears as a space of symbolic violence. In the Ukrainian context, the language is often associated with a history of russification, political marginalisation, or a break with traditional forms of national broadcasting. In Latin American – with the consequences of Spanish colonisation, the dominance of European language codes and the loss of autochthonous languages. In such circumstances, language functions as an archive of oppression, but at the same time as a platform for articulating an alternative identity. The gender dimension of speech trauma and resistance deserves special attention in the analysis. Women's experience in the migration context is often associated with double or triple exclusion – cultural, social, gender. In such cases, the language loses its normativity, becomes fragmented, and sometimes intentionally opaque. This allows taking the narrative beyond hegemonic speech, creating a space for intersectional subjectivity that is not limited to any of the available language systems. Instead of trying to adapt to one language, there

is a strategy of constant transcoding, which in itself is a form of resistance.

Thus, in migration prose, the language is not a neutral structure, but appears as a politically, psychologically, and culturally loaded field. It reveals contradictions between internal and external, between historical memory and current speech, between the requirement of language adaptation and the need to preserve one's own voice. This makes language a critical element of the traumatic experience, but at the same time, a central mechanism for the struggle for identity in the border space of exile and Diaspora. In the context of migration fiction, language functions as a crucial mechanism for representing identity, resistance, and crisis. The analysis of artistic strategies in the texts of Ukrainian and Latin American authors displays the differences in the functioning of the language code in conditions of exile, hybridity, and semiotic instability. Based on the concept of Y. Lotman (1984) on the semiosphere as a space of cultural translation, it is possible to outline typological schemes of interaction between the individual and sign systems in a literary text (Table 2).

Table 2. *Cultural semiosphere of exile and diaspora in Ukrainian and Latin American prose*

Author	Title of the work	Type of language hybridity	Sample fragment	Type of semiosphere
Yu. Andrukhovych	Perversion	Language play, latinisms, metatextuality	"Write to me in Ukrainian, because I don't know who I am in this language"	Semiosphere of internal conflict
S. Andrukhovych	Felix Austria	Polylinguism, a female narrative	"I spoke to him in German, but thought in Polish and quarreled in Ukrainian"	Semiosphere of physical and cultural instability
S. Zhadan	Voroshilovgrad	Alienation, internal migration	"I understood the language locals spoke, but I didn't recognise myself in it"	The transitional semiosphere of post-socialist memory
J. Cortázar	Rayuela	Multilingualism, self-translation	"He spoke to me in French... yet he told me things that hurt me in Spanish"	Semiosphere of intercontinental bifurcation
R. Darío	The Veil of Queen Mab	Colonial code, baroque hybridity	"The language I speak is a heritage of conquest but also my only weapon against the shadow"	Semiosphere of aestheticised resistance

Table 2. Continued

Author	Title of the work	Type of language hybridity	Sample fragment	Type of semiosphere
R. Zafra	Story of a Woman with No Name	Intersectional body language	"They spoke to me in English at school... but my body thought in a language nobody wanted to hear"	Semiosphere of marginalised articulation

Source: compiled by the author based on Yu. Andrukhovych (1997), J. Cortázar (2004), Zhadan (2010), S. Andrukhovych (2019), R. Zafra (2020), S.R. Dario (2025)

Linguistic identity in the works considered in this study both demonstrates the hybrid nature of self-perception and shapes the types of semiospheres, limited sign environments, in which self-expression occurs. While Ukrainian pieces pay more attention to the gap between individual memory and the collective language code, Latin American works show a language crisis as a consequence of the colonial past or intersectional experience. All examples support the hypothesis of language as a key point of tension where exile, self-identification, and cultural resistance meet.

In the context of migration experience, language appears as an ambivalent tool: on the one hand, it is a means of resisting cultural unification, and on the other, it is a mechanism for adapting to new sociolinguistic conditions. In the analysed texts, the language code performs the function of preserving identity by actively rethinking traditional forms of communication, transgressing grammatical and semantic boundaries, introducing polylinguism, stylistic shifts, and intertextuality. Thereby, it can contribute to gradual assimilation if the connection with one's own cultural memory is lost or there is a complete immersion in the dominant discourse. Thus, the language strategy becomes a determining factor in whether the subject will try to preserve the semiosphere of exile as a space of resistance or integrate into the new environment, while losing some of its cultural identity.

Discussion

In the course of this study, it was established that linguistic hybridity in the literature of

migration experience appears not as an exclusively linguistic phenomenon, but as a complex cultural, psychological and semiotic strategy. This understanding allows comparing the results with those obtained in a study by A.Y. Chernysh (2024), which analysed the linguistic and synergistic vector of Ukrainian discourse based on the novel "Voroshilovgrad" by S. Zhadan (2010). The author focused on internal coordination of levels of language structure, while this study considered language as an external marker of hybrid identity. Both approaches have shown that language multiplicity forms a multi-level semantic dynamic of the text, which is essential to revealing traumatic or marginalised experiences. In a paper of I. Tarku (2022), dedicated to the representation of family memory and war trauma in Ukrainian literature, the narrative mechanisms for reproducing historical experience are in the centre of attention. Despite the fact that author did not directly investigate the problem of language hybridity; the results of this study confirmed his observations about the role of the language code as a carrier of post-memory. In aforementioned study, language destabilisation served as an indicator of a cultural gap, which is consistent with the language functioning identified in this study as a symptom of uprooting and identity tension.

S. Nordmark & H. Colliander (2023) in a study on the social inclusion of migrants in the European context stressed the importance of language adaptation as one of the leading factors of integration into the host society. At the centre of their observations is the desire

of migrants to master a new language as a tool for building social capital, access to institutions, communication, and forming a sense of belonging. Their study uncovered a pattern: successful language adaptation correlates with an increased subjective sense of inclusion. Instead, in this study, which focused on artistic representation of migration experiences, language dynamics became deeply ambivalent. It is established that two contradictory tendencies co-exist in the literary text: on the one hand – the desire of characters to adapt to new language codes, on the other – the deliberate or subconscious preservation of markers of foreign language, dialect elements, accent, native language tokens, etc. These remnants of the original linguistic identity are not passive – on the contrary, they represent resistance to cultural assimilation and act as a kind of “shadow” language that embodies criticism of the narrative of total inclusion. Such language fragments in a work of art become metaphors of disunity, ambivalence, and a hybrid subject that defies simple sociological modelling.

In the text of B. Nicholson (2023), dedicated to changing the reception of J. Cortázar (2004), the dynamics of readers and critics in rethinking transnational authorship were examined. The author emphasised how cultural expectations related to a writer’s linguistic identity affect the interpretation of a text. In this study, this problem was transferred to an internal dimension: it was shown that the language structure of the text itself of J. Cortázar (2004) functions as a carrier of multiple polyphonic identity. It refers not only about the functional switching of codes (for example, between literary and spoken Spanish, or the inclusion of French words) but also about the semiotic effect of “body language” – a figurative, sensualised, empirical system of signs that comes into conflict with rational, grammatically controlled speech. In this conflict, a subject was created that exists not within the established language paradigm, but on its border, in the space of

flimsy linguistic hybridity, where language simultaneously reveals and destroys identity.

In the review of M. Hallensleben (2025), the idea that the story of exile in the literature of the 20th-21st centuries not only represents the traumatic experience of losing the motherland but also forms a certain structure of memory in which the past and present are in constant tension was put forward. This study supported this vision, but also offered an important clarification: linguistic representation in migration prose performs the function of preserving or archiving time in addition to having an active influence on its reconfiguration. It was determined that the instability of the language code – due to switching between different styles, rhythms, and levels of formality – embodies the fragmentation of the migrant’s temporal experience, where time limits are blurred. Such fragmentation is not only a compositional technique but also the result of an internal conflict of the subject, who simultaneously seeks to preserve the past and distance themselves from it. In this sense, language appears as a mechanism of time shift, not fixation. Instead, in a study by R.I. Díaz (2021), which considered the phenomenon of transliteration in the Latin American postcolonial context, the language was understood as a space of aesthetic and political resistance. The author underscored that multilingualism in a literary text not only demonstrates cultural complexity but also reflects resistance to dominant narratives of colonial hegemony. This study shared this position, but offered an alternative focus point: not on interaction with autochthonous languages as such, but on how body-language narrative mechanisms are formed in the artistic structure – gestures, rhythms, facial expressions, metaphorical fusion of language with sensation. It was this channel of articulation found in the texts that reflected the deeper intent of resistance – not only semantic, but existential.

Within the framework of this study, it was established that linguistic hybridity in literary

migration discourse appears not only as a sign of cultural multiplicity, but above all as a symptom of ineradicable locality – traumatised, but persistently represented. In this sense, multilingualism does not serve as a transnational association, but, on the contrary, means splitting and resistance to full integration. This approach contrasts with the opinion of S. Esch (2023), who, analysing Central American literature in a global context, considered multilingualism as a strategic tool for entering the universal literary space. In the aforementioned study, language experimentation acted as a marker of openness, dialogue with the global reader, and an attempt to go beyond the local. In the same study, multilingualism was interpreted more as a way to fix the impossibility of a final transition – language preserved the border, reminded of an insurmountable otherness and an experience that cannot be interpreted solely through universal codes. Another aspect was identified in the results of comparison with the publication of H. Jin (2024), in which the artist appeared as a migrant in a broad – cultural, mental, identification – sense, and language was seen as a space of mobility that allows moving between contexts. Although this study confirmed the mobile nature of language experience, it also presented its reverse side: language not only facilitates crossing borders but also materialises as a symbol of resistance, as a scar that embodies the past. It recorded not just changes, but internal limitations that prevented the subject from finally escaping the experience of loss, breakup, or exclusion. Thus, the language in the study by H. Jin was associated with discovery, whereas in this one, it was associated with bodily memory, reverse traction, and rooting.

In this study, the literary representation of migration experience was identified to be inextricably linked to the tension between individual narrative and collective memory. Specifically, language instability – code switching, fragmented syntactic structure, interspersed with unadapted words – represented a constant

conflict between nationality and the experience of exile. In this sense, there was a parallel with the findings of I. Nabytovych (2022), who investigated the role of historical prose in shaping national identity. Although the author concentrated on the great historical narratives actualised in prose, the results of this study showed that even an intimate, migratory narrative is not devoid of historical richness: it translates memory through linguistic cleavage, signalling the incompleteness of national self-determination. Language in such works appears not as an instrument of unity, but rather a field of struggle between a traumatic past and an uncertain future. A different, but indicative approach was traced in the study by J. Cortázar (1981), who interpreted literary exile as a form of ethical union and solidarity. The author claimed that the space of exile in the literary text opened up opportunities for intercultural dialogue, aesthetic exchange, and mutual recognition. In this study, however, another trend was noted: the language in the texts about exile mostly functioned as a conflict-causing structure, not as a bridge, but as a scar. It did not connect, but fragmented, separated, and formed a new identity precisely through the juxtaposition, instead of the harmonisation of experience.

With a different theoretical emphasis, G. Smilevski (2020) reviewed the relationship between loss, memory, and exile, describing language as a container of cultural and individual memory. This confirmed the thesis about the deep connection of language with memory, but simultaneously revealed its other function – not only to preserve but also to transform. In the texts that became the research material, speech often turned out to be not a stable support for memory, but a zone of its destruction: individual words or syntactic structures served as triggers or obstacles in an attempt to reconstruct the past. In some cases, there was an incompatibility between what the character remembers and how they can express it – thus, the language turned into a space of

traumatic tension, where memory not only exists but also conflicts with itself.

A slightly different vector was considered by B. Pokharel (2020), who analysed diaspora literature as a transition from “condition” to “awareness” – that is, from passive existence in emigration circumstances to active identity formation. This idea is extremely valuable for understanding the transformations that a subject goes through in exile. Within the framework of this study, it was determined that in the Ukrainian and Latin American artistic context, this transition is largely blocked by the language gap. Language is not always a means of “awareness” – it often acts as an obstacle to it, especially in situations where language hybridity is combined with existential uncertainty. Such speech does not lead to self-acceptance, drawing the character into a zone of constant doubt, where no language code is a stable support. This highlighted that the “transition to consciousness” in migration prose is not linear or guaranteed: it depends not only on the social context but also on the internal conflict between different linguistic layers of experience. Therefore, the present study, complementing the conclusions of B. Pokharel, demonstrated that language break can be not only a condition for awareness but also its limitation – both in a symbolic and psychological sense.

In the context of the results of this study, which demonstrated that language in the literature of migration experience functions not only as a means of communication but as a space of bodily tension, the observations of V. Matsko *et al.* (2022) on the transformation of cultural memory in the prose of the Ukrainian diaspora were especially meaningful. They underlined the dynamic nature of narrative identity and the multi-layered nature of historical codes. In this study, this dynamic was indicated primarily through linguistic instability and polycodicity: identity was formed at the border between discourse and experience, rather than within given historical models. It was discovered that

not only memory but also language fragmentation, even failures in syntax, served as carriers of the past, which does not have a stable language definition. Thus, the results expanded the understanding of the functioning of historical memory as implemented thematically and at the level of formal language organisation.

R. Phillips (2020) presented the Latin American literary space as a polyphonic environment in which multilingualism and transliteration played a mobilising function aimed at rethinking the colonial heritage and forming new identity narratives. In this context, language was seen as a political tool capable of constructing new models of cultural belonging within the postcolonial space. Instead, the results of this study allowed clarifying this point of view: multilingualism in Latin American prose appeared not only as a gesture of decolonisation or cultural mobilisation but also as a means of experiencing individual bodily experience. In the works of R. Zafra (2020), in particular, language hybridity functioned as a manifestation of intuitive “body language”, which arose in a situation where none of the available languages could fully represent the heroine’s experience. Thus, in contrast to the general theoretical approach of R. Phillips (2020), who emphasised the social and political dimension of multilingualism, in this study, multilingualism was also interpreted as a means of intimate self-affirmation in conditions of existential exile – at a level where language becomes a bodily gesture, and not just an instrument of public articulation.

The results of this study confirmed the general provisions of previous publications on the role of language in migration experience, while offering new aspects of analysis related to bodily articulation, semiotics of speech decay, and strategic ambivalence of speech behaviour of characters. All these elements enabled the formulation of a holistic view of language as a dynamic marker of cultural hybridity and also of internal resistance rooted in the bodily experience of exile.

Conclusions

As a result of the study, it was established that the concept of migration identity, understood in the philosophy of culture and postcolonial theory, was characterised by dynamism, heterogeneity and discursive fragmentation. The main theoretical models allowed considering identity as a result of constant movement between discursive fields, where language acted not only as a means of communication but also as an arena of ideological conflict. Migration identity was identified to be the result of crossing semiotic boundaries, within which language practice reflects not only adaptation but also resistance, stigmatisation, or an attempt to restore a cultural subject.

The Ukrainian artistic discourse reflected the deep internal tension associated with the experience of migration, both external and internal. In the works of Ukrainian writers, language appeared as an instrument of personal reflection and at the same time as a field of loss. The characters of Ukrainian texts experienced a language break due to the destruction of the connection between language practice and cultural memory. Strategies of internal monologue, fragmented narrative, and syntactic instability dominated, reflecting a sense of eradication, internal duality, and the need to redefine oneself in a new context. In the Latin American context, the language problem was directly related to colonial heritage, the dominance of the official language code, and attempts to create alternative forms of expression through multilingualism, self-translation, bodily articulation, or silence. The language in these texts performed a dual function – repressive (as a result of a

history of violence) and expressive (as an attempt at narrative restoration of subjectivity). There was a tendency to stylistic hybridisation, a combination of elements of high and folk culture, codes of European tradition, and elements of local experience.

Comparative analysis, presented in the form of a comparative matrix of language conflict and hybrid identity in Ukrainian and Latin American prose, showed similar structural models and at the same time important differences. Both literary contexts identified language as a space of exile accompanied by internal duality. While Ukrainian authors focused mainly on internal disorientation and post-Soviet trauma, Latin American prose was dominated by a conflict between the language of the coloniser and the subject. In the language strategies of the heroes of Ukrainian texts, switching, fragmentation, and avoiding direct speech were recorded, which contrasted with multilingualism, congestion, and hybridity in Latin American narratives. Promising areas for further research may be the interdisciplinary combination of literary analysis with sociolinguistic methods, the study of linguistic identity in oral and digital discourses of the diaspora, and the expansion of the corpus of texts by attracting other cultural and geographical regions.

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Мова як засіб виживання і розпаду ідентичності у творах міграційної тематики

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Анотація. Метою дослідження було виявити особливості функціонування мови як маркера ідентичності та засобу гібридизації у літературі, що репрезентує досвід міграції. У процесі дослідження було використано методи якісного контент-аналізу художніх текстів із фокусом на мовні стратегії персонажів, а також дискурсивний аналіз, що дозволив виявити наративні механізми формування ідентичності. Дослідження здійснювалося в міждисциплінарній парадигмі, яка поєднувала підходи філософії культури, семіотики та постколоніальної критики. Аналіз здійснювався на основі цифрової текстової обробки та ручного семантичного кодування ключових фрагментів, пов'язаних із темами вигнання, мовного конфлікту, гібридності та саморепрезентації. У результаті було виявлено, що мовна гібридність у художньому тексті є не лише засобом вираження транскультурного досвіду, а й інструментом опору асиміляції. В українських текстах домінувала тема втрати мовної цілісності та інтерналізованої кризи ідентичності в умовах соціолінгвістичного розриву. Мова репрезентувалася як простір внутрішнього конфлікту між пам'яттю й адаптацією, в якому розгорталася особистісна дезінтеграція. Латиноамериканський контекст, натомість, демонстрував мовну стратегію як форму політичного жесту: колоніальне нашарування на мовне тіло героя породжувало наративи перекладу, розщеплення та вивільнення через багатомовність або інверсію лінгвістичних ієрархій. Порівняльний аналіз дозволив окреслити моделі, за якими мова в літературі міграційного досвіду виконує двоїсту функцію – як травматичний наслідок вигнання та як засіб символічного спротиву й збереження суб'єктності. Практична значущість дослідження полягає в можливості застосування його висновків для гуманітарної інтерпретації міграційної культури, формування культурної політики пам'яті та розробки освітніх підходів до теми ідентичності у глобалізованому світі

Ключові слова: дискурс вигнання; семіосфера; лінгвокультурна нестабільність; гібридна суб'єктність; діаспора; комунікація; опір