

Agnieszka Smoleńska  
The University of Rzeszow

## **Wordplay in selected Polish translations of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll**

### **Introduction**

*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, a novel written by Charles Lutwidge Dodgson under the pseudonym Lewis Carroll, is commonly considered to be one of the finest books ever written. This timeless story has provided inspiration for numerous influential artists –writers, painters, directors, rock stars, singers and composers, and video game designers. Salvador Dali, for instance, created 12 illustrations – one for each chapter of Carroll's story, and Walt Disney released the animated film *Alice in Wonderland* in 1951. Roland Topor, a French illustrator, painter and writer, wrote *Alice au Pays des Lettres*, and Andrzej Sapkowski, a Polish writer of fantasy books, presented the story from the point of view of the Cheshire Cat in *Złote popołudnie*. Also, in a popular science fiction film *The Matrix* Neo is sent a message to "follow the white rabbit". These are just a few examples of works inspired by this extraordinary tale.

Not all books require great artistry to be translated. However, some publications are very difficult to render into another language, and constitute a real challenge for translators. Carroll's novel indisputably belongs to this category. This literary masterpiece is so complex and full of riddles and wordplay that every reader (and translator) may construe it in his/her individual way. The book has been translated into more than 125 languages, including Esperanto, Hindi, Hebrew, Gaelic, Pashto and Swahili. There are also versions in Braille (Thomas 2007). The first Polish version appeared 45 years after the publication of the original. At the moment, 10 Polish translations are available. In this paper I put under scrutiny the ways in which Polish translators have dealt with the wordplay used by L. Carroll in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. I focus on the renderings by Antoni Marianowicz (1955), Macviej Słomczyński and Maria Kaniewska, though occasionally reference is also made to the works of other translators.

### **The Origins of Carroll's Masterpiece**

Lewis Carroll was born on January 27, 1832 in Daresbury, Cheshire, England as Charles Lutwidge Dodgson. His biggest problem was a stutter, which resulted in better relations with children than with adults. It was his father who had a great influence on his life. To continue the family traditions, Dodgson became a pastor (but never undertook pastoral duties). He also inherited an outstanding passion for mathematics, and, as a consequence, published approximately 250 papers on logic, mathematics and cryptography (*Nowy słownik literatury dla dzieci i młodzieży* 1979: 95). He was also a photographer. One of his favourite models was Alice Liddell – the archetype of the protagonist in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. This occupation has provoked a lot of suspicion, since Dodgson mainly took pictures of little girls, who sometimes posed nude. It was speculated that he may have suffered from some kind of sexual deviation. However, all of the photos were taken at the children's parents' request, and women, who, as children, were photographed by Dodgson remembered him as a dear friend who gave them high self-esteem (Thomas 2007: 27).

Dodgson became famous for another reason. In addition to taking photographs of his little friends he also used to tell children incredible stories about imaginary creatures to entertain them during those sessions. His dominant inspiration was again Alice Liddell. It became something of a tradition for him to take Alice and her two sisters out for picnics, during which he told them tales. On one of his expeditions Dodgson invented a story about a girl named Alice, who falls down a rabbit hole into a strange place called Wonderland, where she experiences numerous adventures (Thomas 2007: 186-187).

The title of Dodgson's novel was originally different from the one we all know today. "*Alice's Adventures Underground* was the first name of the story; later on it became *Alice's Hour in Elfland*. It was not until June 18, 1864 that he finally decided upon *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*" (Collingwood 1967: 96). The book was published in 1865. Dodgson's pen name originated from an Anglicized form of his name - "Lewis" stands for Lutwidge and "Carroll" is an Anglicized form of Charles. Most probably, his mathematical fondness had an impact on his masterpiece, as it contains numerous plays on words riddles and tongue twisters. *Alice* turned out to be a real sensation, since it was not a book conventionally familiar to Victorians. People either loved it or hated it. For instance, *Antheneum* wrote that "a normal child would be rather puzzled than enchanted by this strange and twisted story"(Thomas 2007:197). Among its first readers were people such as Queen Victoria and Oscar Wilde. The success of the book led Carroll to write a sequel – *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There*, which became equally popular.

### **Polish Translations of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland***

Carroll's masterpiece is a challenge for translators because of its linguistic intricacies – complex syntax, numerous puns and allusions – which may remain unnoticed without a sufficient knowledge of the book's origins and the details of the Victorian era. At the moment, 10 Polish renderings of this book are available. The first one, by Adela S. (her full name is unknown), appeared in 1910 – 45 years after the publication of the original. Its fate after World War I remains a mystery. All that is known about her version is that Adela S. named her translation *Przygody Alinki w Krainie Cudów*, and that it was an adaptation of the original story addressed at young readers rather than a faithful rendering.

In 1927 the Warsaw publishing house Gebethner i Wolff ordered a new version. The author of this rendering was Maria Morawska. She named it *Ala w krainie czarów*, and on its first page she gave an inscription saying "free translation from English", which turned out to be true, as many excerpts were omitted and others were added. Morawska tried to simplify the text and set the story in a Polish context. The strongest point of this version is the inclusion of nursery rhymes translated by the Polish poet Antoni Lange.

In 1955 the next rendering of *Alice*, by Antoni Marianowicz, appeared on the Polish publishing market. His translation is the most polonized one and is clearly directed at the youngest readers. The Victorian nursery rhymes that in the original book are parodied by Carroll were changed by Marianowicz into parodies of famous Polish nursery rhymes.

Maciej Słomczyński, the translator of all of Shakespeare's works and *Ulysses* by James Joyce, wrote the next rendering of *Alice* in 1965; he was also the first to translate *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There* into Polish. It was the first text that was consistent with the original tale and revealed its oniric character. In the preface to his work Słomczyński wrote: "I wanted this book to contain the same things that the original one contains: two overlapping books – for children and for adults. Furthermore, I wanted this

book to be written in the language of a dream and in the grammar of a dream dreamt in Victorian England” (Słomczyński 2000: 6, translation mine: A.S).

The fifth Polish translation of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* came into being in 1986. Robert Stiller, a translator of *A Clockwork Orange* by Anthony Burgess and *Lolita* by Vladimir Nabokov, was deeply convinced that Słomczyński’s version did not equal the original one and decided to write his own translation. He supplied his text with nearly 100 annotations, explaining the facts concerning the reality of Victorian England, and information about the author and the archetype of the protagonist. Moreover, these footnotes also explain the wordplays which have lost their meanings in translation. Stiller relied greatly on the renderings of his predecessors, whom he had previously criticized. Eventually, his translation never became more popular than Słomczyński’s version.

Jolanta Kozak’s and Iwona Libucha’s versions were published at almost the same time. Kozak’s rendering is very anachronistic. There are numerous colloquial expressions and teenage sayings. She also changed some characters’ names that were deeply rooted in the minds of Polish readers. For instance, “kot z Cheshire” has been changed into “Szczery Kot” (lit. ‘an honest cat’). However, such a modernized version was not well-received. Libucha’s book is a short adaptation of *Alice* without wordplays and nursery rhymes. Even the characters’ names are so simplified that it is no longer clear whether this is still a translation of *Alice* or not.

In the centenary of the first Polish edition of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, in 2010, two new versions of it appeared on the Polish publishing market. One of them was written by Bogumiła Kaniewska. She stuck to the original and used very simple language without losing the finesse of the text. She neither modernized nor imitated the style of the original. Her renderings of Carroll’s wordplays are very novel and accurate. Consequently, her book is widely considered as one of the best Polish translations.

Another version from 2010 was published by Krzysztof Dworak. The most considerable merit of this edition are the illustrations and the graphic design created by Robert Ingpen. His innovative pictures differ significantly from Tenniel’s grotesque vision of the Wonderland which was presented in the first edition of the original. Nevertheless, many readers maintain that this is the most beautiful edition of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* in Poland.

The most recent translation of Carroll’s work was written by Elżbieta Tabakowska - the Director of the UNESCO Chair in Translation Studies and Intercultural Communication at Jagiellonian University. She is also a translator of Norman Davies’s works and an author of books on the theory and practice of translation. In 2012 Bona publishing house edited the result of her long-term work. Her book is decorated with the illustrations of Tove Jansson, the author of the Moomin books. In her rendering Tabakowska changed Victorian nursery rhymes into well-known Polish songs and poems. This time “Alice speaks normal present-day language, which would be used by a girl from Jansson’s pictures if she were a Pole” (Tabakowska 2012: 116, translation mine: A.S). Because of that, many Polish readers claim that Alice in Tabakowska’s translation is closer to them.

Ten translations of one book may seem too many. However, when Tabakowska was asked why she wrote another rendering of Alice, she said: “When asked this question, a translator may answer in the same way as did a great climber who was asked why he was climbing mountains and said: ‘because they exist’ ” (Tabakowska 2012:115, translation mine: A.S). It is also the case with Carroll’s masterpiece – it exists, and because of its greatness it still seduces translators to try and create their own versions of Alice.

## **An Analysis of Polish Translations of Wordplay in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland***

The following analysis focuses on three Polish renderings of Carroll's masterpiece: one by Antoni Marianowicz, the second written by Maciej Słomczyński, and the last one by Bogumiła Kaniewska. Occasionally, reference will also be made to other translations. It is beyond the scope of the present paper to discuss all the cases of wordplay included in the book, so the foregoing will only look at the most well-known ones or those which differ significantly across the translations.

One of the first and probably the most famous examples of wordplay in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* can be found in chapter 3 – *A Caucus-race and a long tale*. This fragment focuses on the Mouse's misery and Alice's curiosity about why this animal hates cats and dogs. Eventually, the rodent offers to tell its tale. The title of this passage itself is a pun, since the word *tale* is homophonous with *tail*. Polish versions of this title differ enormously. Morawska (1997), for instance, rendered it as *Wyścigi* (Eng. 'race'), Marianowicz's (1988) version is *Wyścigi ptasie i opowieść Myszy* (Eng. 'a bird race and the Mouse's tale'), Słomczyński (2000) translated it as *Wyścigi Kumotrów i ogonopowieść* (Eng. 'a log-rollers' race and a tail-tale'), while Stiller (1986) titled it *Kumoterski wyścig i ogoniasta opowieść*. (Eng. 'a log-rolling race and a tale with a tail'). The most recent renderings are found in Dworak (2009): *Gonitwa za stanowiskami oraz rzecz długa o smutnym zakończeniu* (Eng. 'a jobs race and a long thing with a sad ending'), Kaniewska (2010), whose version is *Wyścigi elit i długaśna opowieść* (Eng. 'the elite's race and a long-long tale'), and Tabakowska (2012), who named it *Maraton przedwyborczy i długa opowieść* (Eng. 'a pre-election marathon and a long tale'). As can easily be observed, most of the translations failed to convey the ambiguity of the original. Słomczyński and Stiller showed their creativity and attempted to include the Polish equivalents of *tail* (Pol. *ogon*) and *tale* (Pol. *opowieść*), but the most felicitous translation is probably the one created by Dworak. He changed the word *tale* into *rzecz długa o smutnym zakończeniu* (*a long thing with a sad ending*), which, in fact, may refer both to *ogon* (*tail*) and *opowieść* (*tale*).

The situation becomes even more complicated when it comes to the translation of a longer passage. The original reads as follows:

'You promised to tell me your history, you know,' said Alice, 'and why it is you hate - C and D,' she added in a whisper, half afraid that it would be offended again.

'Mine is a long and a sad tale!' said the Mouse, turning to Alice, and sighing.

'It is a long tail, certainly,' said Alice, looking down with wonder at the Mouse's tail; 'but why do you call it sad?' (Carroll 1992: 37)

Marianowicz rendered it as:

- Obiecałaś, że opowiesz mi swoją historię - rzekła Alicja. - Dlaczego nie znosisz „k” i „p” - dodała półszepem, nie chcąc raz jeszcze obrazić Myszy.

- Dobrze, obiecałam. Zobaczysz sama, jak bardzo ten problem jest *zaogniony*...

- *Za o...* - powtórzyła bezmyślnie Alicja, nie bardzo rozumiejąc, o co chodzi. - *Za o...*, ale za co?... *za ogony!* - przypomniała sobie, gdy popatrzyła na długi i kręty ogon Myszy (1988: 48)

Słomczyński's version is:

- Obiecałaś, że opowiesz mi o swoim losie - powiedziała Alicja - i o tym, dlaczego nienawidzisz... K i P - dodała szeptem, obawiając się, że urazi ją ponownie.

- *O, goni smutny i długi* mnie los, smutny i długi jak ta opowieść! - powiedziała Myszka, zwracając się ku Alicji i wzdychając.

- *Ogon i smutny, i długi?* - powiedziała Alicja spoglądając ze zdumieniem na jej ogon. - Długi tak, ale dlaczego mówisz, że smutny? (2000: 27)

Whereas Kaniewska dealt with this fragment in the following way:

- Obiecałaś, że opowiesz mi swoją historię - nalegała Alicja. - Wiesz, tę, która mówi, dlaczego nie lubisz tych na Ka ani tych na Pe - dodała szeptem, w obawie, że Mysz znów poczuje się obrażona.

- To będzie długi i smutny agon! - powiedziała Mysz, spoglądając na Alicję i wzdychając.

- Tak, rzeczywiście DŁUGI - powiedziała Alicja, zerkając w dół na ogon Myszy.  
- Ale dlaczego uważasz, że jest smutny? (2000: 43)

In the original the play on words is obvious. The Mouse says that its story is very long and miserable. As the animal uses the word *tale*, which sounds identical to the word *tail*, Alice confuses these words. Consequently, she can perfectly understand that the mouse's tail is long, but she cannot see it as being sad.

Marianowicz changed the original text. He replaced one pun with another. It is still the conversation about why the Mouse hates cats and dogs, but Alice is not surprised by the fact that the animal says that it has a long tale. Here, Alice simply did not understand what the Mouse had said and she tries to guess what it could be. This translator substitutes the word *tale* with the word *problem* (*a problem*) and describes it as being *zaogniony* (*very complicated*). Then, when Alice looks at the rodent's tail, she immediately starts to think that what the Mouse said is *za ogony* (*for tails*). As can easily be noticed, Marianowicz sought to make a connection between the adjective *zaogniony* and the phrase *za ogony*. From the semantic point of view these words have very little in common, since *zaogniony* comes from the word *ogień* (*fire*) and not from the word *ogon* (*tail*), but they sound similar.

The next quoted fragment comes from Słomczyński's translation. He modified the original text to create a new wordplay. He came up with the phrase *O, goni smutny i długi* *mnie los* (*O, a sad and a long fate is chasing me*), which in fast speech might be understood as *ogon i smutny i długi* (*a sad and a long tail*). This is also the case in this passage. Alice mishears this phrase and cannot understand why the Mouse calls its tail sad. All in all, even though the text is slightly different, Słomczyński's wordplay is very close to the original pun.

Kaniewska, in turn, made an attempt to translate Carroll's pun as literally as possible. The form of this fragment is almost identical to the original. The only visible difference is in the change of the word *tale* into *agon*, which comes from the word *agonia* (*agony*). The word has nothing to do with tales but it is semantically close to a mournful story and it differs from the word *ogon* in only one vowel.

Another example of wordplay involving homophones occurs in chapter 9 – *The Mock Turtle's Story*. In this section, the Mock Turtle, despite his constant sobbing, tries to tell his story about how he used to be a real turtle in school times. The original version is:

‘When we were little,’ the Mock Turtle went on at last, more calmly, though still sobbing a little now and then, ‘we went to school in the sea. The master was an old Turtle - we used to call him Tortoise -’

‘Why did you call him Tortoise, if he wasn’t one?’ Alice asked.

‘We called him Tortoise because he taught us,’ said the Mock Turtle angrily: ‘really you are very dull!’ (Carroll 1992: 114-116)

Marianowicz rendered it as:

- Kiedy byliśmy mali - odezwał się na koniec Niby Żółw spokojnym już głosem, przerywanym tylko od czasu do czasu cichym łkaniem - kiedy byliśmy mali, chodziłem do morskiej szkoły. Nauczycielem naszym był pewien stary, bezzębny Rekin, którego nazywaliśmy Piłą.

- Dlaczego nazywaliście go Piłą, skoro był Rekinem, a w dodatku nie miał zębów? - zapytała Alicja.

- Ponieważ piłował nas wciąż w czasie lekcji - odparł ze zniecierpliwieniem Niby Żółw. - Twoje pytanie nie świadczy doprawdy o zbyt wielkim rozsądku (1988: 166).

Słomczyński’s translation reads as follows:

- Gdy byliśmy dziećmi - powiedział wreszcie Żółwicielem głosem spokojniejszym, choć przerywanym od czasu do czasu łkaniem - uczęszczaliśmy do szkoły znajdującej się w morzu. Nauczycielem naszym był stary Żółw... nazywaliśmy go Ostrygą...

- Dlaczego nazywaliście go Ostrygą, jeżeli nią nie był? - zapytała Alicja.

- Nazywaliśmy go Ostrygą, bo był ostry - powiedział gniewnie Żółwicielem. - Jesteś naprawdę bardzo tępą! (2000: 79)

Kaniewska’s rendition is:

- Kiedy jeszcze byliśmy mali - Niby-Żółw w końcu podjął opowieść i mówił trochę spokojniej, choć od czasu do czasu pochlipywał - chodziliśmy do szkoły w morzu. Naszym nauczycielem był pewien stary żółw, nazywaliśmy go Uczeń...

- Dlaczego nazywaliście go uczniem, jeżeli nim nie był? - spytała Alicja.

- Nazywaliśmy go Uczniem, bo nas uczył - rozzłościł się Niby-Żółw. - Naprawdę, strasznie tępą jesteś! (2010: 130)

While Dworak’s version is:

- Kiedy byliśmy mali - Nibyżółw podjął opowieść spokojniej, choć nadal od czasu do czasu pochlipywał - chodziliśmy do szkoły w morzu. Nauczycielem był stary Żółw Morski - nazywaliśmy go Żółwiem Lądowym...

- Dlaczego nazywaliście go Żółwiem Lądowym, skoro nim nie był? - zapytała Alicja.

- Bo często łądownaliśmy u niego na dywaniku - odparł ze złością Nibyżółw. - Naprawdę jesteś tępa! (2009: 134)

In Carroll's novel the Mock Turtle says that he used to go to the sea school every single day and his master was an old turtle named Tortoise. Alice wants to know why they called him this, and the creature explains that they named him Tortoise "because he taught us". Here the pun plays on the phonetic similarity of "taught us" and "tortoise", the name of a similar type of creature. In Polish *turtle* and *tortoise* are *żółw morski* and *żółw lądowy* respectively, but Polish speakers rarely distinguish between these species and call both *żółw*.

Marianowicz decided to use different animal names than Carroll did. He changed *an old turtle* into *stary rekin* ('an old shark') whom the students named *Piła* ('sawfish'). To make the pun even more humorous he added the adjective *bezzębny* ('toothless') to describe this creature. The wordplay consists in the use of the word *piła* and the turtle's explanation, where he says that they used to call the teacher this way since he *piłował* ('pestered/was very strict towards') his students. Actually, the verb *piłować*, which in colloquial language is used to indicate that someone, especially a teacher, is very strict, comes from the word *piła* (a saw). Nevertheless, in Polish this word is a homonym, which may refer either to a saw or to a sawfish. What is also interesting is the fact that over 30 years later Robert Stiller (1986) made use of Marianowicz's idea and included the same pun in his own translation of this book.

Słomczyński coped with this fragment in a different way. He translated *an old Turtle* as *stary Żółw*, who was called *Ostryga* (an oyster). The reason for naming this teacher *Ostryga* is that he was *ostry* (severe). Even though these words do not derive from the same term and they have little in common on the semantic level, they include the same element – *ostry*. Accordingly, they might be quite easily associated with each other. As in Marianowicz's version, the teacher is portrayed as demanding and strict, whereas in the original there is no reference to this fact.

Kaniewska found yet another solution to translate this pun. In her version the old Turtle was called *Uczeń* (a learner). When Alice interrupts The Mock Turtle to find out why they called him *uczeń* if he was not one, the creature responds: *Nazywaliśmy go Uczniem, bo nas uczył*. Its literal translation into English – 'We called him a Learner because he taught us' sounds completely illogical, but in Polish *uczyć* refers to both learning and teaching, though when it is used to mean 'learn' it is a reflexive verb accompanied by *się* (oneself). *Uczeń* is not a person who teaches (it is *nauczyciel* in Polish), but a Polish reader will understand the connection.

The last quoted passage is written by Dworak. This translation is the closest to the original while looking at the animals chosen. Here, *a Turtle* was rendered as *żółw morski* and *a Tortoise* was translated as *żółw lądowy*. To justify his decisions he came up with the Mock Turtle's explanation that they used to call their teacher this way, *bo często łądownaliśmy u niego na dywaniku* ('because we were often called on the carpet'). The words *lądowy* ('living on land') and *łądować* ('to land') are semantically related, so it is easy for Polish speakers to associate one with the other. All in all, Dworak's attempt is quite successful, as he managed to preserve the comic effect of the original.

There is another instance of wordplay in the same chapter. The Mock Turtle continues to talk about his education, which he considers to be the best available. Alice is curious about what subjects he studied. The original reads as follows:

'What was that?' inquired Alice.

‘Reeling and Writhing, of course, to begin with,’ the Mock Turtle replied; ‘and then the different branches of Arithmetic - Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision.’

‘I never heard of “Uglification,” Alice ventured to say. ‘What is it?’

The Gryphon lifted up both its paws in surprise. ‘What! Never heard of uglifying!’ it exclaimed. ‘You know what to beautify is, I suppose?’

‘Yes,’ said Alice doubtfully: ‘it means - to - make - anything - prettier.’

‘Well, then,’ the Gryphon went on, if you don’t know what to uglify is, you *are* a simpleton.’ (Carroll 1992: 117)

Marianowicz translated it as:

- A jakie mieliście przedmioty? - zapytała Alicja.

- No, oczywiście przede wszystkim: *zgrzytanie* i *zwisanie*. („czytanie i pisanie” - pomyślała Alicja). Ponadto cztery działania arytmetyczne: *podawanie*, *obejmowanie*, *mrożenie* i *gdzielenie*.

- Nigdy nie słyszałam o *gdzieleniu* - odezwała się nieśmiało Alicja. - Co to za przedmiot?

Smok podniósł przednie łapy i przybrał pozę wyrażającą bezgraniczne zdumienie.

- Nigdy nie słyszałaś o *gdzieleniu*? A co mówi nauczyciel, gdy część uczniów nie zdążyła zrobić na czas klasówki?

- Nie wiem.

- Nauczyciel pyta wówczas: „*A gdzie lenie*, którzy nie oddali jeszcze zeszytów?” - i to jest właśnie ten przedmiot. Jeśli tego nie rozumiesz, no to wybacz... (1988: 170-171)

Słomczyński’s version is:

- Jakich? - spytała Alicja.

- Na początku była oczywiście nauka Chłapcadła i Portografia - odpowiedział Żółwiciel - a później różne odgałęzienia Arytmetyki - Wodowanie, Obejmowanie, Dnożenie i Brzydzielenie.

- Nigdy nie słyszałam o „Brzydzieleniu” - odważyła się wtrącić Alicja. - Cóż to jest takiego?

Zdumiony Gryf aż unióśł obie łapy. - Nigdy nie słyszała o „Brzydzieleniu”! - wykrzyknął. - Mam nadzieję, że wiesz, co oznacza słowo upięknianie?

- Tak - powiedziała niepewnie Alicja - oznacza to... że... chce się... chce się coś upięknąć.

- W takim razie - ciągnął Gryf - *musisz być* wielkim głuptasem, jeżeli nie wiesz, co to jest „Brzydzielenie” (2000: 80).

While Kaniewska’s rendition of this fragment is:



- Czyli co?- zaciekała się Alicja.

- Nawijanie i Wykręcanie, oczywiście, żeby od czegoś zacząć - odpowiedział Niby-Żółw - no i do tego różne dziedziny arytmetyczne: Ambicjonowanie, Różniczkowanie, Szkaradzenie i Ironizowanie.

- Nigdy nie słyszałam o takim przedmiocie, jak Szkaradzenie - odważyła się wtrącić Alicja. - Czego na nim uczą?

Gryfon podniósł obie łapy ze zdziwienia:

- Co takiego? Nie słyszała o Szkaradzeniu! - wykrzyknął. - Ale wiesz chyba, o co chodzi w upiększaniu?

- No tak - przyznała niepewnie Alicja - to znaczy... żeby robić coś... żeby było ładniej...

- Ano właśnie - mówił Gryfon - więc jeśli nie wiesz, o co chodzi w szkaradzeniu, to OSIOŁ z ciebie! (p. 132)

In the original text the play on words involves the names of extraordinary courses that the Mock Turtle attended at school. He studied Reeling and Writing, Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision. *Reeling* is naturally more meaningful to sea creatures than *reading*, and *writhing* is more useful than *writing*, which are the elementary skills taught in school. So is the case with the different branches of Arithmetic that the Mock Turtle was taught – *ambition*, *distraction*, *uglification*, and *derision* (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division). Alice asks him to explain *uglification*, which the Mock Turtle explains as the reverse of beautification. Each of the Polish translators dealt with the puns in a different way.

Marianowicz translated *reeling* and *writhing* as *zgrzytanie* ('grinding') and *zwisanie* ('hanging down'), which are not connected in any way with sea creatures. In fact, these words are also difficult to associate with the Polish equivalents of *reading* and *writing* which are *czytanie* and *pisanie*. Marianowicz was aware of the shortcomings of his rendition and added an explanation in parenthesis: "*czytanie i pisanie*" – *pomyślała Alicja* ("reading and writing" – Alice thought). As far as the names of the branches of arithmetic are concerned, Marianowicz's choices are: *podawanie* ('passing'), *obejmowanie* ('embracing'), *mrożenie* ('freezing'), and *gdzielenie* (a neologism based on *dzielenie* 'division'). *Gdzielenie* is the one Alice asks about. To explain this riddle the Mock Turtle asks Alice what the teacher says to students who do not manage to finish their tests on time. Alice does not know the answer, which turns out to be: *A gdzie lenie, którzy nie oddali jeszcze zeszytów?* ('Where are the lazybones who have not yet returned their notebooks?').

Słomczyński found another way to render this passage. In this version *chlapecadło* and *portografia* stand for *reeling* and *writhing*. The former is based on the verb *chlapać* ('to splash') and the word *abecadło* ('the alphabet'). The second one is a combination of the words *port* ('a harbour') and *ortografia* ('orthography'). These names do not resemble *reading* and *writing* but they are easily associated with things taught in school – the alphabet and orthography. The connection with the sea has been retained as well, as in the case of some of the names of the four mathematical calculations, which Słomczyński rendered as *wodowanie*, *obejmowanie*, *dnożenie*, and *brzydzielenie*. *Wodowanie* ('to launch a ship') is a combination of the words *woda* ('water') and *dodawanie* ('addition'), while *dnożenie* is a mixture of the terms *dno* ('sea bed') and *mnożenie* ('multiplication'). The word that is explained by the Mock Turtle is *brzydzielenie*. It is composed of the words *brzydki* ('ugly') and *dzielenie* ('division'), which makes it close to the original pun. The turtle's clarification is

also very similar (if not identical) to the one present in Carroll's work, since *brzydzielić* is to make something uglier. Consequently, Słomczyński's version is very close to the original one and preserves the comic effect of the original puns.

Kaniewska tried to render Carroll's puns as literally as possible, which is why most of the ambiguities and allusions have been lost. *Reeling* and *writhing* are translated as *nawijanie* ('reeling') and *wykręcanie* ('twisting'). *Ambition* becomes *ambicjowanie*, *differentiation* is rendered as *różniczkowanie*, *uglification* becomes *szkaradzenie*, *derision* – *ironizowanie*. Linguistically, the translation is correct, but it fails to preserve any connection with the names of school subjects and sea terms.

As chapter 9 abounds in puns one more example is worth mentioning. In the passage quoted below Alice asks about the length of the lessons, and the Mock Turtle responds that they became shorter day by day. Alice finds this confusing, but the Mock Turtle explains that they were called lessons because they "lessen." The original version is:

'And how many hours a day did you do lessons?' said Alice, in a hurry to change the subject.

'Ten hours the first day,' said the Mock Turtle: 'nine the next, and so on.'

'What a curious plan!' exclaimed Alice.

'That's the reason they're called lessons,' the Gryphon remarked: 'because they lessen from day to day.'

This was quite a new idea to Alice, and she thought it over a little before she made her next remark. 'Then the eleventh day must have been a holiday?'

'Of course it was,' said the Mock Turtle.

'And how did you manage on the twelfth?' Alice went on eagerly (Carroll 1992: 118).

Morawska's rendering reads as follows:

- Ile godzin dziennie mieliście lekcje? - spytała Alicja, aby oderwać strapionych od rozmyślań.

- Dziesięć godzin pierwszego dnia - powiedział Fałszywy Żółw - dziewięć następnego itd.

- Nadzwyczajny program - zdumiała się Alicja.

- I dlatego nazywali to lekcjami, rozumiesz, z każdym dniem l e k c e j i l e k c e j.

Taki rozkład zajęć był tak bardzo nowy dla Alicji, że przez jakiś czas milczała pogrążona w rozmyślaniu i dopiero po jakimś czasie zapytała:

- A więc jedenasty dzień był dniem świątecznym?

- Oczywiście, że był - potwierdził Żółw.

- A coście robili z dwunastym? - zapytała pośpiesznie Alicja (p. 104-105).

Marianowicz's translation is:

- A czy mieliście często wypracowania? zapytała Alicja, pragnąc jak najszybciej zmienić temat rozmowy, nasuwający obu zwierzakom tak bolesne wspomnienia.

- I owszem. Mieliśmy *wyprasowania domowe* mniej więcej raz na tydzień - odrzekł Smok.
- A czasem nawet dwa - dodał Niby Żółw.
- A jak było u was z *ćwiczeniami*?
- O, świetnie, znakomicie. Zapewniam cię, że ćwiczeń nam nie brakło. Byliśmy *ćwiczeni* przy każdej okazji - odparł dumnie Niby Żółw (p. 172).

Słomczyński's version reads as follows:

- A miewaliście piątki? - zapytała pospiesznie Alicja, chcąc szybko zmienić temat.
  - Tak, ponad pięćdziesiąt rocznie, cztery miesięcznie i raz w tygodniu.
  - Zawsze raz w tygodniu? - zawołała zdumiona Alicja.
  - Oczywiście, że tak - powiedział Gryf - przecież jest tylko jeden piątek w tygodniu.
- Odpowiedź ta tak zdziwiła Alicję, że musiała się zastanowić trochę, zanim zadała następne pytanie. - A czwórek nie mieliście w takim razie wcale?
- Oczywiście, że nie - odparł Żółwiciel (2000: 81).

While Kaniewska rendered it as:

- A ile godzin zabierały wam lekcje? - spytała Alicja, żeby jak najprędzej zmienić temat.
  - Pierwszego dnia zabierały dziesięć godzin - powiedział Niby-Żółw - a następnego zabierały dziewięć godzin i tak dalej.
  - Dziwny plan! - wykrzyknęła Alicja.
  - Właśnie dlatego się mówi, że godziny zabierały nam lekcje - zauważył Gryfon - bo każdego dnia zabierały sobie jedną.
- Była to dla Alicji absolutna nowość, więc musiała przez chwilę nad nią pomyśleć, nim wygłosiła kolejną uwagę:
- A więc jedenastego dnia musieliście mieć wolne?
  - No oczywiście - powiedział Niby-Żółw.
  - A jak sobie radziliście dwunastego dnia? - Alicja była niezwykle ciekawa odpowiedzi (2010: 133-134).

In the original the play on words again relies on the use of homophones which are very hard to translate into Polish: *lesson* and *lessen*.

In Morawska's version there are no homophones, nevertheless she managed to preserve the content of the source text, and stayed close to its form. Here, when Alice is puzzled by the turtle's lesson plan, he responds that lessons are named *lekcje* because it is *lekcej i lekcej* with each passing day. *Lekcej* ('easier'/lighter') is a nonstandard form, a comparative of *lekko* ('easy/light'). The standard version is *lżej* but the pun is only possible with the nonstandard

variant. Some years later Stiller (1986) decided to include this rendering in his own translation.

Marianowicz's choice was entirely different. He replaced the original exchange with two completely different puns. In his version, Alice wants to know how often the sea creature had to write *wypracowania* ('essays'). The Mock Turtle replies that they had *wyprasowania* once a week. *Wyprasowanie* is a neologism based on the verb *prasować* ('to iron'). In the second pun, Alice inquires whether they did any *ćwiczenia* ('exercises'). The creature confuses this word with the phrase *być ćwiczonym*, which has a close meaning but in colloquial language is much stronger and refers to drilling with a degree of physical force. Marianowicz's play on words relies on the misunderstandings between the two characters, but it is very distant from both the content and the effect of the original.

Słomczyński also decided to substitute the original pun with a new one. In his translation Alice asks whether students in the Mock Turtle's school ever got *piątki* ('fives' – the highest grade in the Polish educational system at the time). This word is a homonym in Polish: *piątki* also means 'Fridays', which is how the turtle understands it.

Kaniewska found another way to translate this pun. She made use of the homonym *zabierać*, which may mean either *to take something away* or *to last* ('take time'). According to the Mock Turtle, during the first day the lessons *zabierały* ('took') ten hours, but on the next day they lasted nine hours and so on. When Alice is surprised by this extraordinary lesson plan the Mock Turtle says that each day *zabierał* ('took away') one lesson.

## Concluding remarks

The overview of translations presented in this paper demonstrates why there are so many Polish renderings of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*: the book is so rich in language-specific puns that there are countless possibilities of rendering it into foreign languages. As Barańczak (2004) observes, when someone decides to publish a new translation of a literary work, they usually believe that they can do a better job than their predecessors. The translations discussed here differ in many significant ways. Marianowicz's rendition is domesticated and rather infantile because he translated the book as a story for children. Nevertheless, he tried to preserve some of the puns used by Carroll or replace them with new ones. Słomczyński focused on the humorous effect of the puns more than on the original structure and content of the text. He often modified the source text to have the possibility to play on words. Kaniewska's translation is the most literal of the ones discussed here, which is why it fails to reflect most of the ambiguity and comic quality of the original.

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