

THE POETICS OF GRAMMAR AS CHALLENGE AND CHANCE IN
LITERARY TRANSLATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Poetics of grammar is among the largely neglected facts in literary translations. As a rule, this term is missing in translation handbooks and also in surveys concerning translation theory. The reason why this aesthetic device frequently escapes translation scholars' attention, probably has to do with the different make up of languages. There are certain qualities of a language which inspire authors to poetics of grammar. Three such qualities are to be found in the Polish language: 1. a relatively high amount of optional variants of grammatical phenomena, 2. a relatively high amount of grammatical categories and structures equipped with either specific grammatical sense or a number of meanings that a user may choose from, and 3. a certain amount of word classes, which allow for creating lexical variants – first of all with the help of prefixes and suffixes. This study discusses poetics of grammar based on the copula *jest*, the reflexive pronoun *sobie*, the adjectival attribute, interjections, and the grammatical sense of the verbal aspects. Most examples are taken from 20th century Polish literature, i.e. from texts written by Witkiewicz, Gombrowicz, Herbert, Różewicz and others. Both German and English function as target languages.

1. Introduction

Poetics of grammar is among the largely neglected facts in literary translations. So, it is not surprising that, as a rule, this term is missing in translation handbooks and in many studies concerning translation theory. For example, there is no entry dealing with the poetics of grammar in the de Gruyter *International encyclopedia of translation studies*.¹ However, the term is being used in literary studies. Most books and articles devoted to this *artistic device*, so it seems, deal with Russian literature. A few titles may illustrate the case: "O poëtike O.

¹ The first out of three volumes appeared by the end of 2004.

Mandel'stama. Grammatika kak predmet poëzii" (Uspenskij 1990), *Problemy poëtiki grammatičeskich kategorij* (Gin 1996), *Poëtika grammatičeskich kategorij*² (Nozdrina 2000). Though fairly comprehensive research on the poetics of grammar has only been going on since the late 1980s, literary scholars have been aware of this phenomenon for a long time: In his meticulous study on Norwid's poem "Czułość" ('Susceptibility', 'Sensitivity'), Jakobson (1975: 234) talks about the "actualization of grammatical gender" (*aktualizacja rodzaju gramatycznego*). Jakobson is clearly surveying one out of many aspects of poetics of grammar. A preliminary definition of this frequently underestimated marker of fictional texts, then, may run as follows: Poetics of grammar means actualization and functionalization of any grammatical category and structure in order to create and support aesthetic sense.

Two examples will illustrate this phenomenon. The first one concerns the so-called *grammatical sense* (*grammatischen Sinn*) of aspect and *Aktionsart* (aspects and Aktionsarten respectively), the second one concerns the Polish diminutive. Both cases have to do with Polish-English and Polish-German language asymmetries. The first example is taken from the beginning of *Kartoteka* ('The card index') – Różewicz's most important dramatic text. At the opening of the play, the main character, HERO, is lying in bed, looking at his hand. The FATHER, who wants to put an end to this state of apathy, laments: "Co z niego wyrośnie, jak będzie się tak długo wylegiwał. Wstawaj! Chłopcze!" (Różewicz 1999: 30). What interests us here is the verb of state and condition, *wylegiwał się*. The grammatical sense of this iterative-durative verb is twofold. It communicates the state of 'lying', and also criticism of this posture. It should be remembered that the image contained in the verb *wylegiwać się*, the image of a person lolling about in his or her bed, appertains to Różewicz's central matter of concern: man's reaction to the physical, cultural and mental destruction brought about during the Second World War and after. In *Kartoteka*, the HERO's reaction, quite typically, is utter apathy and refusal to engage in things going on around him. The way the author makes use of the grammatical sense of the verb, is quite characteristic of his aesthetics. Further examples of this artistic device could be found in most of his theatre plays and also in his poems (Schultze and Matuschek, in press).

Since neither English nor German have a lexical equivalent of the verb *wylegiwać się*, translators can only paraphrase certain amounts of the grammatical sense. Adam Czerniawski, the English translator of *Kartoteka*, manages to maintain the negative connotation of the verb; the reference to duration, however, is lost: "What will become of him if he lolls in bed like this? Up you get,

² This textbook for students contains a bibliography (cf. Nozdrina 2000: 220-232).

my boy!" (Różewicz 1969: 39). Czerwiński (1988: 37), however, in his study on *Contemporary Polish theatre and drama*, is capable of rendering the idea of duration. Here the FATHER's *wylegiwać się*. It may be instructive also to take a look at the translations into German. One of the translators, Ilka Boll, avoids the challenge implied in the verb *wylegiwać się* by leaving the phrase "jak będzie się tak długo wylegiwał" untranslated. Her version is: "Was soll bloß aus ihm werden? Steh auf, Junge!" (Różewicz 1983: 178). Henryk Bereska's first translation of *Kartoteka* renders the temporal distinction of duration but misses some of the negative overtones: "Was wird bloß aus ihm werden, dieses dauernde Im-Bett-Liegen. Steh auf, Junge!" (Różewicz 1961: 2). This example shows that the occurrence of poetics of grammar calls for a translator's special attention. This aesthetic device may touch on the core of a fictional text.

The second example to illustrate the poetics of grammar is connected with the almost unlimited possibilities of the Polish language to coin diminutives. In this instance the artistic device is even underlined by poetic metatext. The example illustrative for "poetics of the diminutive" is taken from Gombrowicz's novel *Ferdydurke*. This piece of canonical 20th century prose fiction in some places abounds with diminutives. Most of them are lexicalized forms, others are coinings by the author himself. The heading of the second chapter already contains a funny announcement of this artistic device: "Uwięzienie i dalsze zdrabnianie" ('Taking into captivity and further minimizing') (Gombrowicz 1969: 26-53). It should be noticed that the noun pointing at the diminutive is *zdrabnianie*. This, to quote Jakobson, actualization of the imperfective verbal aspect (*zdrabniać*) may also be taken as a case of the poetics of grammar. Actualizing the grammatical sense of the verbal aspects and of the *Aktionsart* is quite typical of Gombrowicz. This device belongs to his *personal aesthetics* (*Personalästhetik*) (Hammerschmid and Schultze 1998: 71, 74, 86-88).³ In order to be able to value the position of the diminutive in *Ferdydurke*, one has to recall the situation of the narrator and central character, Józio. Józio is temporarily living with the "modern" urban family of the Młodziaks. Being modern, among other things, means that the members of the family, father, mother and daughter, have given up using old-fashioned Polish diminutives. Józio, the boarder, feels he has to unmask this "modernity show". By making a mess of his sweets and by pronouncing a diminutive (*Mamusia*), he literally deforms the family lunch (Gombrowicz 1969: 144). For the engineer Młodziak this deranged meal equals release from having to be "modern". Consequently, he indulges in using suffixes, which had been forbidden hitherto. The engineer's wife, on the other

³ A reprint in Polish translation: Schultze and Weinhausen (2004: 346, 350, 366-368).

hand, is upset at this return to such old-fashioned "Polishness". A few lines may suffice to recall a scene abundant with diminutives:

- Wiktorze, co ty mówisz? ... Nasze dążenia! Nasze porywy! ... Zdrada...
- Zdradunia – rzekł Młodziak.
- Wiktorze! Nie zdrabniaj! Nie zdrabniaj!
- Zdradeczka. Wiktoś powiada...⁴

(Gombrowicz 1969: 177).

Obviously, there is no way of letting an English reader know how the Polish diminutive is being *staged* in this squabbling between Mr. and Mrs. Młodziak. Unfortunately, we do not have an English translation of *Ferdydurke* at our disposal. Both German translations, quite naturally, resort to the German diminutive suffixes – *-lein* and *-chen*. Fieguth and Fieguth's revised translation of Walter Tiels first German *Ferdydurke* runs like this:

- “Viktor, wie kannst du nur! ... Unsere Ziele! Unser Elan! ... Verrat...”
- “Verrätlein”, sagte der Ingenieur.
- “Viktor! Keine Verkleinerungsformen, ich bitte dich!”
- “Verrätelchen, sagt Viktorchen...”

(Gombrowicz 1983: 200-201).

Of course, the German nouns “Verrätlein” and “Verrätelchen” are occasional coinings, just like the Polish words *zdradunia* and *zdradeczka*. To a certain extent, the German translators follow the artistic device of the source text, they operate by analogy with Gombrowicz's poetics. They translate *verfahrensanalog*. Both examples may have shown that the poetics of grammar is a topic which deserves some more attention in translation studies.

The reason why this aesthetic device frequently escapes translation scholars' attention, probably has to do with the different make up of languages. If I am not mistaken, there are certain qualities of a language which inspire authors to poetics of grammar. I find at least three such qualities in the Polish language: 1. a relatively high amount of optional variants of grammatical phenomena, 2. a relatively high amount of grammatical categories and structures equipped with either specific grammatical sense or a number of meanings that a user may choose from, and 3. a certain amount of word classes which allow for creating lexical variants – first of all with the help of prefixes and suffixes. A few examples may illustrate these “invitations” to poetics of grammar: One out of many optional variants is the choice between the nominative and the vocative in first name personal address. Let us recall the evening scene at the Młodziaks. Instead

of using the vocative case of her husband's first name, “Wiktorze”, Mrs. Młodziak might also have chosen the nominative, “Wiktor”. Of course, on account of the given situation, Mrs. Młodziak is much too alarmed to choose the more distanced nominative. Another optional variant concerns the copula *jest*, i.e. the choice between using or omitting the copula. Then there is the personal pronoun, which may also be used or omitted – “ja byłam”, “byłam” (‘I was’, ‘was’). A specific case is the adjective attribute. There is, as we know, a tendency to have the adjective of quality before and the adjective of classification after the noun. With regard to this option, the poetics of grammar will be realized when the adjectives of quality and of classification change their place.

Coming to the poetics of grammar based on the grammatical sense of single categories and structures, the verbal expression *wylegiwać się* stands for the actualization of *Aktionsart*. Examples for actualization of the grammatical sense of the verbal aspects could also be given. Another prominent candidate for the poetics of grammar is the dative of the reflexive pronoun, *sobie*. Sentences of the type *Stoję sobie na rynku* (‘I am standing around on the market place’, ‘Ich steh so auf dem Marktplatz rum’, ‘Ich steh da so auf dem Markt’) are a real challenge for translators. All he can do is try to maintain at least some of the semantic facets. A similarly strong candidate for the poetics of grammar is the particle or discourse marker *to*. This discourse marker contains a whole bunch of semantic extensions derived from the demonstrative pronoun “to” (‘it’, ‘das’). For example, Gombrowicz's most important play, *Ślub* (‘The marriage’), not only offers a wide range of meanings of the discourse marker *to*; it also offers coherent sense based on this textual element (Schultze and Tabakowska 1992). A more or less wide range of meanings is also connected with augmentatives, e.g. augmentatives based on the suffix *-isko*. In my experience, the range of meanings is largely context-bound.

Then there is poetics of grammar hinging on what we may call multiplication of verbal material with the help of pre- and suffixes. Here again, the evening scene at the Młodziaks may serve as an example. In this instance, the multiplication of verbal material hinges on diminutives: *zdrada* – *zdradunia* – *zdradeczka*. Of course, the multiplication of verbal material may also be brought about through repetition of just one word or a small group of words. This variant, to quote from American literature, is realized in Dreiser's novel *Sister Carrie*. Carrie keeps pronouncing the emphatic interjections “o” and “oh”, so these interjections function as a sort of personal tag (Schultze and Tabakowska 2004: 555). Poetics of grammar based on one or the other word class or grammatical category seems to be common in many languages. This artistic device can belong to a specific literary or theatrical genre, as is the case with interjections in melodrama (Schultze and Tabakowska 2004: 555).

⁴ The italics are mine [B.S.].

In fictional texts, most of these variants of the poetics of grammar can be exposed as isolated structural elements. Sometimes, however, several of them overlap and form especially complex aesthetic sense. Among Polish authors of the 20th century, Witkiewicz, Gombrowicz, Mrozek, Różewicz, Szymborska and Herbert make ample use of the poetics of grammar. Therefore, the following examples will be taken from texts by these authors. The language pairs are Polish-English and Polish-German. One example will concern German as the source and Polish and English as the target languages. Specific attention will be given to poetics of grammar connected with the copula *jest*, the dative of the reflexive pronoun, *sobie*, the different handling of adjectives of quality and classification, interjections and, finally, poetics of grammar based on the grammatical sense of the verbal aspects.

2. The copula *jest*

The copula *jest* is known to be among the most relevant asymmetries of the language pairs Polish-English and Polish-German (Schultze and Matuschek 1991: 393-396, 2005). In Polish, the copula is often omitted, especially in everyday communication, but also in theatrical texts oriented towards spontaneous speech acts, and, of course, in poetry. The copula may be substituted by the particle *to*, e.g. *Jan to dobry student* ('Jan is a good student'), in rare cases it may also be used together with the particle *to*, e.g. *Jan to jest dobry student* (Schultze and Matuschek 1991: 393). Similar to the German word *ist* and the English *is*, *jest* also has an ontological dimension. Used as a full verb, it may refer to human and animal existence – to anything there is in the world. So *jest* may be a synonym of the verbal expression *istnieje* 'exists' (Doroszewski 1962: 222). Some authors, most of all poets, tend to omit the copula *jest* unless it refers to matters of existence.

Some of the most prominent examples for poetics of grammar hinging on clusters of *jest* are contained in Witkacy's three-act play *Gyubal Wahazar* (Witkacy 1921). According to Witkacy's understanding human existence is fundamentally at stake in the 20th century. Wahazar tries to find the right solution. Confronted with a world of chaos and instability, the dictator, "His Onlyness", pursues two incompatible projects at the same time: to construct a fully automated state of the future and to become an authentic Self capable of getting in touch with the "secret of existence" (Schultze 2000: 425-427, 429-431). At the opening of the play, petitioners are waiting for the dictator, who has already kept them waiting for hours, even for days. The stylistic make-up of the petitioners' dialogue resembles the code of early expressionism. According to the author, this emphatic code will shock the audience and stir everybody's sensitivity to the "secret of existence". The first word to be pronounced in this play is the copula *jest*. The FIRST GENTLEMAN WITH A TOP HAT decides: "*Jest* trzecia w

nocy. Proponuję, żebyśmy po prostu poszli sobie" (Witkiewicz 1998: 210). Several statements, in which the copula *jest* is similarly exposed, follow: "Tam *jest* ON! – A! To po prostu *jest* świństwo! – Tam *jest* symbol jego władzy" (Witkiewicz 1998: 210-212). This verbal pattern, clearly an example of the poetics of grammar, is a challenge both for English and German translators. The only way of letting English and German readers know that the copula is stressed, is to resort to italics. Capital letters are already used to expose the dictator's substitute names ("ON"). The American translators Daniel Gerould and C. S. Durer do not make any efforts to maintain this verbal pattern; quite the contrary. They choose enclitics: "*It's* three in the morning. I propose we just leave. – *He's* in there! – Oh, *It's* just rotten! – *There's* the symbol of his authority" (Witkiewicz 1972: 104-106). The first German translation by Ilka Boll renders this series of sentences in the following way: "Drei Uhr nachts. Ich schlage vor, wir gehen nach Hause. – Dort ist ER! – Ah. Eine Schweinerei, so etwas. – Das Symbol seiner Herrschaft" (Witkiewicz 1974: 7-9).

Here, in three out of four sentences the copula is left out entirely. This means that target side readers and spectators will not get the slightest idea of the expressionist code in these sentences. They will not be acquainted with the so-called *maximalization* (*Maximalisierung*), which is so characteristic of Witkacy's personal aesthetics (Schultze 1993: 459-460). There is no way of finding out whether the translator, specialized both in Polish literature and in theatre studies, was capable of spotting the poetics of grammar based on the copula *jest* or not. The sequence of sentences shows that Ilka Boll had been following a definite translatory strategy: translating for the theatre. According to a "rule of thumb", translating for the theatre means that dialogue should follow spontaneous everyday communication. This is where the German copula *ist* is most likely to be omitted. While the American translators reduce the copula *jest* to the enclitic, the first German translator chooses ellipsis.

The second German translator, Henryk Bereska, seems to have had access to Boll's theatre manuscript. His translation is the following: "Drei Uhr nachts. Ich schlage vor, wir gehen nach Hause. – Dort ist ER! – Ah! Das ist schlichtweg eine Sauerei. – Seht, das Symbol seiner Herrschaft!" (Witkiewicz 1982: 68-69). Bereska seems to proceed without any specific strategy. Summarizing, we may state that the poetics of grammar based on the copula *jest* is lost for English (American resp.) as well as for German readers and audiences. It cannot be discounted that the translators wanted to spare readers and audiences the somewhat pithy code of expressionism.

However, it should be remembered that similar series of the copula *jest* are also contained in Różewicz's plays. E.g., excessive use of the copula belongs to the YOUNG GIRL's (DZIEWCZYNA) way of speaking in the three-act play *Na*

czworakach ('On all fours'). The YOUNG GIRL literally "showers" the famous writer with the copula:

- *Jest mi bardzo przykro, że pana niepokoiłam...*
- *Jest mi ogromnie ogromnie przeogromnie przykro...*
- *Jest mi szalenie przykro...*

(Różewicz 1988: 54-57).

The German translator Henryk Bereska partially breaks up this pattern:

- *Es ist mir äußerst peinlich, dass ich Sie beunruhigt habe...*
- *Es ist mir ganz unheimlich wahnsinnig peinlich...*
- *Es tut mir wahnsinnig leid...*

(Różewicz 1986: 6-9).

German readers and audiences will not know that the obtrusive behaviour of the YOUNG GIRL – "I feel awful about having disturbed you ... I am awfully sorry" is stressed by the poetics of grammar. Instead of maintaining the meaningful aesthetic device, Bereska translates according to the basic principle *varietas delectat*. This principle seems to spoil the poetics of grammar in many a translation.

3. The reflexive pronoun *sobie*

Sobie, the dative of the reflexive pronoun, also belongs to those asymmetries of the language pairs Polish-English and Polish-German, which can be a real challenge for translators. Considering its frequency in fictional texts and the range of meanings evoked whenever it appears, *sobie* even seems to be a singular case within the Slavic language family. It is known that *sobie* indicates the perception of the self in private, non-official speech (Bogusławski 1984: 50). The situation of self-perception is either phrased in the perspective of the agent himself (*Choruję sobie* 'I'm sick', 'Ich kränkele so'n bißchen') or seen from the outside (*Dzieci biegały sobie po lesie* 'The children ran around the forest', 'Die Kinder tobten im Wald herum') (Tabakowska and Schultze 2002: 126-127). What is important about this situation of self-perception is the feeling of contentment that accompanies it (Tabakowska and Schultze 2002: 128-129). This feeling of self-satisfaction, occasionally also of relaxation, may be due to the fact that the individual or the group confined to such an experience do not permit any irritations from the outside.

It should be noticed that the reflexive pronoun *sobie* also occurs in the beginning of Witkacy's *Gyubal Wahazar*. The FIRST GENTLEMAN suggests: "Proponuję, żebyśmy po prostu poszli *sobie*" (Witkiewicz 1998: 210). Of course, this has to do with the poetics of grammar. The decision to "just walk

away", when "His Onlyness" is being awaited, may be interpreted as the wish to defy the dictator. The reflexive pronoun reveals that walking away without paying any attention to what is going on around is impossible. The American translators, so it seems, were aware of the function of *sobie* at the beginning of Witkacy's play. Their translation is: "I propose, we just leave" (Witkiewicz 1972: 104). Both German translators omit the *sobie* entirely. They may have been unaware of its function.

One of the most prominent cases of the reflexive pronoun is Mrożek's one-act play *Emigranci* 'Emigrants' (Mrożek 1974). In this instance, *sobie* belongs to an idiolect. It characterizes the worker XX, a 20th century version of the Polish *cham*. When relating his visit to the railway station to AA, XX uses utterances like these: "Myślę *sobie*", "zapaliłem *sobie*", "stoję *sobie*", "Tak *sobie* pomyślałem" (Tabakowska and Schultze 2002: 131-132). The poetics of grammar is not only justified by the fact that *sobie* is a part of XX's idiolect. It also points out XX's mental situation: He's indulging in the illusion he will make a fortune abroad and turn back home, a "wealthy man". The American translator, Henry Beissel, renders the reflexive pronoun in this way: "I just stood", "I just smoke very calmly", "So I decided". On the whole, he manages to render that XX is an intellectually limited person, but fails to render the attempts at self-deception (Tabakowska and Schultze 2002: 132-133). In Christa Vogel's German translation, XX uses colloquial German: "Zünd mir nur 'ne Zigarette an", "Ich nich. Ich sag mir: wozu" ('Only light myself a cigarette', 'Not me. I'm telling myself: what for'). The *wozu* ('what for') brings in the purpose of the action. In consequence, the German XX is less "body-oriented" than the Polish *cham*. And, of course, instead of trying to deceive himself, this XX is trying to persuade himself (Tabakowska and Schultze 2002: 134).

Similar challenges for translators occur in the beginning of Mrożek's one-act play *Strip-tease* (Mrożek 1961). One of the two characters, PAN I (MR. I) describes his state of self-contentment: "właśnie szedłem *sobie*, jak zwykle" (Mrożek 1963: 159). The reflexive pronoun *sobie* clearly functions as a starting point for the play's issue – i.e. matters of *conditio humana*. Similar to the situation in *Emigranci*, a character thinks he is master of the situation and has to learn there are no "safeties" at all. The American translator Lola Gruenthal seems to have been aware of the reflexive pronoun. Her translation is: "I was walking along as usual..." (Mrożek 1972: 5). The verbal expression *walking along*, may include self-contentment. However, the readers or the audience will not know that the character is not interested in what is going on around him. The same goes for Ludwig Zimmerer's translation into German: "Ich ging gerade wie gewöhnlich..." (Mrożek 1965: 27). The translator renders the everyday situation. He probably has no chance of informing target side readers or audiences about the character's narrow, even "self-confined" view of the world.

In rare instances, translators manage to use the reflexive pronoun for creative translation. One such case occurs in Heinrich Kunstmann's revised translation of Gombrowicz's *Iwona, księżniczka Burgunda* 'Iwona, Princess of Burgundy' (Gombrowicz 1937). We have to recall that Iwona is a female version of the *King-for-a-day*-theme (*Z chłopaka król*), in German: eine Bauernfürstin, Eintagsfürstin. According to tradition, the courtiers, having had enough pleasure watching the drunkard-king, carry the "boor" back to the place where they had found him. Gombrowicz's Iwona, however, does not want to leave her new surroundings. Having fallen in love with the prince (FILIP), she resists being escorted back home. The prince understands that Iwona is unassailable. And the reflexive pronoun *sobie* renders unassailability: "Możesz *sobie* stać, ile wlezie ... Stój *sobie*, jak chcesz!" (Gombrowicz 1994: 66). Heinrich Kunstmann's translation runs as follows: "Du kannst dir hier die Beine in den Leib stehen ... Steh hier herum, solange du willst!" (Gombrowicz 1982: 81). When the legs return into the body ("sich die Beine in den Leib [Bauch] stehen"), reflexiveness is taken literally. I think Kunstmann had a chance here and took that chance.

4. The adjectival attribute

The poetics of grammar based on the adjectival attribute mostly occurs in poetry and in theatrical plays. Zbigniew Herbert's poem "Kamyk" 'Little stone', 'Pebble' (Herbert 1961) may serve as an example. The first two lines are:

Kamyk jest stworzeniem
doskonałym
(Herbert 1987: 386).

In this instance, the adjectival attribute, i.e. an adjective of quality, *doskonały* ('accomplished', 'perfect'), is emphasized in two ways: by occurring in the place of the adjective of classification and by forming a single line.⁵ There is no way of rendering this aesthetic device in an English translation. The first lines of Czesław Miłosz's English version of "Kamyk" read:

Pebble
the pebble
is a perfect creature
(Herbert 2000: 39).

While the source text postpones and isolates the attribute ('[The] pebble is [a] creature/perfect'), the target text isolates the topic of the poem, the pebble. The

⁵ Of course, the nature of the pebble is also stressed by the copula *jest*, which clearly implies an ontological statement (Schultze and Matuschek 2005).

result of this translatory option is an unequivocal judgement on the state of the pebble. English readers will be unaware of the fact that the pebble is *not characterized* as being "perfect", but *classified* as a "perfect" creature.

The German translator, Karl Dedecius, manages to isolate the adjectival attribute, however, at the cost of semantic deviation:

Kiesel
Der kiesel ist als geschöpf
vollkommen
(Herbert 1987: 387).

This translation restricts the perfection of the pebble in terms of ontology (cf. note 5): As far as the state of a "creature" is concerned, the pebble is perfect. Problems connected with the adjectival attribute, then, keep being a challenge for translators. All Polish-English and Polish-German translators can do is try to come as close as possible to the meaning of the source text.

Różewicz even uses the adjectival attribute as comic device. A telling example, which may illustrate this case, occurs in *Kartoteka* ('The card index'). In this play, private life is fundamentally threatened: "a street" seems to be "passing through the HERO's room" (Różewicz 1969: 38). And, indeed, next to family members and acquaintances, who keep visiting the HERO, there are also strangers, who just pass through the room. Of course, the threat to private life and private property (Schultze and Matuschek 1991: 399), first of all, aims at the situation in communist Poland around 1960. But we may also note a general allusion to man's loss of privacy in the second half of the 20th century. One of the HERO's uninvited visitors is the FAT WOMAN (TŁUSTA KOBIETA), a former acquaintance. The verbal pattern based on the adjectival attribute is:

BOHATER ... Co pani tu robi? To jest *mieszkanie prywatne!* ...
TŁUSTA KOBIETA Cha! cha! cha! cha! (zaśmiewa się) *Mieszkanie prywatne!*
...
BOHATER ... To jest *prywatne mieszkanie.*
TŁUSTA KOBIETA (śmieje się) *Prywatne mieszkanie? Mieszkanie prywatne!*

(Różewicz 1999: 44-46).

In her second answer, the FAT WOMAN first uses the adjective of quality ('Private apartment?'), then the adjective of qualification ('Private apartment!'). This difference can be rendered in German. The blessings of a private home could be expressed in this way: *Eine private Wohnung!* The difference between living quarters of one's own choice and those made available by the employer could be underlined by the compound *Privatwohnung* – in contrast to *Dienstwohnung*.

Obviously, there is no way of letting English readers know about this joke based on the Polish adjectival attribute. Czerniawski's translation is:

HERO ... What are you doing here, madam? This is a *private apartment*. ...

FAT WOMAN: Ha ha ha ha ha ha! (laughs herself silly) *Private apartment!*

...

HERO ... This is a *private apartment*.

FAT WOMAN: (laughs) *Private apartment? A private apartment!*

(Różewicz 1969: 56-58).

Thus, the English translation questions the private character of the apartment and ridicules the HERO's insistence on privacy.

The translators of two German versions of *Kartoteka*, Ilka Boll and Henryk Bereska, so it seems, failed to notice the, admittedly slight, chance of rendering the joke based on the adjectival attribute in German. Ilka Boll's translation of the FAT WOMAN's last utterance is: "Eine *Privatwohnung?* Eine *Privatwohnung!*" (Różewicz 1983: 195). Henryk Bereska tries to stress the private character of the HERO's room by strengthening the punctuation: "Privatwohnung? Privatwohnung!!!" (Różewicz 1961: 23). English and German readers and audiences will probably understand that the HERO is trying to defend his private home. Summarizing, we may say that the poetics of grammar based on the dual realization of the adjectival attribute, especially with respect to the language pair Polish-English, is a case of untranslatability.

If I see it correctly, translators have more chances to resort to creative translation when they are confronted with the poetics of interjection. We shall have a look at one of the prominent cases of the poetics of interjection, Busch's "story of two rascals in seven tricks", *Max und Moritz* (Busch 1996: 5).

5. Interjections

In Busch's "Tale in pictures", the poetics of grammar consists of almost forty different interjections. Among them are conventional primary interjections (e.g. *ach*, *Autsch!* *Rums!*) and conventional secondary interjections (e.g. *herrje*, *herrjemine!*), but also pieces of poetic invention (e.g. *Schnupdiwup!* *Ritzeratze!*) (Tabakowska and Schultze 2002: 560-561). One has to bear in mind that *Max und Moritz* is not only a witty tale about two nasty rascals – and not only a book for children. Quite the contrary. It is mainly a book for grown-ups. It ridicules the German *petit bourgeois* (the *Spießbürger*), who loves his way of life filled with daily routine and "dear habits", i.e. a life which can yield a feeling of safety. Of course, the deep-rooted sceptic Busch was quite suspicious of any concept of life founded on the ideal of safety and standing-still. Poetics of grammar based on interjections will be investigated in one Polish and one English translation. To start with, both translators, Robert Stiller, whose Polish transla-

tion only appeared in 2004 and Walter W. Arndt, whose English translation goes back to 1982 (Busch 1996: 158), were well aware of the role of interjections in *Max und Moritz*. In our study, specific attention will be paid to the so-called "elegiac *Ach*" ("elegisches *Ach*") and onomatopoeic expressions that imitate sounds produced by inanimate objects (Tabakowska and Schultze 2002: 556). Quite characteristically, the poetics of grammar is already announced in the "Preface" to *Max und Moritz*. The first word is the elegiac *Ach*:

Ach, was muss man oft von bösen
Kindern hören oder lesen!

(Busch 1996: 6).

Since the elegiac *Ach* does not exist in the English language, the translator chooses another primary interjection. At any rate, he also opens the text with an interjection:

Ah, the wickedness one sees
Or is told of such as these...

(Busch 1996: 7).

The second elegiac *Ach* in the preface – "*Ach*, das war ein schlimmes Ding" – is rendered in this way: "*Woe*, I say, and double *woe!*" Here, the translator underlines the meaning of the elegiac *Ach* ("woe"), i.e. he resorts to so-called explanatory transfer.

Since the pattern composed of the German *Ach* throughout the text cannot be maintained in the English translation, Walter Arndt chooses different translatory strategies to save at least the basic meaning of the *Ach*. The first trick, to give an example, offers the following series of the *Ach*, out of which the last one does not connote elegiac lament, but spontaneous horror:

Flattern auf und in die Höh,
Ach herrje, herrjemine!
Ach, sie bleiben an dem langen
Dürren Ast des Baumes hangen.

...

Ahnungsvoll tritt sie heraus:
Ach, was war das für ein Graus!
(Busch 1996: 23-27).

The English translation reads:

Flutter up into the air,
What a desperate affair!
Gracious me, all tangled now

And suspended from the bow!
 ...
 She steps out in nameless fright
Oh, the horror of the sight!
 (Busch 1996: 23-27).

Walter Arndt even strengthens the impression of dismay and horror. One of the primary interjections is rendered as the secondary interjection “*Gracious me!*”; and the last two lines contain the primary interjection *Oh* as well as two words instead of the German noun “*Graus*” (‘terror’, ‘horror’) – “fright” and “horror”. The English translation, thus, is clearly directed at the effect of Busch’s “story of two rascals”.

Two examples may suffice to illustrate Arndt’s translatory skills in rendering sounds produced by inanimate objects. Both of them occur in the third trick. In this instance, Max and Moritz play a trick on “*Schneider Böck*”, in the English translation, “*Tailor Billy*”. The verses which interest here are:

Max und Moritz, gar nicht träge,
 Sägen heimlich mit der Säge,
Ritzeratze! Voller Tücke,
 In die Brücke eine Lücke.
 ...
 Und schon ist er auf der Brücke,
Kracks! Die Brücke bricht in Stücke.
 (Busch 1996: 55, 59).

The English translation runs as follows:

Max and Moritz, full of spite,
 Saw with mischievous delight
Reeker-rawker, heartless prank,
 At the plank from bank to bank.
 ...
 He is crossing at a dash;
 No! A crash, and then a splash!
 (Busch 1996: 55, 59).

By rendering Busch’s onomatopoeic interjection “*Ritzeratze!*” as “*Reeker-rawker*”, Arndt certainly had a chance of creative translation and took that chance. The interjection “*Kracks!*”, however, is lost – probably in favour of the triple rhyme: “*Brücke – Brücke – Stücke*”, “dash – crash – splash”. It should be noted that Arndt, at least indirectly, supports the poetics of grammar. While the three nouns in the source text cannot serve as secondary interjections, there are

English secondary interjections of the type “dash it!” and “crash!”. Further examples could show that Walter Arndt fully manages to transfer the texture of interjections to the English version of Busch’s “*Tale in pictures*”.

The Polish translation of *Max und Moritz* shows deviations from the German source text, which may have to do with Robert Stiller’s ‘struggling’ with the rhymes. Though the Polish language has the elegiac *Ach* at its disposal, there is no *Ach* in the Polish “*Preface*” (“*Przedmowa*”):

Ciągle słyszy się lub czyta,
 Jaka podłość w dzieciach skryta
 ...
 Niech nikogo nie zachwyca
 ...
 (Busch 2004: 9).

Instead of starting the “*tale*” from the interjection *Ach*, Stiller starts it from the adverb *oft* (here: *ciągle* ‘permanently’). The lines “*Ach, das war ein schlimmes Ding,/ Wie es Max und Moritz ging!*” are rendered as “*Niech nikogo nie zachwyca/ Przyszłość Maksa i Moryca*” (‘Max’s and Moritz’s future should not delight anybody’). While in the source text already the “*Preface*” announces the poetics of grammar, the Polish target text postpones this information to the first trick. The three lines of the first trick beginning with the interjection *Ach* read:

Boże! Toż to istny krzyż!
 Lecz nie puścić ani myśli!
 ...
Ach, i jak tu grozy nie czuć?
 (Busch 2004: 13-14).

Thus, only the third *Ach* is rendered by direct transfer (Tabakowska and Schultze 2002: 559); the first *Ach* is replaced by the secondary interjection *Boże!* (‘God!’, ‘Heavens!’); instead of the second *Ach* the translator uses the conjunction “*Lecz*” (‘But’). For all that he obviously tries to make up for these omissions by inserting the interjection *Ach* in lines where it does not occur in the source text. E.g., the line “*Fließet aus dem Aug, ihr Tränen!*” (‘Flow down from the eyes, my tears!’) is rendered as “*Ach, łzy mi się z oczu leją!*” (Busch 2004: 15). Regardless of such translatory device to make up for omissions of the *Ach*, this interjection is not quite as “present” in the Polish version of Busch’s *Max und Moritz* as it is in the source text. On the other hand, sounds produced by inanimate objects are rendered without exception. Again, the third trick may serve as an example. In the Polish text, the trick is played on the tailor *Kozieł*. The line “*Ritzeratze! Voller Tücke*” reads: “*Chrup-chrup! Wzięły się diableta*” (Busch 2004: 23), and the line “*Kracks! Die Brücke bricht in Stücke*” is

“*Chrrrup!* Rozpadła się na części” (Busch 2004: 25). Of course, the interjection *chrup* or *chrup-chrup* comes closer to the German onomatopoeic interjection “*Kracks!*” than to the sound of the saw, “*Ritseratze!*”

On the whole, we may acknowledge that Walter Arndt’s English and Robert Stiller’s Polish translation manage to equip the target texts with a wide range of different interjections. The verbal pattern of the English translation contains interjections as e.g. “*Pitter, patter*”, “*Bow-wow*”, “*Bah!*”, “*Plop!*”, “*Krroom!*”; the Polish version of *Max und Moritz* offers these sound effects: “*Mee ... mee ... mee!*”, “*Chlups!*”, “*bums!*” “*Bach!*”, “*Szust!*” and others. Thus, with respect to English and Polish, this variant of the poetics of grammar allows for successful translatory results.

6. The grammatical sense of the verbal aspects

Next to the reflexive pronoun *sobie* and *Aktionsart*, the grammatical sense of the verbal aspects also confronts translators with problems which are hard to tackle. One short example may illustrate this case. The poetics of grammar based on the grammatical sense of the verbal aspects is crucial in the beginning of Różewicz’s poem “*W środku życia*” ‘In the middle of life’ (Różewicz 1955):

Po końcu świata
po śmierci
znalazłem się w środku życia
stwarzałem siebie
budowałem życie

...

(Różewicz 1971: 366).

Since we do not have a professional translation at our disposal, a working translation will have to suffice: ‘After the end of the world/ after death/ [I] found myself in the middle of life/ created myself/ built life’.

What interests here is the sequence of verbs, out of which the first one, *znalazłem się*, is perfective, whereas the following ones are imperfective. Karl Dedecius’ German translation of the series of verbal expressions is:

fand ich mich in der mitte des lebens
ich *schuf* mich neu
ich *baute* leben

...

(Różewicz 1996: 815).

The first verbal expression, *fand*, is a poetic abbreviation of “befand ich mich”, “fand ich mich wieder”. The other verbal expression, *schuf* and *baute*, sound

equally plain and seem to be quite transparent. And yet they cannot inform target side readers of the grammatical sense of the Polish imperfective verbs: *stwarzałem siebie* means ‘I tried to create myself’; it also means that the outcome of this process is open and unknown. Similarly, the verbal expression *budowałem* indicates the attempt at building life anew and, again, the outcome of this process is totally open (Schultze and Matuschek, in press). In this instance, the poetics of grammar clearly concerns the core of Różewicz’s lifelong aesthetic quest – the search for meaningful human existence and a new system of values after the devastations of the Second World War and in the 1950s. This example shows that even single occurrences of the poetics of grammar may be quite relevant in literary translations.

Summarizing, we may state that the poetics of grammar deserve specific attention in translation analyses and also in translation theory. Any case of the poetics of grammar, be it the German interjections in Wilhelm Busch’s *Max und Moritz*, be it the copula *jest* in Witkiewicz’s *Gyubal Wahazar*, are a challenge for translators. Eventually, as is the case with Heinrich Kunstmann’s translation of *Iwona*, the poetics of grammar allows for creative translation, i.e. for translation, which will even surpass the source text in one or the other phrasing or texture.

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