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## **Equivalence and translation strategies in the Polish rendering of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Ken Kesey**

**Abstract.** The aim of this study is to compare the original text of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Ken Kesey with its Polish translation by Tomasz Mirkowicz, and to analyse the strategies and techniques employed by the translator. It examines the way the translator dealt with the language variety of the original, its register, proper names, the use of capital letters, and text formatting. It argues that the modifications he introduced have made the Polish version of the novel more expressive.

**Keywords:** *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Ken Kesey, translation, Polish, Tomasz Mirkowicz

### **Introduction**

This paper offers a contrastive analysis of the novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Ken Kesey and its Polish translation by Tomasz Mirkowicz with the aim to analyse the differences between them, and to estimate the extent to which the translator's intervention has changed the text and influenced its reception among Polish readers.

Taking into consideration that there are a number of approaches to translation and numerous techniques that can be applied in the process of rendering a work into a foreign language, the human factor is of great importance. The translator chooses a specific strategy and shapes the text because of his/her own decisions. He is responsible for taking apart all the pieces of a novel and putting them together again. Such a task is not an easy one, and because of the structural differences between languages and their specific traits, sometimes it is almost impossible to render a phrase in a manner that would preserve both the meaning and the form of the original. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is a complex story, rich in symbols and metaphors, which are potentially easy to be lost in translation. Venuti (1995) uses the term *invisibility* to describe the phenomenon of the illusion of the translated text – for those, who read it in target language it feels to be natural, and they do not think of it as a rendering:

A translated text, whether prose or poetry, fiction or nonfiction, is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers, and readers when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the appearance that it reflects the foreign writer's personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text—the appearance, in other words, that the translation is not in fact a translation, but the “original.”

The below comparison of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* with its Polish translation focuses on the decisions and choices made by its Polish translator, Tomasz Mirkowicz, and their influence upon the final product.

## ***One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* – the plot, style and background**

The story takes place in a mental hospital. It is narrated by Chief Bromden, an Indian who is thought to be deaf and dumb – a pose he adapts as a result of his illness. He is a schizophrenic who believes in the existence of a machine-like conspiracy which he refers to as “Combine”. He pretends to be unable to hear and talk in order to deceive it. When a new patient appears and causes a real revolution in the ward, Bromden’s perception changes along with the manner in which he reports the subsequent events.

The language of the novel demonstrates the author’s language skills, as well as his flexibility in writing: comical scenes interweave with drama, reality is mixed with the chimerical and deranged images of what is inside Bromden’s head, but it is noticeable as one reads on that the story is becoming more realistic: “Readers initially see the ward through the Chief’s psychotic haze. His fantastic visions show his paranoia and how oppressive the asylum really is. Then as McMurphy brings him back to sanity, the picture gradually clears, the fantastic visions becoming realistic” (Macky 2010: 2). Randle McMurphy pushes all the events forward; he is the power that introduces changes affecting the asylum and the patients. Starting with such simple things as laughter and playfulness, he shows the other patients a new dimension of life. His frisky and bold behaviour amuses his inmates, but it infuriates the nurses, which is the book’s most important motif. However, his rebellion proves to resemble a poker game, which patients play in the ward: though it seems to be fun, it also involves a great risk and the chances of winning are questionable. As he discovers that disobeying the rules might result in the coercion of staying in the asylum for a long time and grave punishments, he becomes meek and quiet. The situation settles down, but not for long – the rebel organizes a fishing trip, which considerably raises the spirits of his fellow patients and gives them hope. Soon, another scheme is planned – McMurphy decides that he will arrange one last gathering after which he attempts to escape. The plan is not successful. On the contrary, the circumstances lead to a suicidal death of one of the patients, Randle’s uncontrolled outburst of anger and an injury of the head nurse. Those events cannot go unnoticed. The situation in the ward changes again, but this time for the worse. McMurphy disappears, being said to be held in different part of hospital, some of the patients leave the asylum, as if they were running away. The atmosphere is tense, filled with anxiety but, nevertheless, Bromden keeps his vision clear and understands the happenings. All the dreadful events only sharpen his senses and bring back the energy he lacked. Finally, he decides on an ultimate step: he wants to run away, just as McMurphy told him he could.

The novel’s storyline and its style have attracted numerous critics and literature connoisseurs to this masterpiece. Zubizarreta praises the author’s writing style, emphasizing the exceptionality of the picture Kesey has painted with his imagination. He describes the narration’s perspective as hallucinatory and hyperbolic and the author’s decision to adopt a lunatic’s viewpoint as “dramatically effective, entertaining, comic and inspiring” (Zubizarreta 1994: 63-65).

The plot of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is related to Ken Kesey’s personal experiences. From a very young age was taught by his father how to wrestle, box, fish and hunt, and he cultivated these passions not only during his adolescence but also in his adulthood. He attended Springfield public schools and later enrolled in the University of Oregon at Eugene where he practised wrestling and football. In the 1960s, his life changed its course after Kesey moved to the bohemian quarters of Stanford, where he met other writers and was introduced to Freudian psychology. At that time, he volunteered to participate in drug experiments at the veterans’ hospital in Menlo Park, California. Earning twenty dollars per

session, Kesey was taking mind-expanding drugs that included Ditran, IT-290 and LSD, and soon, he became a night attendant of the psychiatric ward at the same hospital. This is where he completed his novel *Zoo* and began writing *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Along with some friends, a group later known as Merry Pranksters, Kesey continued his drug experiments and kept on leading his bohemian lifestyle, which meant not only narcotic journeys of a free-spirited and liberated mind, but sometimes resulted in bar fights and being arrested (Reilly and Cole 2010: 1-9).

As Maroufi accurately observes, “Ken Kesey created a bridge between the 1950’s Beat generation and the 1960’s hippie movement” (1997:1), as he combined spiritual transcendence and affirmation of freedom with the social ills that were destroying America after the Second World War. He was inspired by Jack Kerouac’s prose and influenced by the hippie culture movement, which found its reflection in the novel. By incorporating his own memories of spending time with his father in the bosom of nature into the figure of Bromden, and individualism, nonconformity and the praise for the physical strength into the persona of McMurphy, Kesey created two different, yet harmonious characters, who represent the values proclaimed by the author (Maroufi 1997:1).

## **The translator**

It should be noted that the translation of this novel was one of the first such serious tasks in Mirkowicz’s career. Later, he also translated Orwell’s *1984*, Harry Mathews’s *Conversions*, Richard Condon’s *Prizzi’s Honor* and Kosiński’s novels *The Painted Bird*, *Passion Play* and *Blind Date* (Kutnik 2003). Mirkowicz proved to be an observant reader and a careful translator. He commented on some allusions and nuances, which the novel is imbued with. For example, he was aware of the author’s allusions to the New Testament: McMurphy as a savior, Candy as Marie Magdalene or the cross-shaped table as an instrument of crucifixion (Mirkowicz 1990:293).

Venuti (1995: 273) discusses the notion of *simpatico*, which signifies “possessing an underlying sympathy”, which is likely to occur if the translator and the author live in similar times and conditions, if the translator finds the author likeable and is able to relate to him/her experiences to some extent. Venuti claims that the perfect situation would be for the translator to follow the author’s career and over time develop affinity towards him, sharing the author’s ideas, tastes and opinions. *Simpatico* contributes to the perception of a rendering as invisible. It is difficult to establish whether Mirkowicz felt any special affinity with Kesey while translating the novel, but the fact is that he met Ken Kesey and became friends with him (Kutnik 2003). They were born and grew up in entirely different cultures: the author – in the United States during the hippie times of the flower power, and the translator – in communist Poland, the martial law being introduced when he was translating *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*. Mirkowicz was born in 1953 (Kutnik 2003) while Kesey only 18 years earlier. Mirkowicz supported the democratic opposition in Poland and may have identified some similarities between the Combine and the socialistic system he disapproved of.

## **Proper names in the Polish translation of the novel**

Proper names, especially the names of the main characters are usually very important in literary works. Sometimes they can be left untranslated, but when they are meaningful or have direct equivalents in the target language, the translator has to decide how to render them most appropriately. In the case of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, one of the potentially

problematic names is *Big Nurse*. The immediate Polish counterpart of the word *big* is *duży*, but it only refers to size, while *big* also means “important, because of being powerful, or having a lot of influence or a serious effect” (IS1). Thus, Tomasz Mirkowicz quite accurately decided to call this character *Wielka Oddziałowa* (‘The Great Ward Nurse’) where both parts of the name seem to gain more importance and power. However, there is also a fragment in which McMurphy mocks the nurse, by calling her *Rat-shed* (Kesey 1976:79) instead of using her last name, i.e. Ratched. The intended pun is an evident case of showing disrespect, but it is done in a rather subtle way, and could be excused as a tongue slip. Here, the translator could not rely on any method of literal translation since word-for-word translation would give a rather awkward effect of calling the nurse *Szczurza szopa* (lit. ‘rat’s shed’) which would not only sound unnatural, but it would be simply indecipherable for a Polish reader. A well-chosen option was finding an equivalent according to the rules of the communicative translation method, which led to the invention of *Sratched* which not only preserved a similarity to the original name of the character, but also the humorous sneer. By adding a single letter, the translator invented a name which in Polish has a rather unpleasant connotation of defecating.

A different approach was used when Chief Bromden’s nickname appeared. In the original he was called *Chief Broom* by black orderlies because he often had to sweep the floors with a broom. The translator could not find any equivalents which would produce the same effect, so he chose to translate the word literally, deciding that in this case the meaning was much more important than the phonetic qualities of the moniker. Although *Szczota Bromden* does not contain a similar alliteration as *Broom Bromden*, this loss does not affect the story and is acceptable.

In addition to the main characters’ names, there are names in the book which refer to groups of patients, such as *Acutes*, *Chronics*, *Walkers*, *Wheelers* and *Vegatables*. Even a new person who is admitted into the hospital is called *Admission*, also written with a capital letter. The names are translated as: *Okresowi*, *Chroniccy*, *Chodzący*, *Wózkarze*, *Ludzie-rośliny*, each starting with a capital letter except for *nowy pacjent* (lit. ‘a new patient’). Perhaps the translator decided that the last one was not sufficiently important to keep the name capitalized, especially that, unlike the rest, it does not appear regularly in the book. Not only are the names of the characters written in a peculiar manner. Also, the names of places in which the action takes place are characterized by the use of majuscule at the beginning. These are: *Inside*, *Outside*, *Main Building*, *Nurses’ Station*, *Seclusion*, *Shock Shop* and *Disturbed Ward*, none of which remained capitalised in the Polish translation. They were replaced with their Polish equivalents *wewnątrz*, *na zewnątrz*, *budynek główny*, *dyżurka*, *izolatka*, and in the case of the last two, the translator decided not only to remove the majuscule but even to make the words sound more informal, creating *wstrząsówka* and *oddział dla furiatów* (‘a ward for madmen’).

Other examples of such treatment include: *Indwelling Curiosity Cutout* (*wyłącznik ciekawości*), *Unaccompanied Leave* (*samodzielne wyjście*), *Potential Assaultive* (*potencjalnie groźny dla otoczenia*) or *Group Discussion* (*dyskusja*). When Big Nurse reads aloud McMurphy’s folder, she mentions “a series of arrests for Drunkenness, Assault and Battery, Disturbing the Peace, repeated gambling and one arrest – for Rape” (Kesey 1976: 39, the original version). In the Polish version, those nouns were written in lowercase: “litania bójek ulicznych, awantur w lokalach oraz aresztów za pijaństwo, pobicia, zakłócanie porządku i najliczniej – za szulerstwo. Raz aresztowany... za nierząd” (Kesey 1990: 44, Polish translation).

Then, again, the *Combine*, which is a name of an imaginary institution which seems to be the axis of Bromden’s hallucinatory world, is translated as *Kombinat*. What should be noted is the narrator’s unique point of view – Chief Bromden is a schizophrenic, who sees his

environment in a way that is impervious to others. The use of capital letters is not accidental – the majuscule gives importance to the elements that the asylum patient finds significant. In the very restricted space of the asylum, Bromden has created his own world – *Outside, Inside, Seclusion*. These are not simply references to certain places. Rather, they look like geographical names of a considerable significance, inhabited by different nations of *Acutes, Chronics* and *Wheelers*. In Chief’s small world, a new patient is a great change, group discussions are important events but not as important as the possibility of an unaccompanied leave. Dropping the capital letters in those names impoverishes the author’s intentions and reduces the power of the image he tried to present.

## Sounds and phonetics

Polish and English are languages belonging to different language groups – English is Germanic and Polish – Slavic. In the Polish language there are some consonants which do not exist in English, and vice versa, which is why achieving the same phonetic effect in the two languages is often difficult. As one of the characters in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, Billy Bibbit, stutters, Tomasz Mirkowicz had to analyse his utterances and decide which syllables should be repeated to sound natural in the rendering. First of all, the words in English do not necessarily start with the same sound as their Polish counterparts, and secondly – trying to transfer the stuttering at the same word would not always be successful because of the differences in word order between the two languages. The translator chose the sounds carefully, trying to emphasize the same words as in the original. For example:

“His **n-name** is Bromden. Chief Bromden. Everybody calls him Chief **Buh-Broom**, though, because the aides have him sweeping a **l-large** part of the time. There’s not m-much else he can do, I guess. He’s deaf. If I was **d-d-deaf**, I would kill myself” (1976:24)

“**N-nazywa** się Bromden. Wódz Bromden. Ale wszyscy przezywają go Wodzem **Sz-szczotą**, bo sanitariusze wciąż zaganiają go do **s-s-sprzątania**. Chyba niewiele poza tym umiałby robić. Jest głuchy. Gdybym ja był **g-g-głuchy**, tobym się zabił” (1990:25)

This comparison shows that Mirkowicz indeed tried to spread the stuttering evenly and put it on the same elements of a sentence (*d-d-deaf / g-g-głuchy*), on the same sound (*n-name / n-nazywa*) or at least at in similar place in the sentence (*l-large / s-s-sprzątania*). Though Mirkowicz managed to overcome the phonetic difficulties with Billy’s stuttering, shorter utterances caused another problem. There is a patient whose brain surgery did not go well and, in result, he is unable to function or speak normally. Provoked by an aide, he gathers all his strength to say anything back: “he’s working his jaw so hard to say something. When he finally does get to where he can say his few words it’s a low, choking noise to make your skin crawl – *Fffffffuck da wife! Fffffffuck da wife!* and passes out on the spot from the effort” (Keseey 1976:19, original version). Although this fragment is not vital for the storyline and does not convey any symbolic meaning, it shows the difference between the two languages and the difficulty to produce the same effect in Polish. The repeated letter “f” resembles a hissing sound or exhaling with a great difficulty, while “p” in Polish *Ppppppierdolę żonę!* is nothing like a whisper that it was meant to imitate.

Another example concerning the phonetic differences is the fragment in which McMurphy is lying on the table in *Shock Shop* when aides put a rubber hose into his mouth. He is singing a song from a commercial of Wildroot Cream Oil: “mage with thoothing lan-o-lin” (made with soothing lanoline) which accurately imitates the way of speaking with one’s mouth full. Tomasz Mirkowicz has rendered these words as “w zgląd jej wchodzi czyzda lanolina” and using voiced consonants in place of voiceless ones (*zgląd* instead of *skład*, *czyzda* instead of *czysta*), he tried to create an effect produced by a speaker who clenches his teeth on an object.

Randle Patrick McMurhpy is a very musical man; his amusing songs appear throughout the whole novel. When rendering these, the translator decided to use an oblique method (cf. Vinay and Darbelnet 2000) instead of a direct strategy, in order to preserve the rhythm and rhyme:

<p>“Your horses are hungry, that’s what she did say. Come sit down beside me an’ feed them some hay. My horses ain’t hungry, they won’t eat your hay-ay-aeee. So fare-thee-well darlin’, I’m gone on my way.” (1976:75)</p>	<p>“Twe konie są głodne, tak mi powiedziała. Usiadłbyś tu przy mnie, siana bym im dała! Konie nie tkną siana, które byś im da-łaaaa! Muszę jechać dalej, żegnaj moja mała.” (1990:87)</p>
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Although the translation is not literal, and is made up of longer words (which are characteristic of Polish), it successfully transmits the meaning and each verse has the same number of syllables (11 syllables in original and 12 in the rendering). A much more problematic task was probably the translation of a nursery rhyme from which the title is derived:

<p>“Ting. Tingle, tingle, tremble toes, she’s a good fisherman, catches hens, puts ‘em inna pens... wire blier, limber lock, three geese inna flock... one flew east, one flew west, one flew over the cuckoo’s nest... O-U-T spells out... goose swoops down and plucks you out”. (1976:224)</p>	<p>“Ene due like fake, ona dobrym jest rybakiem, łapie kurczaki i wsadza do paki... kosz klosz, kłódkę kładzie trzy gąsiorki w stadzie... jeden poleciał tam, drugi śmignął siam, trzeci wzbił się nad kukulcze gniazdo... gę gę gę... potem sfrunął, wlaźł do... i wyciągnął cię.” (1990:252)</p>
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The translator chose to adapt an actual nursing rhyme used by children in Poland, instead of translating the words *tingle, tingle, tremble toes*. The result is very good: it sounds more natural and is easier to pronounce than any literal translation of these words could be. Moreover, that verse rhymes with the next one (*fake - rybakiem*) which did not need to be drastically changed. Then again, the third verse concerning catching hens was rendered quite literally; the translator decided to preserve the meaning rather than come up with an adaptation strategy that could be used to make this verse as short as it is in original and sound more rhythmic. The next part sounds very natural – the meaning here was not as important as the sounding, and here Mirkowicz created a verse which is quite nonsensical (as is the original) but it fits the rhythm and the nature of nursery rhymes – putting words together on the basis of their phonetic qualities, rather than a logical connection between them. Since one of the verses is at the same time the title of the novel, Mirkowicz decided to retain *the cuckoo’s nest* even though it turned out to be difficult to find a rhyme to *kukulcze gniazdo* in Polish, and the whole noun phrase is too long for the verse.

The Polish rendering of the title does not maintain the original structure, but it stays close to the original. The translator used the noun phrase *lot nad kukulczym gniazdem* (lit. ‘a flight over the cuckoo’s nest’). This change is not radical and the reader can easily notice the connection between the title and rhyme included in the novel.

## Language variety

The characters which appear in the novel use different varieties of English. Their idiolects differ considerably, e.g. there is a schizophrenic who makes grammatical mistakes, and they also use different social and regional varieties: there is a recidivist who often uses swear words and black aides whose language bears traces of African American Vernacular English. All of them are contrasted with one of the patients who speaks immaculate English and uses elaborate vocabulary. The sections which follow outline some of the strategies adopted by the translator while rendering the peculiarities of the different characters' speech.

### Bromden

Bromden is not just a character but also a narrator so his speech is present throughout the whole book. For most of the novel his manner of talking does not distract readers from the main plot, especially that there is a lot of action to be followed and focused on. Nevertheless, several nuances can be noticed after a closer inspection. Chief's speech is quite often made of short sentences which sometimes contain grammatical mistakes and informal expressions. Even though he is a schizophrenic, most of the narration is very clear and unambiguous. The fragment below illustrates the characteristics of the language he uses.

"This morning I plain don't remember. They got enough of those pills down me so I don't know a thing till I hear the ward door open. That ward door opening means it's at least eight o'clock, means there's been maybe an hour and a half I was out cold in that Seclusion Room when the technicians could of come in and installed anything the Big Nurse ordered and I wouldn't have the slightest notion what." (1976:13)

"Ale dzisiejszego ranka nie pamiętam. Tak mnie nafaszerowali różnymi świństwami uchodzącymi tu za lekarstwa, że pierwsze, co do mnie dociera, to odgłos otwierających się drzwi. Drzwi wejściowe otwierają się najwcześniej o ósmej, więc co najmniej półtorej godziny przeleżałem bez czucia w izolatce – w tym czasie technicy mogli mi wmontować na polecenie Wielkiej Oddziałowej mnóstwo lichy wie jakich urządzeń." (1990:12)

Bromden uses simple colloquial English, which the translator rendered into simple colloquial Polish, though not all the informal properties of the original text could be rendered directly. For example, Bromden says "I plain don't remember" instead of "I plainly don't remember", which is characteristic of informal American speech. This specific quality has no direct counterpart in Polish. To make the text colloquial, the translator added the mild swear word *lichy wie* in a place where there are no swear words in the original; instead of providing a direct equivalent of the word *pills*, he used the expression "świństwa uchodzące tu za lekarstwa" ('the awful stuff they call medications here').

Another example is "I been silent so long now it's gonna roar out of me like floodwaters and you think the guy telling this is ranting and raving my *God*". In the translation this fragment reads: "Milczałem tak długo, że wypłynie to ze mnie z hukiem wezbranej wody, a wy pewnie pomyślicie, że facet, który to opowiada bredzi, cholera, i majaczy". Again, it is clear that the translator decided not to look for Polish equivalents of the nonstandard form *I been* and colloquial *gonna*, but he chose to add the swear word *cholera* in the place of *God* to make it more characteristic of a simple man's speech. In other cases, Bromden adds the determiner *a* before a plural noun, or sometimes – uses *don't* instead of *doesn't*. The grammar of the Polish version is invariably standard. The colloquial and nonstandard character of Bromden's speech is only visible on the level of vocabulary.

## McMurphy

McMurphy's style of speaking quite often includes vulgar words and informal expressions. His tone is unceremonious; he is never formal in his speech. Again, as in the case of Bromden's language, the translator decided to add slangy words and exclamations, to make up for the loss of other qualities of his nonstandard way of speaking. In the example below, the differences mentioned earlier can be noted:

"They showered me this morning at the courthouse and last night at the jail. And I *swear* I believe they'd of washed my ears for me on the taxi ride if they **coulda** find the **vacilities**. **Hoo**, boy, seems like everytime they ship me someplace I **gotta** get scrubbed down before, after and during the operation. I'm **gettin'** so the sound of water makes me start gathering up my belongings. And *get* back away from me with that thermometer, Sam, and give me a minute to look my new home over." (1976:14)

"Musiałem brać prysznic dziś rano w sądzie i wczoraj wieczorem w **kiciu**. A w taksówce, **kiedyśmy** tu jechali, wymyliły mi uszy, gdyby tylko mieli czym. **Rany**, ilekroć mnie gdzieś wysyłają, muszę się szorować przed, po i w trakcie podróży. Tak mi to już **weszło w krew**, że gdy tylko słyszę plusk wody, od razu zaczynam pakować manatki. Uciekaj z tym termometrem **kochasiu**, daj mi się rozejrzeć po nowej **chalupie**" (1990:14)

The translator changed the register of selected words and even replaced the name of the black aid (*Sam*) with a pet name (*kochasiu*, roughly: 'darling'). He also added the idiomatic expression *wejść w krew* to make this utterance sound more natural. Throughout the novel, many colloquial expressions and swear words appear, many of which are difficult to translate. Mirkowicz used their Polish counterparts in strategic places – he did not try to translate each expression as literally as possible, but he selectively enclosed informal expressions where they sounded natural for the Polish reader. Sometimes his Polish expressions are stronger than their English counterparts, sometimes they are weaker, e.g. *farts* is rendered as *skurwysyny* (a stronger word), and the expression *are you guys bullshitting me?* as *czy to ma być żart?* (a softer equivalent, lit. 'is this a joke?').

The translator's choices result from his use of the transposition strategy (cf. Vinay and Darbelnet 2000). Instead of translating the character's words directly, the translator focused on conveying McMurphy's personality, which is more important than the literal rendering of his words.

## Black aides

Another variety of the English language in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is the one used by black men. Since the novel was written in the 1960s, the contrast between black and white people's speech was still very clear. Smitherman (1994), recollecting her college years, calls attention to several characteristics that distinguished her language from that of her peers. For example: postvocalic R deletion and problems with "th" which in initial position sounded like "d" and at the end of the words like "f", or the tendency to end all syllables with a vowel sound. She says that those deviations are the result of mixing African language patterns with English ones, the mixture that developed during the years of enslavement.

Black English is a phenomenon unfamiliar to Polish readers, therefore Mirkowicz decided not to emphasize the black orderlies' variety of English. The way they spoke was natural for them and American readers were acquainted with that manner of speaking. Any endeavour to present the fashion they spoke in to readers in communist Poland (the translation was first published in 1981) would probably be fruitless or could misshape the vernacular unknown to Poles. Thus, Tomasz Mirkowicz only rendered the meaning and did not focus on adapting the form:

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"What you s'pose it'd be like if *evahbody* was

„Jakby to wyglądało, gdyby k a ż d y mył zęby,



to brush their teeth whenever they took a notion to brush?" (1976:77)	kiedy mu przyjdzie ochota!" (1990:89)
"My <i>gaw</i> , don't you <i>see</i> ?" (1976:77)	„Rety, nic pan..." (1990:89)
„Tha's right gennulmen, tha's the way" (1976:19)	„Słusznie panowie, grunt to porządek!" (1990:19)
„Ahhh, Geo'ge, you jes' don't have no idea" (1976:214)	„Ach, George, ty nic nie wiesz" (1990:239)

The peculiarities of their speech are thus entirely lost in the translation.

## Harding

In contrast to the previously mentioned characters, Harding is a person whose language is sophisticated and who tends to use long sentences and formal vocabulary, including French and Latin expressions. At some point, he even corrects his wife, explaining to her the difference between *anything* and *nothing* and comments on her use of the double negative (in the rendering he corrects her pronunciation of the word *imaginowałaś*). In this case, the translator played with the form of the utterances, which was also the case in the original.

The example below speaks for itself:

“Have you ever tried to keep up a noble and angry front in the face of such consolation? So you see, my friend, it is somewhat as you stated: man has but *one* truly effective weapon against the juggernaut of modern matriarchy, but it certainly is not laughter” (1976:60)

“Czy po takiej pociesze umiałbyś długo zachować w sercu gniew i marsa na czole? A więc sam widzisz, przyjacielu, masz poniekąd rację: przeciwko molochowi współczesnego matriarchatu męczyzna rzeczywiście posiada j e d n ą broń naprawdę skuteczną, ale bynajmniej nie jest nią śmiech.” (1990:69)

Words such as *bynajmniej* (‘by no means’) and *poniekąd* (‘partly/up to a point’) are rarely used in speech, especially that of informal character. In fact, *bynajmniej* is often used incorrectly by uneducated speakers of Polish: it is confused with *przynajmniej* (‘at least’), so a correct use of the word is an indication of educated speech habits. There is also an idiomatic expression *mieć marsa na czole* which is an elaborate way of naming an angry face. Moreover, the sentences spoken by Harding are long and complex. The example provided above demonstrates that Mirkowicz managed to render Harding’s ways of speaking accurately.

It appears that the translator used different approaches to render the characteristics of the speech of each of the main characters. He used literal translation, modulation and adaptation, according to the needs of the text.

## Changes in register

Hatim and Munday (2004) claim that preserving the register in translation is a myth. They emphasize that “the form is different in each language” and this is the reason why register cannot always be fully transferred. Newmark (1988) suggests that it is essential for the translator to identify idiosyncratic properties of texts written by different authors. He also enumerates various functions that can be applied in the text, influencing its register. These are: informative (distinguished by non-class, non-idiolectal, formal and technical language), vocative (which is meant to be addressed to the reader by using “you”, “du”, “Sie”, “vous” forms and imperatives to enliven relationship between author and reader), aesthetic (focused on onomatopoeias, metaphors, rhyme, metre, intonation and stress) phatic (used to maintain friendly contact with reader; inclusion of standard phrases and spoken language) and

metalingual (indicates language ability to criticize and explain its own features) (Newmark 1988: 39-44).

In the case of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, the main function which influenced the register is the aesthetic one. Mirkowicz has a tendency to overtranslate vulgar words into stronger (e.g. the above mentioned *farts* translated as *skurwysyny*) and at the same time, he quite often employs formal expressions and makes some utterances less colloquial. For example, in a conversation between the two main characters, when Bromden tells McMurphy about his parents, the latter responds: "And when a town woman marries an Indian that's marryin' somebody beneath her, ain't it? Yeah, I think I see". His language is colloquial (it includes "ain't", "yeah", "-in' ending), but in the Polish translation, he says: "Jeśli biała kobieta wychodzi za Indianina to popełnia mezalians, tak?" Not only the grammatical elements of his non-standard speech are omitted in the Polish version, but also the term *mezalians* ('mésalliance') appears, which is unlikely to be used by a gambler who has spent his all life working physically and drinking alcohol. This sentence sounds at least awkward when compared with the original.

Another example can be found in the utterance spoken by McMurphy, where "at your balls, buddy, at your everlovin' balls" is replaced with "jąder, koleś, waszych cennych jąder!" – where a colloquial name of men's parts is interchanged with a more technical term which can be found in medical books. And when Cheswick says "You bet", Mirkowicz translated this short expression into much longer "to bezsporny fakt!" ('that's an undisputable fact'), even though a shorter and more natural exclamation like *no chyba!* could be used to translate it into Polish.

Although such alternations of register are not frequent, their use does not always seem justifiable. They do not change the text significantly, but their presence suggests that the translator tried to "improve" the original text.

## **Expressiveness and text formatting**

In the Polish rendering, more than 50 additional exclamation marks occur. They do not introduce anything strikingly new or change the sense of the utterances. However, their addition makes the translated text more dynamic and expressive than the original. The original version illustrates a world within an asylum, plunged in a sleepy, monotonous atmosphere of hospital routine. The patients are portrayed as tired and indifferent, which is consistent with Bromden's illusions, dreams, fears and the dense fog which he believes to appear in the hospital, making the time go slower or faster. The Polish rendering loses a little of the psychotic haze which Kesey depicted in his novel.

According to Delisle (1988), a translator is an author deprived of the responsibility for the substance, but responsible for the form, which means that translation in the first place demands the ability to recognize the type of a text, interpret it and put into an appropriate form. Pisarska and Tomaszewicz (1996:90-91) stress that the process of reexpression involves "what author meant to say", "what translator understood it" and how the translator "transferred this concept" into a new form of language. This may explain the punctuation changes made by Mirkowicz. The translator may have perceived the novel differently: as more expressive and less drowsy.

In the quotations from *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* provided in the previous subchapters, some words are written in italics – they were accentuated in this manner in the original. In the Polish rendering this distinction disappeared almost completely. In many cases, a word which was italicized in the original is left unmarked in the translation, and sometimes – instead of italics, letter-spacing is used to emphasize a part of a sentence, and

there is no clear pattern showing why in some words the distinction has been retained while in others it has not. It seems likely that the sentences whose syntax in a natural way already stressed the elements which were italicized in the original have been left unmarked.

Italics / letter- spacing	“They didn’t mind so much when I was a dumb logger, and got into a hassle; that’s <i>excusable</i> , they say, that’s a hard-working feller, blowing off steam, they say.” (1976:22)	„Kiedy wdawałem się w bójki będąc prostym drwalem, przymykali oczy i mówili, że to zrozumiałe; gość który tak ciężko tyra ma prawo się wyszumieć.” (1990:23)
Italics / no change	“Bibbit! You tell Mr McMurphy I’m so crazy I voted for Eisenhower <i>twice!</i> ” (1976:22)	„Bibbit, powiedzcie panu McMurphy’emu, że w swoim szaleństwie głosowałem na Eisenhowera dwukrotnie!” (1990:22)

Here, the first stressed element occurs in the middle of the utterance and changing the font makes it more visible. In the second example, the word which is emphasized is at the end of the sentence, which already makes it visible.

In the novel, there is also a half-page fragment in which Bromden’s reminiscences about his father are mixed with his own thoughts about the present day. In the original, his memories are written in italics, in order to be distinguished from the present events described by the narrator. In the Polish rendering, there is no difference in font, so in consequence, the text seems to be much more chaotic and unclear.

When the narrator talks about the Therapeutic Community, he reports the doctor’s words. He does not use reported speech or passive voice – elements which are typical for the English language and hence difficult to translate. In fact, the narrative is very simple: “Any little gripe, any grievance, anything you want changed, **he says**, should be brought up before the group and discussed instead of letting it fester inside of you. Also you should feel at ease in your surroundings to the extent you can freely discuss emotional problems in front of patients and staff. Talk, **he says**, discuss, confess”. The narrator uses the phrase “**he says**” to indicate that those words are not his. Without them, the fragment would look as if it was just a part of Bromden’s train of thought. The Polish version, in contrast, presents this fragment as an independent statement. The utterance starts with a dash, which is usually used to introduce a dialogue, rather than a reported statement:

“ – Nie tłamście w sobie – przekonuje lekarz – żadnych pretensji, bolączek, zgłaszajcie mi, jeśli chcecie coś zmienić, zawsze można wszystko przedyskutować w grupie.”

When written in this way, the text is more expressive. Some of the differences concerning the font and the graphic form of the text may have been caused by the editor’s – not the translator’s – choice, but it seems unlikely that the editor introduced all the exclamation marks. The modifications outlined above have made the Polish version of the novel a little more expressive, lacking the sleepy, even lethargic atmosphere of the original.

## Conclusion

Translation is transparent for the reader who only enjoys the rendered text without getting acquainted with the original, and the Polish version of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* is an excellent work. Only a comparison with the source text enables us to notice the subtle differences between the two versions. Mirkowicz smoothed some of the edges, and sharpened the others: he omitted some grammatical mistakes and the characteristics of Black English, but he added more swear words and exclamation marks, which deprived the book of its lethargic atmosphere, giving it a more expressive tone instead. However, even though the form has changed, and many words or phrases have been replaced with their remote

synonyms, the translated version reads naturally. The translator put every effort to convert short songs and nursery rhyme into Polish without losing their rhythm and rhyme, which is definitely not an easy task to accomplish. Even the stuttering, which is a distinctive feature of one of the characters, has been rendered in a way which makes a similar impression as its original version.

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