



**You have downloaded a document from
RE-BUŚ
repository of the University of Silesia in Katowice**

Title: Gendered Existence? Existential-There Construction in English-Polish Translation

Author: Andrzej Łyda

Citation style: Łyda Andrzej. (2021). Gendered Existence? Existential-There Construction in English-Polish Translation. „East European Journal of Psycholinguistics” (2021, nr 2, s. 124-137), DOI:10.29038/eejpl.2021.8.2.lyd



Uznanie autorstwa - Licencja ta pozwala na kopiowanie, zmienianie, rozprowadzanie, przedstawianie i wykonywanie utworu jedynie pod warunkiem oznaczenia autorstwa.



UNIWERSYTET ŚLĄSKI
W KATOWICACH



Biblioteka
Uniwersytetu Śląskiego



Ministerstwo Nauki
i Szkolnictwa Wyższego

GENDERED EXISTENCE? EXISTENTIAL-*THERE* CONSTRUCTION IN ENGLISH-POLISH TRANSLATION

Andrzej Łyda

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4412-2336>

Scopus Author ID: 56266655700

andrzej.lyda@us.edu.pl

University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland

Received June 1, 2021; Revised November 5, 2021; Accepted December 9, 2021

Abstract. This paper analyses a possible effect of the variable of gender on semantic enrichment of existential sentences translated from English to Polish. Existential-*there* clauses in English typically take the form *there* + be + indefinite NP (+place/time adverbial). Since *there*-constructions lack a structurally congruent counterpart in Polish, they can be rendered in Polish with several syntactic constructions ranging from the verb ‘być’ (E. to be) through ‘mieć’ (E. to have) to verbs semantically richer than ‘być’ (e.g., verbs of perception, verbs of location, etc). We ask the question of whether the gender factor is correlated with the factor of text type/genre. To this purpose, we compiled a corpus of English texts representing belles-lettres and popular science writing, male-authored, female-authored and multi-authored and translated by male and female translators. Our preliminary results show that the choice of Polish translations of English existential-*there* follows from the interplay of genre, narrative/descriptive modes of text, and the gender of the translator, with female translators tending to replace the simple copula ‘be’ with a full lexical verb more often than male translators in dialogic parts of belle-lettres.

Keywords: gender, existential *there*-clause, translation, English, Polish.

Ліда Анджей. Гендерна екзистенція? Екзистенційна конструкція з компонентом *there* в англійсько-польському перекладі.

Анотація. У цій роботі аналізується можливий вплив гендеру на семантичне збагачення речень з екзистенційною конструкцією, перекладених з англійської на польську. Речення з екзистенційним *-there* в англійській мові зазвичай мають форму *there* + be + indefinite NP (+place/time adverbial). Оскільки в польських конструкціях відсутній структурно конгруентний відповідник, вони можуть бути передані польською мовою за допомогою кількох синтаксичних конструкцій, наприклад, дієсловом “być” (англ. to be), “mieć” (англ. to have), а також дієсловами, семантично багатшими за ‘być’ (дієсловами на позначення сприйняття, місця тощо). Піднімається питання, чи співвідноситься гендерний чинник із чинником типу/жанру тексту. З цією метою було складено паралельний корпус англійської художньої та науково-популярної літератури авторів жіночої та чоловічої статей та їхніх перекладів у виконанні різностатевих тлумачів. Наші попередні результати свідчать, що на вибір перекладу польською екзистенційної конструкції із *there* впливають взаємодія жанру, оповідного/описового способів тексту та статі перекладача, причому перекладачки-жінки прагнули замінити просту зв’язку «бути» на повне лексичне дієслово частіше, ніж перекладачі-чоловіки в сегментах діалогічного дискурсу художньої літератури.

Ключові слова: гендер, екзистенційна структура *-there*, переклад, англійська мова, польська мова.

Introduction

As observed by Magnifico (2020), gender-related differences in interpreting are not well researched. In spite of the fact that in the recent decades, a significant amount of research has been conducted in exploring the area of gender and translation, a similar claim can still be made about gender-related differences in translation in different language pairs and in respect of particular linguistic and stylistic features, reported to be related to the sex of the translator.

This paper focuses on possible gender-related trends in the translation of English existential-*there* construction, which, to the best of our knowledge, has received almost no attention in the literature. An incentive for the present study comes from the present author's observation concerning 154 students' in-class translation of an existential-*there* sentence in Dorris Lessing's short story *Among the Roses* in the years 2002-2004 and 2010-2010. The sentence 'There was no greater pleasure than wandering among roses and deciding...' was translated into Polish by 108 female translators (FT) and 46 male translators (MT) in several ways, of which the following were most common:

1. FT 32; MT 28

Nie było większej przyjemności niż spacerowanie między różami i decydowanie...

There was no greater pleasure than wandering among roses and deciding...

2. FT 24; MT 16

Nie istniała większa przyjemność niż spacerowanie między różami i decydowanie...

There did not exist a greater pleasure than walking between the roses and deciding...

3. FT 22; MT 2

Nic nie sprawiało jej większej przyjemności niż przechadzanie się pośród róż i decydowanie...

Nothing gave her more pleasure than walking between the roses and deciding...

4. FT 13; MT 0

Nic nie sprawiało jej większej radości niż przechadzanie się pośród róż i decydowanie...

Nothing gave her more joy than walking between the roses and deciding...

5. FT 6; MT 0

Odczuwała największą przyjemność przechadzając się wśród róż i decydując...

She felt the greatest pleasure walking between the roses and deciding...

6. FT 6; MT 0

Znajdowała największą przyjemność w przechadzaniu się pośród róż i decydowaniu...

She found the greatest pleasure in walking between the roses and deciding...

7. FT 6; MT 0

Nie znajdowała większej przyjemności niż spacerowanie pośród róż i decydowanie...

She found no greater pleasure than walking between the roses and deciding...

The differences between FTs and MTs in the translation of the sentence are immediately striking. First, while MTs produced only three Polish versions of the source text (ST), FTs produced as many as seven. Secondly, although most common in both gender groups were translations using Polish 'być', i.e., instances of literal translation, they were observed in as much as 61% of MTs and only 22% of FTs.

Even when the cases of translation by means of Polish ‘istnieć’ (Eng. exist) were accounted for as ‘existential’, the figures still show that the literal ‘existential’ translation was almost an exclusive solution among MTs (95%), while for FTs the figure amounted to only 52% of all translations. The remaining translations of FTs resorted to notional verbs that replaced the English copula.

Given such discrepancies in rendering English existential-*there* sentences, which belong to a larger class of presentational constructions, this study has been launched to examine whether our preliminary observations find support in a larger and more varied corpus of translations.

Presentational Scale and existential sentences

Presentational scale

The notion of presentational (also known as presentative) scale was introduced by Firbas (1992) to reflect the distribution of communicative dynamism in a sentence. The presentational scale includes three basic functions: the setting (S), the presentation of a phenomenon by means of a verb (Pr), and the phenomenon (Ph) itself as in the following set of model sentences (Adam, 2013, p. 59)

- (1) *All of a sudden, there was (Pr) **a picturesque castle** (Ph) on the hill (S).*
- (2) *All of a sudden, on the hill there was **a picturesque castle**.*
- (3) *All of a sudden, there appeared **a picturesque castle** on the hill.*
- (4) *All of a sudden, **a picturesque castle** appeared on the hill.*
- (5) *All of a sudden, **a picturesque castle** could be seen on the hill.*

All sentences employ the same recurring semantic pattern, yet in different syntactic configurations and with different presentational verbs (‘be’, ‘appear’, ‘be seen’). Example (1) represents the most prototypical way of presenting a phenomenon in English: the existential-*there* construction. Actually, as Tárnyiková (2009, p. 96-97) argues, the existential-*there* performs two functions: first, its is existential as it “denotes mere ‘hearer-new’ existence of an entity” and secondly it is presentational “bringing something ‘discourse-new’ into sight.” In the remaining sentences the existential verb ‘to be’ is replaced with other (semantically richer) presentational verbs. Among these richer verbs one can find ‘arrive’, ‘be in sight’, ‘become plain’, ‘come forward’, ‘come into view’, ‘come up’, ‘emerge’, ‘exist’, ‘evolve’, ‘develop’, ‘grow out of’, ‘happen’, ‘issue’, ‘recur’, ‘rise’, ‘spring up’, ‘show up’, ‘take place’ (Firbas, 1992) and ‘appear’, ‘come out’, ‘come over’, ‘fall’, ‘happen’ (Adam, 2013). Each of them can substitute for the existential ‘to be’, yet, as has been demonstrated, they usually represent approximately 5% of all presentational verbs in a text, whereas the existential ‘to be’ is ranked by far as the most frequent subtype (see, e.g., Dušková, 2005a; 2005b; Adam, 2011).

Existential sentences in English

Existential sentences, known also as ‘existential there’ (Jespersen, 1969) and ‘existential construction with there’ (Langacker, 2008) express the existence or

nonexistence, or the occurrence or nonoccurrence of a particular phenomenon. In English, existential sentences commonly involve the dummy subject construction with *there*. They are presentative structures that function to create end-focus: a subject that includes new information is set in a position after the verb and the common subject slot is completed by ‘there’. This arrangement complies with the general information principle, the principle of end focus, appearing in Indo-European languages. According to this principle, the most natural way of presenting ideas is ordering elements in line with a gradual rise in communicative importance (Firbas, 1992, p. 7).

The process in the existential sentences is usually expressed by the verb ‘be’ (Petronienė, 2007). Apart from this verb, the verbs occurring in English *there*-sentences “must be intransitive [...], and of fairly general presentative meaning: verbs of motion (arrive, enter, pass, come, etc.), of inception (emerge, spring up, etc.), and of stance (live, remain, stand, lie, etc.)” (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 1408).

It is generally accepted in the literature (see, e.g., Brevik, 1981, 1983; Lumsden 1998, and Petronienė 2007) that the function of existential-*there* consists in introducing new entities into discourse. Brevik (1981, p. 15) argues that existential-*there* conveys ‘signal information’ and “functions as a signal to the addressee that he must be prepared to direct his attention toward an item of new information.” A similar view is held by Lambrecht (1994, p. 179), for whom the pragmatic purpose of existential-*there* constructions is not normally to confirm the existence of some entity but “to introduce the NP referent into the discourse world of the interlocutors by asserting its presence in a given location.” Within Fauconnier’s (1985) theory of mental spaces ‘the given location’ would be a space where conceptual entities are located. A similar interpretation is also offered by Lakoff (1987), for whom “narratives create mental spaces of their own, and when an existential construction is used within a narrative, it is the mental space of the narrative that is designated by *there*” (1987, p. 570). In the context of the present research on ‘semantic enrichment’ of existential claims, it is worth repeating here what Lakoff (1987, p. 570) noted: “A good narrative is one that allows the hearer to vividly picture the events of the narrative as they are told. English has an existential construction that is specialized to narratives. It allows speakers to introduce a new narrative element, while simultaneously sketching a scene.”

Existential sentences in Polish

In Polish, there is no formal construction parallel to the existential-*there*, as there is no empty subject in Polish in any counterpart of any type of English *there*-constructions (Grzegorek, 1984). The most common verbs used in existential sentences are the copula ‘być’ (Eng. to be) and ‘istnieć’ (Eng. to exist).

As existential sentences express the idea of existence and of nonexistence, it should be noted that Polish distinguishes between the expression of existence and of nonexistence not only with regard to negation but also by changing the copula ‘być’ (to be) to the copula *mieć* (to have) in the present tense.’

Na biurku jest laptop.
[On the desk **is** a laptop.]

Na biurku nie ma laptopa.
[On the desk **not has** a laptop.]

English existential-there in Polish translation

Polish offers several ways in which English existential-there can be translated into Polish. The first group of these methods consists in using the copulas 'być' and 'mieć' or ellipted 'być' as in 1-3 below:

1. English 'to be' and Polish 'być' (Eng. 'to be')
There are other education loans. / **Są** jeszcze pożyczki edukacyjne. [**Are** other education loans]
2. English 'to be' and Polish ellipted verb
There is no news. / **Żadnych** wiadomości. [No news]
3. English 'to be' and Polish 'nie ma' (lit. Eng. 'not has')
There is no bread in the shop. / **Nie ma** chleba w sklepie. [**Not has** bread in the shop]
The second group includes notional verbs and consists of two types:
 4. English 'to be' and Polish notional presentational verb other than 'być' (Eng. to be)
And then there was a scandal. / **Wtedy nastąpił** skandal. [Then **occurred** a scandal]
 5. English 'to be' and Polish notional non-presentational verb
There is no door that opens automatically. / **Nie zainstalowali** jeszcze automatycznych drzwi. [Have not installed automatic doors yet]
Finally, the English existential-*there* can be expressed by a Polish nonverbal element, which is not to be analysed in the present study.
6. English 'to be' and Polish non-verbal element
There is a report that it was a bribe. / **Według** pewnego raportu to była łapówka.
[According to a report, it was a bribe]

Of prime importance for the present study is the second group (4-5) that includes notional non- presentational verbs and notional presentational verbs other than 'być', which may replace the lexically empty 'być'. The choice of a preferred verb is determined by the semantic features of the subject. Grzegorek (1984, p. 160) classifies the verbs in the following way:

1. Verbs of location, with two subtypes: a. synonyms of 'być': *znajdować się* ('be located'), *odbyć się* ('take place') and b. verbs which depict the characteristic manner of spatial existence of the referent: *słup – stoi* ('pillar – stands'); *obraz – wisi* ('picture – hangs'), etc.
2. Verbs which describe the typical state or action of the referent of the subject NP: *gwiazdy – świecą* ('stars – shine'), *orkiestra – gra* ('band – plays'), etc.
3. Verbs expressing perception in impersonal forms: *plamy – widać* ('patches – one can see'), *mróz – czuć* ('frost – one can feel'), etc.
4. Verbs that are idiomatically linked to the subject noun, namely, in collocation with a particular noun the verb acts as a synonym of 'być': *cisza – zapaść* ('silence – fall'), etc.

The choice of a lexical verb is predictable in the light of the meaning of the subject noun phrase and the fact that the sentence is existential. However, the very decision of the translator to resort to this mode of translation rather than to 'być' is

not. As we expect, a partial answer to the question can be found in analysing the factor of gender.

Gender and translation

Early studies on differences between male and female language production focused on its social and sociopsychological aspects, often in terms of stereotypization and power differential of gender roles. Since the launch of Lakoff's 'Deficit Theory' in 1975, the research has proceeded along different tracks by focusing not only on the language-and-power link but also on findings in other fields. Abundant scientific evidence brought forward from the field of neurology, psychology, or psycholinguistics (e.g., Harris, 1978; Benbow, 1988; McGuinees, 1985) points to several differences of qualitative type. Reporting on such frequent findings, Moir and Jessel (1989) claim that the fact that males are better than females in respect of the recognition of spatial relations, visualization of 3-D forms, and perception of analogies, but worse in the adaptation for receiving sensory impulses, is attributable to differences in the brain anatomy and function rather than different modes of socialization.

Irrespective of the source of the differences, as Gal (1991, p. 181-182) claims, differences in speech associated with men and women "have been found in every society studied; but the nature of the contrasts is staggeringly diverse, occurring in varying parts of the linguistic system: phonology, pragmatics, syntax, morphology, and lexicon." Shlesinger *et al.* (2009) provide a long list of studies of such early studies that seem to confirm Gal's claim (see e.g. Muchnik, 1997; Mulac *et al.*, 1990; Mulac & Lundell, 1994; Herring, 1996 or Argamon *et al.*, 2007; Łyda, 2003). Such studies on the variable of sex/gender in communication have now accumulated to the point where a complex of convergent results is apparent: females excel at verbal production and comprehension, make fewer grammatical errors, construct longer sentences, articulate more clearly, and achieve an impressive level of fluency (Thorne & Henlay, 1987). In the context of these findings, Leonardi (2007) hypothesizes that if men and women speak differently, they are also likely to translate differently. We take Leonardi's hypothesis as the starting point for the study of gender-related choices in rendering an English presentational structure known as existential-*there* in Polish.

Method

Research questions

The current study planned to investigate the problem of the gender factor in translation of existential-*there* focuses on the following research questions:

• How often are English existential–*there* constructions rendered by means of Polish existential 'być' / 'mieć' in two functional types of texts, i.e., aesthetic and informative?

• How often are English existential–*there* constructions rendered by means of Polish 'semantically richer' notional verbs in two functional types of texts, i.e., aesthetic and informative?

• Is there a relationship between translator gender and the use of 'semantically richer' notional verbs in Polish translations?

• Is there a relation between the mode of discourse, i.e., dialogic/narrative and a gender-related decision of the translator to use 'semantically richer' notional verbs?

Materials

This study draws on a corpus of English-to Polish translations and consists of seven English publications. Six of them can be classified as representing two genres: fiction and popular science. Fiction is represented by four novels authored by women writers, whereas two publications by two male authors represent popular science fiction. To control the variable of gender we have also included the seventh source, that is, one multi-authored and mix-genre publication of factual nature, i.e., a travel guide. The final parameter accounted for in this study is the gender of the translator. Table 1 displays the author–translator–genre interrelations.

Table 1

The Composition of the Corpus (M=male, F=female; MF= mix-genders)

<i>Genre/ Function</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Author gender</i>	<i>English title</i>	<i>Polish</i>	<i>Translator gender</i>
Fiction (aesthetic)	Tess Gerritsen	F	<i>The Surgeon</i>	<i>Chirurg</i>	M
		F	<i>The Silent Girl</i>	<i>Milcząca dziewczyna</i>	F
	Doris Lessing	F	<i>The Memoirs of a Survivor</i>	<i>Pamiętnik przetrwania</i>	M
		F	<i>The Fifth Child</i>	<i>Piąte dziecko</i>	F
Popular science (informative)	Jeremy Paxman	M	<i>The English. A Portrait of a People</i>	<i>Anglicy. Opis przypadku</i>	M
	Steven Pinker	M	<i>How the Mind Works</i>	<i>Jak działa umysł</i>	F
(highly informative)		MF	<i>DK Australia. Travel Guide</i>	<i>Australia. Przewodnik. DK</i>	MF

Methodology

For the purpose of this study a concordance list of existential-*there* in the English corpus was produced for each of the analysed texts with *Antconc3.2.4w* (Anthony, 2011). Due to the multitude of functions performed by *there*, manual identification of existential-*there* that met the definition proposed above had to be performed.

The first 100 existential-*there* sentences in each text were selected. This step was followed by manual identification of the corresponding Polish translations of the English sentences. Polish translations of existential-*there* sentences were classified into three types corresponding to the types discussed in Section 2.2:

(i) existential '*być*' and *mieć*

... but there was no end to the unaffectionate adjectives they earned.
... ale nie było też końca pejoratywnym przymiotnikom, jakie Harriet i Dawid sobie zaskarbiali.

(ii) notional verbs

There was a smell of cold rainy earth and sex.
Pachniało zimną, przesiąkniętą deszczem ziemią i seksem.

(iii) other.

For each Polish translation, a count of the three types was performed in terms of the gender of the translator, the genre, and the dialogic/narrative mode of discourse.

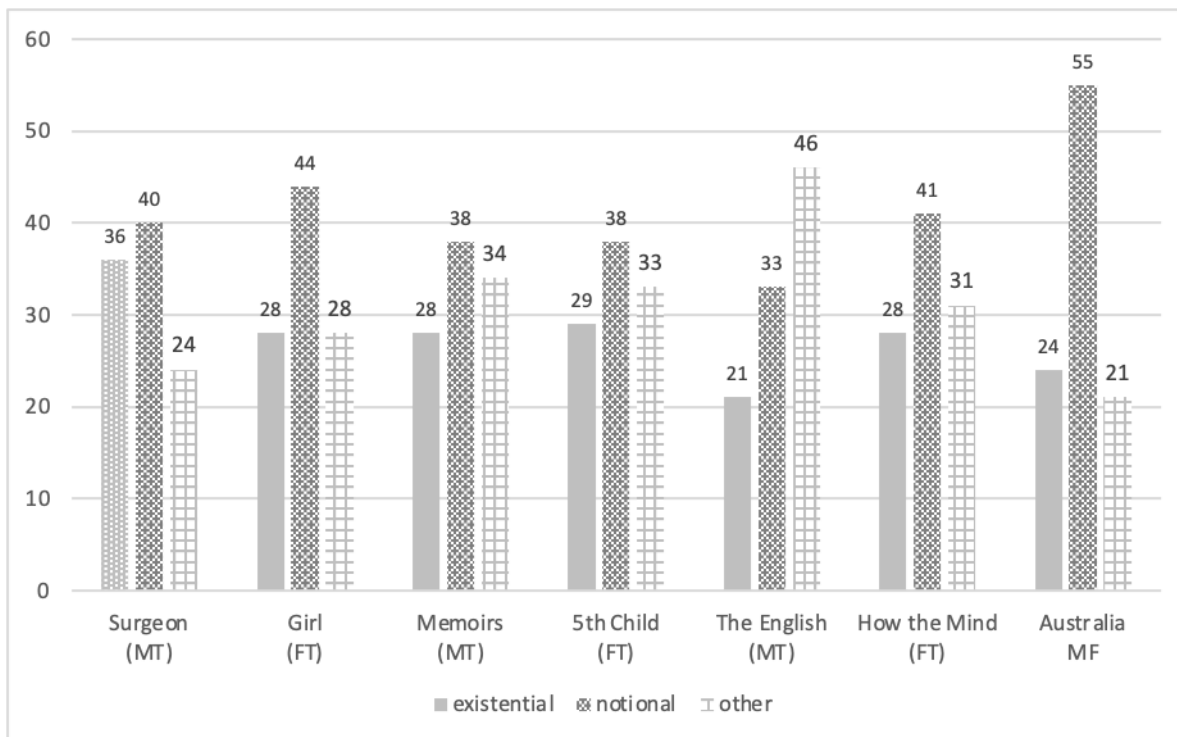
In the second step the analysis was narrowed down to the four novels in the corpus and concentrated on existential-*there* in the narration and dialogues. For each of the fiction books a search was performed to identify the first 50 existential-*there* constructions in the narrative and the first 50 ones in dialogues. As before, their Polish renditions were analyzed in terms of the three translation classes and the factor of the translator's gender.

Results

This section presents the results of the analysis of the distribution of the three translational types. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the types in terms of the total number of occurrences of each translation type in each of the texts in the corpus.

Figure 1

The Distribution of Polish Renditions of English Existential-There in the Corpus



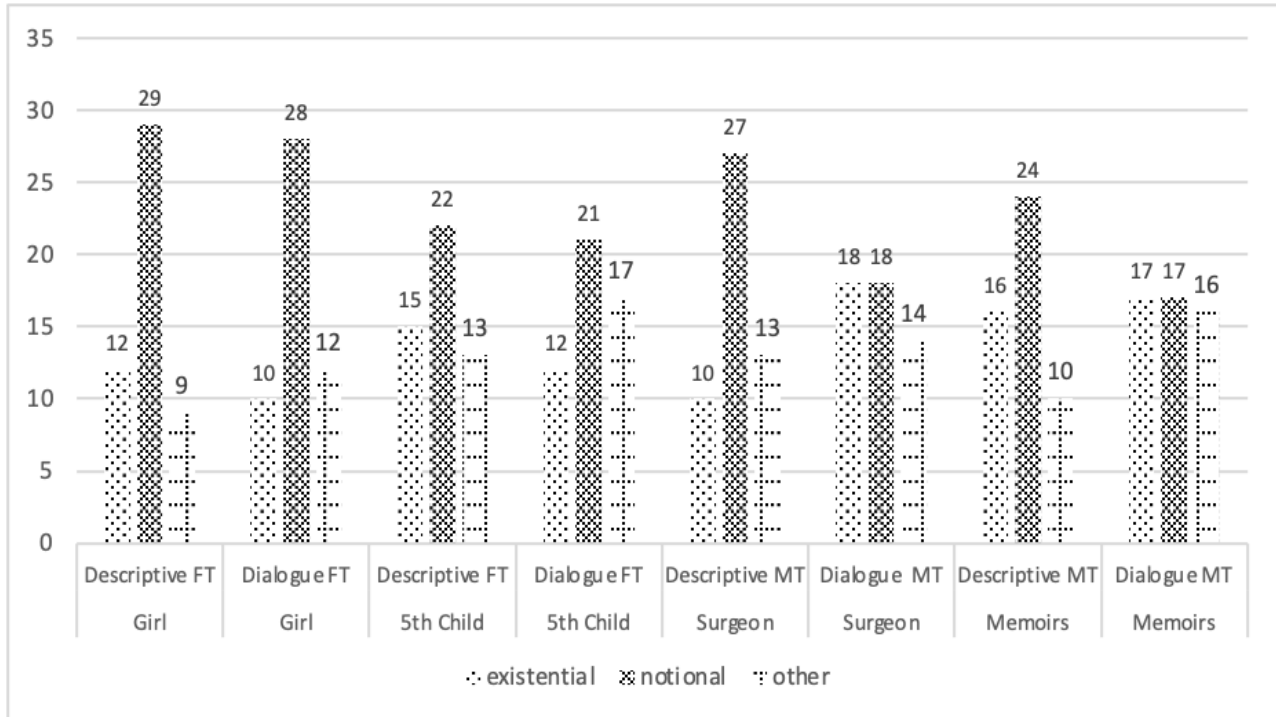
The frequency count with normalised frequencies does not reveal any significant differences in the distribution of the three translational methods. In seven of eight texts, the highest frequency (mean=39) is observed for translations with Polish notional verbs. It is the most common strategy in fiction translation, yet the highest figures have been recorded in the travel guide authored by a mixed-gender group of translators. This should not be surprising if we consider a very high number of verbs that depict the characteristic manner of spatial existence of the referent such as ‘leżeć’ (Eng. lie), ‘rozciągać się’ (Eng. stretch), ‘stać’ (Eng. stand), ‘znajdować się’ (Eng. be situated), etc.

If the travel guide translations are excluded from the analysis, the second most common is the use of ‘other’ strategies (mean=31) and finally, existential ‘być’ and ‘mieć’ (mean=30). These strategies rank similarly with respect to the gender of translators, with no radical differences (variation ± 4) between the two groups of translators in fiction and popular science texts. In the case of the notional verb class, the mean value in MTs is 37 and in FTs – 41. The figures for the existential verb class are identical for MTs and FTs (28.3).

In the second step, the analysis was narrowed down to the four novels in the corpus and concentrated on the occurrence of existential-*there* in narration and dialogues. The frequencies were normalised as the 50 occurrences threshold was not attained in two cases. Figure 2 shows the distribution of the three translation types.

Figure 2

The Distribution of Polish Renditions of English Existential-There in Narratives and Dialogues



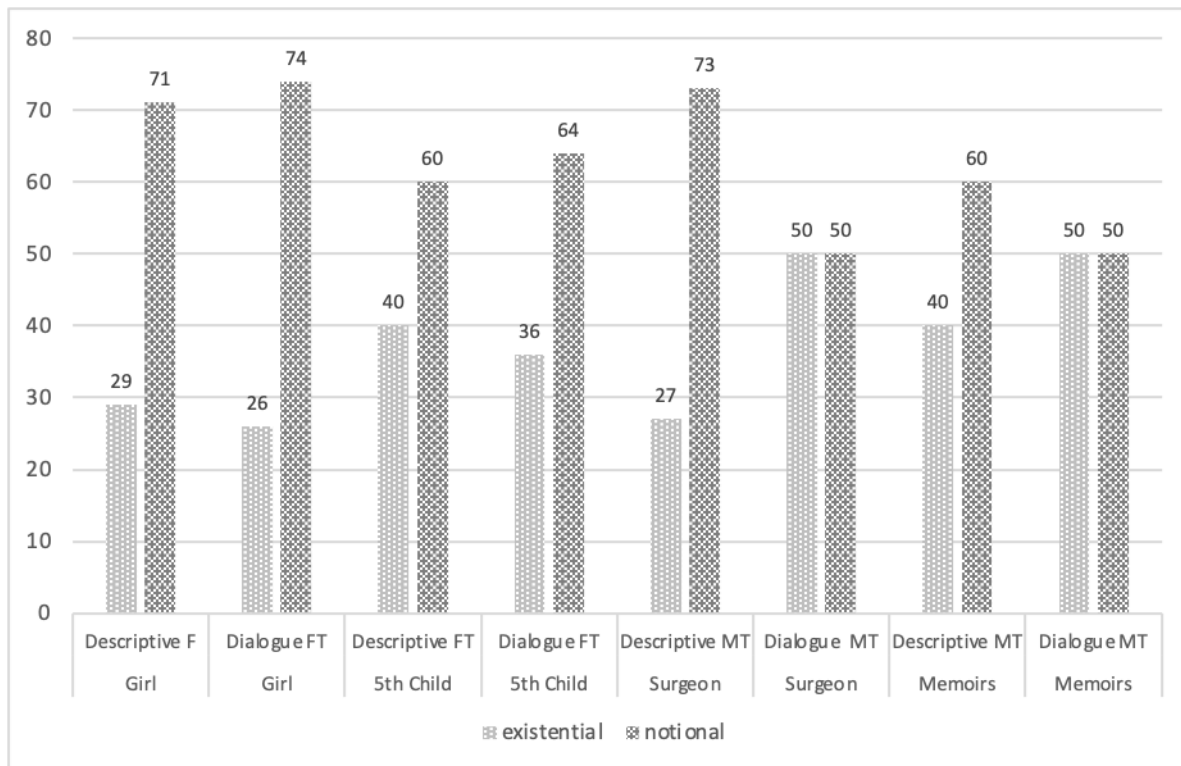
With respect to the distribution of the three translational classes, it is immediately evident that FTs favour notional verb solutions. For all the novels, the notional verb translations were most common (mean value=25) with the existential verb translations being the rarest and reaching only the mean value of 12.25. This shows that FTs resorted to semantically richer notional verbs twice as often than existential verbs.

The distribution of strategies in MTs follows a different pattern. Although notional verb strategies were most common in MTs, their mean frequency value was only 21.5 with existential verb renditions in Polish corresponding to 15.5. This the ratio notional verb/existential verb is much lower than in FTs and equals 1.38.

In the next step we eliminated the third category, that is, 'other', to calculate the share of the existential 'być'/'mieć' and notional verb strategies, as shown in Figure 3:

Figure 3

The share of Distribution of Polish Renditions of English Existential-There by Means of Existential 'Być' and 'Mieć' and Notional Verb in Narratives and Dialogues



Again in six out of eight cases, the most common strategy rested on the use of Polish semantically richer notional verbs (FT mean value=67.25; MT mean value=58.25). The difference of 9 per cent between FTs and MTs is notable, yet statistically, it is insignificant at $p < .05$ (chi-square statistic is 1.728. The p -value is .188667). Notably, the two cases in which notional verb strategies did not outnumber the existential verb ones could be observed in MT's renditions of existential-*there* in dialogues, where the distribution of the two strategies was identical. To analyse the relation between the use of notional verbs and existential verbs on the one hand and dialogues/narratives on the other, we calculated the ratio shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Notional Verb / Existential Verb Ratio in Polish Translations of Existential-There in Narratives and Dialogues

	Notional/existential ratio			
	MT		FT	
Novel	narrative	dialogue	narrative	dialogue
<i>Girl</i>	2.45	2.84		
<i>5th Child</i>	1.5	1.77		
<i>Surgeon</i>			2.7	1
<i>Memoirs</i>			1.5	1

The figures presented above clearly show that there is a marked tendency among FTs to use notional verbs rather than existential 'być/mieć' in dialogues. No such tendency has been observed among MTs. If the figures for the use of the two strategies are comparably similar in rendering the narratives, then they are significantly different when the existential-*there* appears in the dialogic part of a novel (FT 2.84; 1.77 vs. MT 1; 1).

Discussion

In our study four research questions were formulated, and they concerned the frequency of use of existential 'być' / 'mieć' and notional verbs according to the translators' gender, and the mode of discourse.

As follows from Fig. 1, Polish FTs opted for the existential- *być/mieć* translations in about 29% of all instances, while the MTs decided to use the same solution in 25% of all cases. If the purely existential translations are combined with the 'richer' presentational verb translations, the number increases to approximately 70% irrespective of the translator's gender. This is in agreement with findings in Rambousek and Chamonikolasová (2008) on the translation of existential-*there* into Czech.

The results exhibit a discernible pattern of translating *there*-constructions: for both gender groups, there could be observed a tendency to enrich the existential construction with other aspects of 'coming into being', both in narratives and dialogues. However, if the distribution of notional verbs in the narrative parts seems to be comparable for both men and women, a strong relation between the gender and the use of notional verbs in the translation of dialogues can be observed, as shown in Fig. 3 and Table 2. In the latter case there is a marked preference for verbs with the higher semantic load among FTs.

With the fairly limited data used in the present analysis it is probably too early to speculate on possible reasons for this strong predilection for semantically richer verbs. Yet, the fact that the increase is significant in the dialogic parts rather than narratives could be related to Tannen's theory of conversational styles, that is, report talk of men and rapport talk of women. According to Tannen (1992), rapport talk is a way of establishing connections, especially emotional one whereas report talk should be understood as a style relying on exchanging information with a little emotional import. Such a claim may meet criticism on the grounds that most of the notional verbs, such as those listed in Section 2.4, do not possess an emotive component. However, Tannen identifies also other functions of rapport talk, which is the interaction or at least producing a signal for interaction. Semantically 'poorer' be-constructions offer fewer possibilities for developing interaction than lexical verb versions, in which the lexical verb may function as a springboard for a more dynamic verbal exchange.

This is only one of numerous interpretations of the FTs translational behaviour in the case of presentational structures. Its motivation might be social, as Tannen believes, or it can be a socially motivated psycholinguistic behavior, reported, for example, by Moser (1996), who observes that women find accuracy more important

than men. A similar view is held also by Tannen (1992, p. 54), who observes that “many women value the recounting of subtle nuances in conversations” and adds “the exchange of relatively insignificant details about daily life sends a metamessage of rapport and caring”.

It is worth stressing that the substantial discrepancy between MTs and FTs stems also from the fact that the number of notional verb renderings remained on a similar level in FTs’ translations of existential–*there* in dialogues. This is again in agreement with Tannen, who defines ‘report talk’, typical of men, as an exchange of information and not an attempt to establish and maintain an interpersonal relationship.

Concluding remarks

The present paper studied possible gender differences in rendering semantically ‘poor’ English existential–*there* constructions from English into Polish. We chose to compare source and target texts to determine the interpreters’ handling of the construction and examine whether the translational choices implemented would show gender-related differences. It turned out that such differences were significant when the gender factor interacted with the factor of mode of discourse: an increase of notional verbs was observed among FTs I dialogic parts. This finding was interpreted here in terms of Tannen’s hypothesis of report and rapport talk. We did not reject any alternative interpretations and we strongly believe that it would be worthwhile to further explore the impact of these parameters in a broader perspective of presentational structures, e.g., presentational structures related to auditory, tactile, visual, and spatial perception or cognitive styles and modal priorities of men and women (see, e.g., Zasiękin & Zasiękina, 2016).

References

- Adam, M. (2011). Towards a Syntactic-Semantic Typology of Presentation Scale Sentences in Fiction Narratives. *Brno Studies in English* 37(1), 5-19. <https://doi.org/10.5817/BSE2011-1-1>
- Adam, M. (2013). Presentation Sentences. Syntax, semantics and FSP. Brno: Masaryk University.
- Benbow, C. (1988). Sex differences in mathematical reasoning ability in intellectually talented preadolescents. Their nature, effects, and possible causes. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 11, 169-232. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1017/S0140525X00049244>
- Breivik, L. (1981). On the interpretation of existential there. *Language*, 57, 1-25.
- Breivik, L. (1983). Existential There. A Synchronic and Diachronic Study. Bergen: University of Bergen.
- Dušková, L. (2005a). Syntactic Constancy of the Subject Complement. Part 2: A Comparison between English and Czech. *Linguistica Pragensia*, 15(1), 1-17.
- Dušková, L. (2005b). From the Heritage of Vilém Mathesius and Jan Firbas: Syntax in the Service of FSP. In Chovanec, J. (ed.) *Theory and Practice in English Studies*, 3: Proceedings from the 8th Brno Conference of English, American and Canadian Studies. Brno: Masaryk University. (7-23).
- Fauconnier, G. (1985). *Mental spaces*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Firbas, J. (1992) *Functional sentence perspective in written and spoken communication*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Jespersen, O. (1969). *Analytic Syntax*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston

- Gal, S. (1991). Between speech and silence: The problematics of research on language and gender. In M. di Leonardo (ed.), *Gender at the (crossroads of knowledge: Feminist anthropology in the postmodern era.* (pp. 175-203). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press,
- Grzegorek, M. (1984). English sentences with introductory *there* and their Polish counterparts. In Fisiak, J. (ed.). (pp. 143-169). *Contrastive Linguistics: Prospects and Problems.* Berlin: Mouton Publishers,
- Halpern, D. (2012). *Sex Differences in Cognitive Abilities.* New York: Psychology Press.
- Harris, L. (1978). Sex differences in spatial ability: possible environmental, genetic and neurological factors. In M. Kinsbourne, (ed.), *Asymmetrical Function of the Brain.* (pp. 405-522). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
- Langacker, R. (2008). *Cognitive Grammar: A basic introduction.* Oxford: Oxford.
- Lakoff, G. (1987). *Women, fire, and dangerous things: What categories reveal about the mind.* Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, R. (1975). *Language and Women's Place.* New York: Harper Colophon Books.
- Lambrecht, K. (1994). *Information Structure and Sentence Form.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lumsden, M. (1988). *Existential sentences: their structure and meaning.* London: Routledge.
- Łyda, A. (2003). Emotive Markers: Gender Differences in Translation. In M. Gonçalves de Abreu and M. de Castro (eds.) *Estudos de Tradução. Actas de Congresso Internacional de Estudos de Tradução.* (pp. 183-194). Cascai: Principial Publicacoes Universitarias e Cientificas,
- Magnifico, C., and B. Defrancq (2020). Norms and gender in simultaneous interpreting: a study of connective markers. *Translation & Interpreting-The International Journal of Translation and Interpreting*, 12(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.12807/ti.112201.2020.a01>
- McGuiness, D. (1985). *When Children Don't Learn.* New York: Basic Books.
- Muchnik, M. (1997). Men vs. women – Different communication patterns. *Hebrew Linguistics* 41–42, 79–86.
- Mulac, A. and T. Lundell (1994). Effects of gender-linked language differences in adults' written discourse: multivariate tests of language effects. *Language and Communication*, 14, 299–309.
- Petronienè, E. (2007). The order of thought and the order of words. *Kalbotyra*, 57, 204-210.
- Quirk, R., S. Greenbaum, G. Leech, J. Svartvik (1985). *A comprehensive grammar of the English language.* Harlow: Longman.
- Rambousek, J., Chamonikolasová, J. (2008). The Existential *There*-Construction in Czech Translation. In G. Anderman and M Rogers (eds.) *Incorporating Corpora: The Linguist and the Translator. Multilingual Matters.*
- Saldanha, G. (2003). Investigating gender-related linguistic features in translation. In J. Santaemilia (ed.) *Género, lenguaje y traducción: actas del Primer Seminario Internacional sobre Género y Lenguaje (el género de la traducción - la traducción del género).* (pp. 420–432). València: Universitat de València,
- Shlesinger, M., M. Koppel, N. Ordan, & B. Malkie. (2009). Markers of translator gender: Do they really matter? *Copenhagen Studies in Language*, 38, 183-198.
- Tannen, D. (1992). *You Just Don't Understand.* London, England: Virago Press.
- Tárnyiková, J. (2009). *From text to texture: an introduction to processing strategies.* Olomouc: Palacký University.
- Tannen, D. (1990). *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation.* New York: Balantine Books.
- Thorne, B. & N. Henley (eds.) (1987). *Language and Sex. Difference and Dominance.* Massachusetts, Newbury House Publishers
- Zasiekin, S. & D. Zasiekina (2016). Gender Cognitive and Behavioral Asymmetry in Translating. *East European Journal of Psycholinguistics*, 3(2), 122-131. <https://doi.org/10.29038/eejpl.2016.3.2.zas>