

*As usual or entirely different? Playing with foreignness  
in the original and French translation of the novel Jak  
zawsze (As Usual) by Zygmunt Miłoszewski*

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Abstract

The present article constitutes an attempt to describe the specificity of the French translation of Zygmunt Miłoszewski's novel *Jak zawsze (As Usual)*, in which an important role is played by French, omnipresent in the text. The writer creates an alternative vision of Poland, where French almost becomes the second language, thus introducing French vocabulary in everyday life, its influence on Polish, and many neologisms proposed by the author. The translator Kamil Barbarski had to face a difficult task of preserving the indications of foreignness from the original without transgressing simultaneously, which seemed inevitable in the French translation. The article presents the translator's strategies and constitutes a reflection upon the amount of foreignness in the original and the translated texts.

*Keywords:* Zygmunt Miłoszewski; foreignness; literary translation; language; wordplay

1. Introduction

One could say that the translator is the target reader's guide through a foreign culture who explains to a greater or lesser extent, the unfamiliar and brings it

closer to him or her. However, what should be alien and exotic in the original, happens to be re-introduced via translation into the culture in which it originated. Sometimes, the translational challenge becomes even greater if the source culture's elements from the original text, especially the linguistic elements, in some measure, return through translation to their own culture, but are processed by the culture of the original. The present article proposes to reflect upon the topic of foreignness of the source culture towards the target culture in the Polish original and the French translation as well as upon the word-play with readers in both texts.<sup>1</sup> The point of departure will be Kamil Barbarski's French translation of the novel *Jak zawsze* (*As Usual*) by Zygmunt Miłoszewski, which could be seen as a pretext to discuss some of the difficulties involved in translating the language of the original.

## 2. Not only crime novels

Zygmunt Miłoszewski (born 1976) is a novelist known mostly for the crime series about prosecutor Teodor Szacki (*Entanglement*, 2007; *A Grain of Truth*, 2011; *Rage*, 2014). The writer began a professional career in 1995 as a journalist preparing reports from courtrooms for the *Super Express* journal; he then worked in several editorial offices and became the *Newsweek* columnist. His first writing attempt was in the 2004 issue of *Polityka* with the short story *Historia portfela* (*The Story of a Wallet*), which he had submitted to a competition organized by Jerzy Pilch, the weekly's columnist and a writer. After his first novel, the horror story *Domofon* (*The Intercom*, 2005), Miłoszewski created the character of the rather sharp-tongued but at the same time talented prosecutor Szacki, who first appeared on the pages of *Entanglement*, awarded, among others, with the High Caliber Award at the 5th Crime Story Festival. It is also worth mentioning that the novel was translated into English in 2010 by Antonia Lloyd-Jones, Olga Tokarczuk's translator,<sup>2</sup> for the US and UK markets. A year later, Miłoszewski was the guest at the Literature from Europe festival in New York, co-organized by the Polish Cultural

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<sup>1</sup> It should be emphasized that the article does not concern the translation of the novel into English.

<sup>2</sup> In the list of the translations of Miłoszewski's books, these are usually novels about Szacki that are translated the most often and most willingly (into Czech, English, French, German, Japanese, Spanish, Slovak and Ukrainian) or only selected volumes of the trilogy (Belorussian, Croatian, Hebrew, Greek, Italian, Turkish). *Priceless* has also been translated into several languages. In many instances, Miłoszewski is translated by the same translator: this is the case of the English translation (Antonia Lloyd-Jones) and the French one (Kamil Barbarski is the translator in this language). The books that have already been published in French are: *Les impliqués* [*Entanglement*], Bordeaux: Mirobole Editions, 2013; *Un fond de vérité* [*A Grain of Truth*], Bordeaux: Mirobole Editions, 2015; *La rage* [*Rage*], Paris: Fleuve noir, 2016; *Inavouable* [*Priceless*], Paris: Fleuve noir, 2017; *Te souviendras-tu de demain?* [*Jak zawsze*], Paris: Fleuve noir, 2019.

Institute. The second book in the Szacki trilogy, *A Grain of Truth*, was released in 2011. At the same time, Miłoszewski was nominated for the prestigious Polityka Passport award. Many reviewers stressed the social dimension of Miłoszewski's writing, not restricted to the creation of crime stories. As Mizuro claims:

With *Entanglement*, which was published four years ago (in 2007 – J.W.-R.), he had already proved that the Polish historical and social essence can be used as a base for a contemporary crime novel, which may by all means compete with the best European productions. [A] *Grain of Truth*, which was published in 2014, fully confirms that he not only has what is required of creators of popular literature, namely great writing skills, but also an enormous literary talent. (after Culture.pl, online)<sup>3</sup>

Ultimately, Miłoszewski was honored with the Polityka Passport award in 2014, when the last part of the trilogy, *Rage*, was published. After the publication, the author announced that he would abandon the crime genre, claiming that cruelty, murder, and violence are overrepresented in literature (and the world of today), and that he felt badly profiting from it (see Culture.pl, online). Along with *Priceless* (2013), the writer started experimenting with sensation fiction, in which he keenly uses adventure and spy themes. It is worth mentioning that the "intertextual jugglery of well-known motives" (Ostaszewski, after Culture.pl), became Miłoszewski's trademark. The ideas from *Priceless* return in the 2020 novel *Kwestia ceny* (*The Question of Price*), in which the author refers to history, draws from conspiracy theories, and expresses his sense of humor.

### 3. As usual in Miłoszewski's prose, and still entirely different

Humor is also a trademark of the 2017 novel *Jak zawsze*, in which the reader gets to know a story of a couple married for 50 years, Grażyna and Ludwik, who on their anniversary travel back in time to the 1960s. The back cover blurb reads that the novel is "an ironic rom-com about a couple who gets another chance to live their love." However, love and a sentimental story are not the essence of the book. This is also – as the blurb reads – "a comedy about a nation that can re-live their history," as it turns out that the protagonists arrive in Poland which became after the World War II the fully independent Republic of Poland, instead of the Polish People's Republic. Apart from the couple's story, Miłoszewski weaves into the narrative a fantasy exploring an alternative history. Importantly, the alternative vision of Polish history includes many real elements, which means that numerous allusions to historical events and figures of political, social and cultural life are mentioned.

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<sup>3</sup> Translation of the quotation by Marek Kępa. Translation of all other Polish quotations by Ewa Drab.

Critics often emphasize the fact that Miłoszewski's novels are not only well-written page-turners, representatives of popular literature, but that they remain deeply rooted in contemporary times and have a distinctive journalistic component. The writer discusses it himself:

I . . . have never denied the fact that my writing is temporary, journalistic, that I don't disconnect from politics or contemporary times. . . . I encourage [the critics who make an accusation out of it – Culture.pl] to look closely – by maintaining the right proportions – at Prus or Żeromski [writers from the canon of Polish literature–J.W.-R.], who wrote about what was then happening around them, in a journalistic way. They were accompanied by a conviction that if their voice was heard, it should not be underestimated . . . . This is to me the most beautiful tradition of Polish literature. (Culture.pl)

It must be stated that in *Jak zawsze*, Miłoszewski draws profusely from this tradition: not only does he use his comprehensive knowledge of history, but also refers to the political situation in Poland after 2010 (the story is set first in 2013 and further on – in 1963), makes sociological observations, and embellishes everything with a great sense of humor. Many allusions, jokes, wordplays will require from the reader to be generally well-versed and to have the knowledge of two different cultures – Polish and French (this topic will be developed later). The more the reader knows, the more they will understand and the greatest will be their pleasure of reading.

#### 4. Between foreignness and familiarity

The idea behind Miłoszewski's novel is based mostly on the curious use and combination of two different cultures: Polish and French. The story is set in Warsaw, initially in 2013, and then, 50 years earlier, in the 1960s. The author alludes to the city's topography as well as to historical events, authentic figures, culture, and popular culture. At the same time, since Miłoszewski strives to create an alternative version of history, the protagonists travel in time to the Poland of the 1960s, where communists are gone, and France is Poland's greatest ally. French is a language that is commonly known and used in the public sphere, whereas French culture is known to as much as Polish culture, permeating constantly the lives of the characters.

Undoubtedly, the construction of the novel challenges the reader of the original book, and requires from them the adequate prior knowledge. The title itself is the reader's first test. The eponymous "as usual" is used regularly in the novel and refers to the title of a French song *Comme d'habitude* ("as usual" in

French), known better thanks to its American cover, namely the famous *My way* performed by Frank Sinatra.<sup>4</sup> The reference to this song appears in the text:

W radiu zapowiedzieli przebój dnia i puścili francuską przeróbkę *My Way* Franka Sinatry. Kiedyś uwielbiał tę piosenkę. Teraz za każdym razem gdy ją słyszał, myślał o tym, że to podobno najczęściej grany na amerykańskich pogrzebach utwór i być może on sam powinien już wybrać jakiś kawałek na swoją przejażdżkę w trumnie. (O, 9)<sup>5</sup>

The French title is not cited in the text explicitly, so only the reader with this particular prior knowledge ("les implicates" in Lederer's terminology, 2003) will notice the connection between the title and the song. The phrase "as usual" will appear throughout the text, playing the role of an element bringing everything together. In this context, the question of the novel's French title seems most interesting. Even if the first and best choice for translation could be "comme d'habitude," the faithful translation of the Polish "jak zawsze" and the title of the above-mentioned song, the translator decided to change the title to "Te souviendras-tu de demain?," which means "Will you remember about tomorrow?," so the meaning of the original is abandoned. It is also difficult to determine if this is the translator's decision or perhaps the publishing house's, that is – according to Lefevere's terminology – one of the most important patrons with a significant influence on the final translation. As the French translation is the work of Miłoszewski's "permanent" translator, Kamil Barbarski, whom the author thanks in the afterword, one could suppose that it was not the case of the translator's self-proclaimed or unfounded decision.

## 5. French in the original

The specific language used by Miłoszewski undoubtedly indicates the foreignness of the original text. As it has been mentioned earlier, since the alternative Poland of 1963 from the novel is France's ally, almost one of the country's colonies, it is not surprising that French is omnipresent, visible in the public space

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<sup>4</sup> Interestingly, according to Miłoszewski's novel, the French version is the cover. The writer explains it in the afterword addressed to the French readers by saying that he does know that the first version of the song was French, but the book's protagonist does not (see T, 547).

<sup>5</sup> All examples are taken from the editions cited in the bibliography. In the brackets, O stands for the "Polish original," T stands for "French translation," and the number is the page number of the quotation. The footnotes contain a philological translation into English of the Polish original. "On the radio, they announced the hit of the day and played the French version of Frank Sinatra's *My Way*. He used to love this song. Now, every time he heard it, he would think that it was apparently the most played song at American funerals, and maybe he should have already picked a song for his own coffin ride."

and heard in every day conversations. The use of French in the novel can be grouped in several categories. The first one will be the presence of French in the Polish original without any translation:

1	- Dzień podsumowań to dzień podsumowań, quoi faire? - Tu pourrais m'excuser. - Chyba miałeś na myśli me pardonner. (O, 24) <sup>6</sup>	- La journée des bilans, c'est la journée des bilans, <i>quoi faire</i> * 1 ? - Tu pourrais m'excuser. - Je crois que tu voulais dire <i>me pardonner</i> . (T, 31) 1. Tous les mots, phrases, suivis d'un astérisque sont en français dans le texte. (N.d.T.) <sup>7</sup>
2	Nad kolumnadą widniał wryty w marmurze napis: FEMMES SANS FRONTIÈRES (O, 115) <sup>8</sup>	Au-dessus de la colonnade, on distinguait une inscription en français gravée dans le marbre : FEMMES SANS FRONTIÈRES (T, 135)
3	« Les femmes n'ont point de caste ni de race, leur beauté, leur grâce et leur charme servant de naissance et de famille. Leur finesse native, leur instinct d'élégance, leur souplesse d'esprit sont leur seule hiérarchie, et font des filles du peuple les égales des plus grande dames. » (O, 124)	« Les femmes n'ont point de caste ni de race, leur beauté, leur grâce et leur charme servant de naissance et de famille. Leur finesse native, leur instinct d'élégance, leur souplesse d'esprit sont leur seule hiérarchie, et font des filles du peuple les égales des plus grande dames. » (T, 145)
4	- Ça tombe très bien que vous soyez là, mademoiselle Gragine. Puis-je m'entretenir un instant avec vous dans mon bureau ? (O, 126)	- Ça tombe très bien que vous soyez là, mademoiselle Gragine. Puis-je m'entretenir un instant avec vous dans mon bureau ?* (T, 149)
5	Madame la directrice vous demande de la rendre visite. [. . .] Żozi, której udało się zrobić błąd nawet w prostym zdaniu (O, 195-196) <sup>9</sup>	Madame la directrice vous demande de la rendre visite. [. . .] Żozi, qui avait réussi à commettre une faute dans une phrase basique (T, 226)

Clearly, already in the original, the use of French constitutes an important sign of foreignness, which contributes to the creation of the vision of Poland as a Francophile country, but at the same time, the elaborate presence of another language in the text might inhibit the reading experience. There are parts where the context explains the meaning (as in the second example from the above table, similarly to an analogy with the widely-known name of the organization – Médecins sans frontières). Nevertheless, there are also parts where no explanation has been given (excerpts 1, 3, 4) or where the narrator refers to the earlier lines in French, which means that understanding will be fully possible only if the reader knows the language. This is what happens in the fifth example, where the protagonist, Grażyna, comments in Polish on what someone else said in French and points out their grammatical error.

The presence of foreignness changes dramatically in the French translation, because what was foreign in the original suddenly becomes quite familiar.

<sup>6</sup> “– The day of summary is a day of summary, *quoi faire*?  
– Tu pourrais m'excuser.  
– I guess you meant me pardonner.”

<sup>7</sup> “All words, sentences marked with an asterisk are originally cited in French (translator's note)”

<sup>8</sup> “Above the collonade was an inscription carved in marble: FEMMES SANS FRONTIÈRES”

<sup>9</sup> “Madame la directrice vous demande de la rendre visite. . . . Żozi, who managed to make a mistake even in a simple sentence”

If the translator had chosen to copy the French parts in the translation text, the effect of foreignness would be completely effaced. Kamil Barbarski decides to introduce a footnote (excerpt 1, translation). In general, footnotes are an unequivocal sign of foreignness in language and culture. Intriguingly, a footnote, the only one in the whole novel, plays a reverse role – the translator has to find a way to indicate what has been lost in translation, i.e., an element foreign to the original, which disappears in the French version. It seems then that despite the fact that – as observed by inconsolable Hrehorowicz – “[in] belles lettres, the translator’s footnotes should in fact not exist” (1997, p. 111), there would be no other possibility to underline the presence of French in the original text. The footnote is of informative, technical character, informing the reader about marking the French excerpts in the Polish original with an asterisk. Such a decision does not allow the reader to forget that they are reading a translated text even if in the case of Miłoszewski’s novel, it is quite clear that this awareness will accompany the reader constantly in view of the text’s character and its immersion in Polish culture.

## 6. The author’s Francophile invention, or heterotypes

Another significant group comprises the modified French words used in the Polish original. According to the terminology introduced by Henryk Lebieźniński, they could be classified as heterotypes.<sup>10</sup> As Bartwicka writes, these are “diverse forms of language creativity. [...] peculiar, unusual creations that generate specific stylistic results” (2012, p. 41). The researcher distinguishes neologisms, lexical and semantic, as well as funny sayings, which should enhance the expressiveness of the utterance. Here are some of the examples:

6	- Na dernier wracam. (O, 48) <sup>11</sup>	- Je retourne au <i>dernierski</i> . En entendant ce mot à consonnance française ou latine, mais qui aurait une terminaison polonisée, il ne sut pas vraiment comment réagir, alors il tenta de sourire. (T, 56)
7	wdusił RC, uznając, że winda musiała zostać zaimportowana z Francji (O, 49) <sup>12</sup>	[il] enfonça le bouton RC, considérant que la machine avait sans doute été importée de France, et ce n'est qu'alors qu'il soupira de soulagement. (T, 57)

It is worth noticing that the neologisms created by the author are usually more or less comprehensible for the reader of the original, because – as claims Bartwicka – “their creation is conditioned by the semantics and the formative

<sup>10</sup> In Henryk Lebieźniński’s view, “heterotypes are basically created, not copied, in the process of moving the reality one is realizing to speech and paper.” (Lebieźniński, 1981, p.50).

<sup>11</sup> “I go back to the dernier one.”

<sup>12</sup> “he pressed in the RC, assuming that the lift must have been imported from France”

system of a particular language” (2012, p. 42). If, however, in such a case the author actually uses the Polish formative system, the words – taking into consideration their French core and meaning – will not be comprehensible for the original’s reader, who does not know French. On the other hand, a person familiar with French should understand them without difficulties since they have a transparent structure. Miłoszewski chooses several strategies in the novel. Firstly, he places a French word, in an almost unchanged form, among Polish lexemes. This is exactly what happens in example 6, where he uses the word “dernier,” meaning “last,” by default – it means here the last floor – and in example 7, where he places the abbreviation RC, that is, “rez-de-chaussée”, or “ground floor,” with the verb “wdusić” (in English: “to press in”) and the information that the lift must have been made in France. The Polish reader will come into contact with a foreign lexeme, but will have to guess the meaning.

The text of French translation looks interesting: here, the translator, wanting to maintain the foreign character of what is familiar in the target language, makes use of various procedures. In the case of “dernier,” he creates a neologism “dernierski,” adding to the text an explanation in the form of a definitional extension (or explicitation), which becomes the part of the narrator’s discourse, which could be translated into English as follows “Hearing a French or Latin sounding word, but with a Polish ending, he didn’t exactly know how to react, so he only tried to smile.” This is an interesting measure, indicative of the inventiveness of the translator, who processes the writer’s idea and adds the aspect of foreignness where the original becomes necessarily familiar in translation. On the other hand, in the case of “RC” (ground floor), the translator only adds “le bouton” (button), not attempting to compensate for the original expression.

## 7. Polonized French

French words spelled phonetically, in Polish, or with slightly modified spelling and matched to the Polish syntax constitute another category.

8	żadnych smikardów ani szomerów (O, 49) <sup>13</sup>	aucun <i>smicard</i> ni <i>chômeur</i> (T, 59)
9	Sawa. (O, 99)	<i>Ça va*</i> . (T, 116)
10	i tam jest podobno ipersztetnie, wszystko inne, smaki, kolory, nawet pladżury mają tam szik (O, 164) <sup>14</sup>	Je connais quelques personnes qui y sont allées et il paraît que c’est très chouette. Tout est différent, les goûts, les couleurs, même les <i>platduzur</i> y sont <i>chik</i> (T, 191)
11	Dla mężczyzny to ewidentnie bez znaczenia, a jeśli mu powiemy, jego wieczór będzie zgaszony.	Pour l’homme c’est <i>evidemensko</i> sans intérêt et si on le lui dit, sa soirée peut être <i>gâchée</i> . Et si sa soirée est

<sup>13</sup> “no smikard or szomer”

<sup>14</sup> “and it is supposed to be ipersztetnie there, everything’s different, tastes, colors, even pladżury have szik there”



	A jak jego wieczór będzie zgaszony, to powstanie szansa, że nasz też się zgaszuje. (O, 136) <sup>15</sup>	<i>gâchée</i> , alors les chances seront fortes que notre soirée se <i>gâche</i> aussi. (T, 159-160)
12	Dacodac. (O, 132)	<i>Daccordsko</i> . (T, 163)
13	regulamin domicylu (O, 308) <sup>16</sup>	le règlement du <i>domu</i> . (T, 355)

Hence, there are “smikardów” and “szomerów” (in French: smicard, chômeur, example 8), i.e., people living on unemployment benefit and the unemployed, words adapted to Polish spelling, the expression “Sawa”, which is phonetically spelled “Ça va” in French (‘It’s fine’, example 9), and “szik,” or French “chic” (10). In translation, the lexemes “smicard” and “chômeur” are spelled correctly, with no modification, only in italics, which indicates a French word in the Polish original. Similarly, “sawa” is again spelled correctly, as “ça va,” but in italics. As the translator does not have one sole approach towards the author’s neologisms, the equivalent of “szik” is “chik” in French, with a partially changed spelling due to the use of letter “k,” present in French only in the words of foreign origin.

In the original version, there are also words that have been modified due to the requirements of Polish: “ipersztetnie” (French: hyperchouette – super-cool), “pladizury” (French: plat du jour – today’s special, example 10), “ewidamentnie” (French: évidemment – obviously) or the verb “zgaszować” (French: “gâcher” – to spoil, example 10). These neologisms will certainly not be clear to all readers, without any knowledge of French it might be rather impossible. In Kamil Barbarski’s translation, the above-mentioned lexemes are not treated uniformly, which cannot be really criticized: the translator resorts to compensation, and it is impossible to re-create particular wordplays and creations in an identical manner. Consequently, a lovely “ipersztetnie” simply becomes “chouette” – great, cool. The translator’s inventiveness is visible, however, in the translation of „pladizur” (today’s special). Barbarski creates the neologism “platduzur,” which is interesting, because it should be comprehensible for the French reader, but it also carries foreignness with the letter “ż.”

Nevertheless, the wordplay related to the neologism “zgaszować,” derived from the verb “gâcher” (to spoil), has not been rendered successfully in translation. The participle form of this artificial verb is “zgaszony,” present in Polish and meaning feeling blue, uneasy. So we have here an activity that will spoil both the evening and the mood. In the French version, the existing verb, the source verb of the Polish neologism, is used, yet in italics.

The translator’s creativity is clearly visible in the neologism “ewidamentnie.” The French equivalent is “evidemensko,” which will be surely associated with the French prototype, but will surprise at the same time with a non-French

<sup>15</sup> “For a man, it doesn’t ewidamentnie matter, and if we tell him, his evening will be zgaszony. And if his evening is zgaszony, there will be a risk that ours will zgaszuje, too.”

<sup>16</sup> “the domicyl’s regulations”

termination, close to the sound of a Slavic language for the translation's target reader. Barbarski uses the same method to translate the neologism "dacodac," a variant of "d'accord" (fine, OK). He returns to the French spelling of the core word, removes the apostrophe and adds the termination used in "evidemensko."

Quite surprising seems to be example 13, in which Miłoszewski introduced a word rooted in Latin – "domicyl" – present in Polish in the legal context. It is supposed to replace "dom" (residence) in order to imitate the French "domicile." Unexpectedly, the translator chooses to use another Polish word, "dom," in the genitive case with the contracted article "du." The French-sounding noun from the original has been thereby replaced in translation by a Polish word. Such a solution seems surprising, definitely interesting, if one looks at both texts (original and translation), but simultaneously, completely incomprehensible.

Usually, in the case of the presence of a neologism in the original and the translated version, one can speak of a greater or lesser possibility of preserving the semantic value while limiting the presence of the emotional and expressive value. Hejwowski observes that "readers of a translated text that is culturally rich, deeply rooted in the realities of another culture, will understand a little less than the readers of the original version who belong to this particular culture, but it will also depend [...] on the preparation of such readers" (2009, p. 73). As it was shown earlier, Miłoszewski's novel constitutes a curious instance of how this order has been disturbed: in the original text, the full value of the neologisms will only be available to a Polish reader with the knowledge of French.

This requires from the translator a great degree of creativity.<sup>17</sup> Another aspect linked to the presence of French-derived neologisms in the original should be mentioned. As Lipiński remarks, "the creative translation of heterotypes and nonce words demands a great deal of linguistic sense. They often come close to the limits of linguistic acceptability, it also happens that they violate the linguistic norm, but not understood as an error, rather as a creative attempt to extend the articulation capabilities of a particular language" (2000, p. 101). Interestingly, in *Jak zawsze*, this phenomenon also characterizes the original text, which draws from French. Paradoxically, the French translator's task is both easy and difficult: surely, he understands the meaning and the mechanism of how the unusual linguistic elements have been constructed, but translates to a language that will inevitably "flatten" the wordplays, hence the need for extreme vigilance and sensitivity.

Apparently, Kamil Barbarski successfully compensates for Miłoszewski's idea, impossible to render in French: if these are French expressions deciding

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<sup>17</sup> It should be reminded that Dąbbska-Prokop writes about creativity understood as „an operation consisting in determining correspondence (equivalence), not lexicized and unpredictable" (2000, p.119).

about the feeling of foreignness in the original, in the French translation, in which the signals of foreignness become familiar, the same foreignness is to be indicated by the associations with Polish, underlining at the same time the presence of French in the original novel.

## 8. Franco-Polish mix

The juxtaposition of Polish and French lexemes, in the correct form or spelled phonetically, is yet another category:

14	nie wystarczy kaczkę na kanarda przechrzcić (O, 163) <sup>18</sup>	il ne suffit pas de rebaptiser un bout de volaille <i>magret de canard</i> (T, 190)
15	„szatynki” wzięty się od francuskiego czasownika „châtier”, czyli „karać.” (O, 196-197) <sup>19</sup>	le terme de „châtaines” venait du verbe français « châtier », et que [...] (T, 228)
16	Bigos, nie wiedzieć czemu, nazywany z francuska szukrutem, groch, fasolka z boczkiem tytułowana na etykietce kasuletem (O, 55) <sup>20</sup>	du bigos appelé „choucrouette”, comme en français, allez savoir pourquoi-, des petits pois, des haricots au lard affublés du nom « Kassoulet » (T, 64)
17	Zauważyłaś, że „byczo” to doskonały przekład „vachement bien”, czyli „krowio dobrze”? Więc po co młodzież mówi „waszebiście”? (O, 344) <sup>21</sup>	Tu as remarqué que « torride », pour dire super, marche bien en polonais, alors pourquoi les jeunes disent « tauridement bien », de taureau traduit du français <i>vachement bien</i> ? (T, 394)

Example 14 is fully comprehensible even without any knowledge of French, where “kaczka” (duck) is accompanied by “kanard” (French: duck), spelled phonetically. Similarly in the next example, there is an explanation of the French verb “châtier,” or “karać” (to punish). The example with “szukrut,” is somewhat less evident. It refers to the name of a French cabbage-based dish, often replacing the name of Polish “bigos” as a form of an adaptation. Here, the elementary knowledge of French cuisine is necessary. A similar case is “kasulec,” spelled in French as “cassoulet,” a dish with beans and meat. One can, however, suppose that thanks to the context, the Polish reader will understand that these are the names of the French cuisine specialities. The cited instances will pose a challenge to the translator, who cannot translate (explain) what remains clear to the French reader. He removes then the obvious explanation accompanying the verb “châtier,” whereas in the case of “kaczka” and “kanard,” an opposition between poultry (volaille) and the exquisite dish from south-west France -acarefully prepared duck breast is applied. What the translator does could be qualified as an *intralingual conversion* (see Pisarska & Tomaszewicz, 1996, p. 129)

<sup>18</sup> “it’s not enough to convert a duck into a kanard”

<sup>19</sup> “‘szatynki’ have derived from the French verb ‘châtier’, which means ‘karać.’”

<sup>20</sup> “Bigos, no one knows why, called szukrut from French, pea, beans with bacon labeled as kasulec”

<sup>21</sup> “Have you noticed that ‘byczo’ is a perfect translation of ‘vachement bien’, so ‘krowio dobrze’? Why then the young say ‘waszebiście’?”

when the translator replaces the elements that might be specific to the source culture (Polish culture – a regular duck in the original version in opposition to French “kanard”) with the name of the French dish. Example 17 is, on the other hand, quite a conundrum: how should one render the wordplay in which the author juxtaposes the expressions “byczo” – a rather archaic, even if contemporary for the protagonists, way of showing approval, almost delight – and the French “vachement bien” of analogical meaning? Interestingly, both expressions have an animalistic core as the Polish one derives from “byk” (bull) and the French one – from “cow” (French: vache). The third expression, “waszebiście,” is a neologism created by Miłoszewski, a cluster of phonetically spelled “vache” and the termination typical of a colloquial expression of approval. The translator follows in the author’s footsteps by creating a French neologism with the word “taureau” (bull), which is an example of faithful translation and a successful strategy of retaining the original wordplay. An interference in the translated text is also necessary in the passages where French serves uniquely as a way to pronounce Polish words, as quoted below:

18	Ja wam bałdzo dziękuje – powiedział po polsku z bałdzo wyraźnym francuskim akcentem. – Wy jesteście zawsze bałdzo miła, phoszę pani. Ja idę wam przygotować nowość do spróbowania z Tuhcji. (O, 175) <sup>22</sup>	- C'est moi qui vous remercie, répondit-il en polonais, mais avec un fort accent français. Vous être toujours très gentille, chère madame. Moi je préparer la nouveauté à goûter de ça Turquie. (T, 203-204)
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It would be absurd to expect from the translator to re-create such a wordplay. Barbarski manages to find a perfect solution: instead of pointing to the influence of French on Polish on the phonetic level, he decides to show it with the help of grammatical errors. This is undoubtedly one of the many times the translator succeeds in re-creating the author’s wordplays while preserving the aesthetical and artistic value of the text.

Finally, a few words about the passages in which the author does not use French explicitly, but refers to it or uses it as a model:

19	- Stolik już czeka na państwa – powiedziała grzecznie, oczywiście z nerwów pomyliła rodzajnik, we Francji stoi jest dziewczynką. (O, 268) <sup>23</sup>	- <i>Le table vous attend</i> , dit-elle poliment. Bien sûr, nerveuse, elle avait confondu les articles ; en France, la table est une fille tandis qu'en Pologne, c'est un garçon. (T, 309)
20	Twoja auto, ona się popsuta? (O, 275) <sup>24</sup>	- Ta auto est en panne ? (T, 316)

<sup>22</sup> “I thank you so much – said in Polish with a distinct French accent. – You are always vchry nice, m’am. I go now prepahre for you a novelty to taste from Tuhrkey.”

<sup>23</sup> “–The table is ready for you – she said politely, of course, she chose the wrong article, out of nerves, in France, the table is a girl.”

<sup>24</sup> “Your auto, has she broken down?”

In example 19, there is only a reference to French grammar and the grammatical gender of the noun "stół" (table) with the explanation that the object is a girl ("dziewczynka"), meaning that it takes a feminine grammatical gender. It has to be said that the explanation is not transparent, in contrast to the French version: here, the reader will understand the use of an article (incorrect – le table), as well as the grammatical gender itself, and the difference between French and Polish, because the translator explains that in Polish, 'the table is a boy' ("jest chłopcem"), hence – it is masculine. Example 20 is the exact copy of the sentence in the French form. It could be formulated in the following way: "Ta voiture, est-elle en panne?" (Has your car broken down?). There is the car, so the feminine noun in French (paraphrasing Miłoszewski: in France, the car is a girl), and then, the repetition of the subject as a pronoun, which is characteristic of the French inversion in questions. Clearly, with no knowledge of French, the structure cannot be rationally reproduced. And it is not reproduced in the translation either as it would deprive the sentence of additional meaning. Despite the fact that the pronoun preceding a noun that starts with a vowel should be masculine in French, the translator decides to use the incorrect feminine possessive pronoun ("ta" instead of "ton").

## 9. Instead of conclusion. Language, culture, translation

The case of Miłoszewski's novel is special, because the reader of the original text will be able to fully comprehend it only if they know the French language and French culture, inseparably linked to the language. Without this knowledge, the reading experience will certainly be impoverished. As Mitura (2013) observes,

comprehension is not limited to the deciphering of senses closed in the space of an autonomous, complete unit, but is perceived as an unusually complex conglomerate of elements creating the situation of reading. Apart from the text as the creation of the author, they consist of widely understood dispositions of the reader, which should be construed as prior knowledge, readiness to cooperate with the creator of the text, and distance in time and in the space of cultural and social contexts of the author and the reader, which becomes exceptionally important in the case of translated texts. (2012, p. 123)

The French translation, as has been shown in the above-mentioned examples, stresses different elements of the text, which is quite natural if one takes into consideration the role and use of French in the original novel. The analysis of Kamil Barbarski's translation has shown that the translator does not choose one global strategy but uses a given technique relative to a particular translation problem. In spite of the fact that the translator is fairly consistent in his selection of strategies, he may sometimes surprise the reader.

In the context of translation, there is usually a reflection concerning the characteristics of a good translation, which is connected with the extent of the Target Language reader's comprehension. As Mitura (2012) remarks, one should not succumb to such an illusion:

The reader's perfect reception should be the crowning achievement for the translator, who balances between being faithful to the original and protecting the translation's reader from growing tired of the excess of required interpretation. However, such an approach would also prove that the expectations towards the reception of the translation are greater than towards the reception of the original. (2012, p. 130)

Intriguingly, it would be hard to expect the same from the reader of the original text in the case of Miłoszewski's novel and its French translation. It could be stated that both the Source Language reader and the reader of translation will be confronted with the elements of foreignness, which will require from them effort and engagement, though to a different degree. Popovič believed that the reader is the third partner in the game of translation (1971, p. 205), the reader of the original version is such a partner in this case. It is evident that the reader – of both translated and original versions – cannot understand everything, as this would be basically impossible, but they should be prepared to encounter another version. The world created by Miłoszewski is not completely domesticated either by the reader of the original novel or the reader of the translation, unless they have competences similar to those of the translator. In other words, when they are perfectly familiar with both source and target languages and cultures. Then the pleasure of the reading experience will be the fullest.

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