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**A translator as an author:
on the dynamics of meaning
behind *podróż* and *ruch*
in the English translation of ‘Bieguni’
by Olga Tokarczuk**

Introduction

Olga Tokarczuk’s novel ‘Bieguni’¹ (‘Flights’²) celebrating the issue of travelling, mobility and movement as an immanent part of human life, occupies an exceptional place not only on the map of the Polish and world literature, but also on the map of literary translations. This was evidenced by the Man Booker International Prize awarded collectively to the author and the translator, Jennifer Croft, in 2018. The fragmentary novel, presenting stories of particular characters through a series of vignettes, offers an intriguing insight into its characters’ travels, be it journeys, trips, expeditions, voyages, explorations, etc³. Its leitmotif and motto could probably be best encapsulated in the following quote: ‘Fluidity, mobility, illusoriness – these are precisely the qualities that make us civilized. Barbarians don’t travel. They simply go to destinations or conduct raids’ (Olga Tokarczuk 2018: 48⁴).

The work itself, as well as its translation, has been subject to great scholarly attention resulting in subsequent critical reviews and academic publications (cf. Anita

¹ TOKARCZUK O., *Bieguni*, Kraków, Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2007.

² TOKARCZUK O., *Flights* (trans. Jennifer Croft), Croydon, Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2018.

³ Tokarczuk often refers to journeys in her books titles, e.g. ‘Podróż ludzi księgi’ (The Journey of the Book People) or the subtitle of *The Books of Jacob*: ‘A Fantastic Journey Across Seven Borders, Five Languages, and Three Major Religions, Not Counting the Minor Sects’.

⁴ TOKARCZUK O., op. cit. The motto seems particularly valid in the contemporary times marked by the Russian invasion on Ukraine.

Całek 2021⁵; Sungeun Choi and Wioletta Hajduk-Gawron 2020⁶; Grzegorz Franczak 2021⁷; Adam Głaz 2021⁸; Dorota Gołek-Sepetliewa 2020⁹; Marcelina Pietryga 2021¹⁰; Ewa Sławkowa 2013¹¹; Karolina Siwek 2021¹²; James Underhill and Adam Głaz 2021¹³, among others). Some of these already point out to the issue of the translator embarking on the role of the author (Pietryga 2020¹⁴, 2021¹⁵), with their arguments pertaining mostly to distinct elements of untranslatability (e.g. the double sense of *biegunka* as ‘a flight’ and ‘the runs’), Polish culture-specific terms (e.g. the female name *Jagoda*), the strategy of omission (from single words to whole paragraphs), or additions as permeating the target text. Such claims seem to be supported even by a prima facie investigation of the rendition of the title itself¹⁶, where the Slavic word *bieguni* refers to a sect holding a belief in constant motion as a form of protection from evil¹⁷, whereas *flights*, used for the English title, connotes both the action of flying and fleeing, thus being of a more generic character¹⁸.

⁵ CAŁEK A., *Narracja w biografii: od ustanawiania sensu do budowania relacji*, Zagadnienia rodzajów literackich, 64(2), 2021, pp. 27-43.

⁶ CHOI S., HAJDUK-GAWRON W., *Podróż między dwoma językami O pracy nad przekładem tekstów Olgi Tokarczuk z Esterą Czoj – tłumaczką literatury polskiej na język koreański – rozmawia Wioletta Hajduk-Gawron*, Postscriptum Polonistyczne, 25(1), 2020, pp. 177-196.

⁷ FRANCZAK G., 2021. „Ogumienie mózgu” w „słabym świetle postępu”: O pułapkach translacji syntagmatycznej i niebezpośredniej na przykładzie włoskiej wersji *Biegunów* Olgi Tokarczuk, *Między Oryginałem a Przekładem*, 27(2 (52), 2021, pp. 35-61.

⁸ GŁAZ A., *Longing for an Olga that belongs in English: a Nobel Prize laureate's micro-narratives*, Perspectives: Studies in Translation Theory and Practice, 2021.

⁹ GOŁEK-SEPETLIEWA D., *Recepcja twórczości Olgi Tokarczuk w Bułgarii*, *Przekłady Literatur Słowiańskich*, T. 10, Nr 2, 2020, pp. 47- 58.

¹⁰ PIETRYGA, M., *The Use of Explicitation to Retain the Foreignness of Olga Tokarczuk's Flights*, *Między Oryginałem a Przekładem*, 27/2 (52), 2021, pp. 101-116.

¹¹ SŁAWKOWA E., *Bieguni Olgi Tokarczuk: artystyczny obraz domu i świata* [in:] Sokólska U. (ed.), *Tekst - akt mowy - gatunek wypowiedzi*, Białystok, 2013, s. 23-31.

¹² SIWEK, K., *A Flight of Tokarczuk Translators: Remarks on Collaboration and Cooperation*, *Między Oryginałem a Przekładem*, 27/2 (52), 2021, pp. 117-134.

¹³ UNDERHILL J., GŁAZ A., *Olga Tokarczuk is IN. A Dialogue between James W. Underhill and Adam Głaz on Filtering Olga Tokarczuk's "Tender Worldview" into English during her Nobel Lecture*, *Między Oryginałem a Przekładem*, nr 2(52), 2021, pp. 145-162.

¹⁴ PIETRYGA M., *Tłumacz jako autor na podstawie wybranych fragmentów powieści Olgi Tokarczuk Bieguni*, *Rocznik Przekładoznawczy*, 15, 2020, pp. 285-303.

¹⁵ PIETRYGA M., op. cit.

¹⁶ It seems interesting to compare the English rendition of the title with French and German counterparts. The French title, ‘Les Pérégrins’, refers to the concept of *peregrination*, whereas the German title, ‘Unrast’ is equivalent with the English ‘Unrest’, implying the uneasiness behind the wanderings of the characters.

¹⁷ ‘[C]hange will always be a nobler thing than permanence; that which is static will degenerate and decay, turn to ash, while that which is in motion is able to last for all eternity’ (Tokarczuk 2018:11).

¹⁸ As Tokarczuk explicates it herself, the reason for using the word *flights* was ‘the strangeness or absence of the lexeme *bieguni* outside the Slavic languages, which for a reader from a different cultural circle would result only in the effect of exoticism. The connotations of *flights* are much greater – it is

It is in this context, i.e. of substantial differences existing between the Polish and English texts, that we champion the claim that the English translator of Tokarczuk's work cherishes the author-like status. Tokarczuk herself, in the essay titled 'How Translators Are Saving the World' (2019), appears to corroborate this view:

Lately I have often stood alongside a translator as I have launched books published in other countries. It's hard for me to express the relief that comes with being able to share authorship with someone. I was delighted to relinquish at least a little bit of my responsibility for the text, for better or for worse. (...) The translator would take over calmly, showing the text to the world from a different perspective, becoming its support and vouching for it. What bliss. Translators free writers from the profound loneliness that is inherent to our work, when for hours or days or months or even years on end we wander alone in the cosmos of our thoughts, internal dialogues, and visions. Translators come to us from the outside and say: I have been there, too. I have walked in your footsteps – and now we will cross over this border together. And indeed, the translator literally becomes a guide, taking me by the hand and leading me across the borders of nation, language, and culture.

The aim of this article is to examine the renderings of lexical items essential for the structure and the content of Tokarczuk's 'Bieguni'¹⁹, i.e. *podróż*, and *ruch*, in the English translation performed by Jennifer Croft. Since we believe that both a wide-angle lens and a microscope are needed to view the composition properly, we offer both a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the terms in question. In particular, 78 instances of the use of *podróż*, and 80 instances of the use of *ruch* are subject to the scrupulous comparative analyses when it comes to their translated equivalents, providing an in-depth description of their context-embedded textual meanings, and an attempt to demonstrate that some of the translator's choices befit the characteristics of explicitation, which occurs

when a SL unit with a more general meaning is replaced by a TL unit with a more specific meaning; when the meaning of a SL unit is distributed over several units in the TL; when new meaningful elements appear in the TL text; when one sentence in the ST is divided into two or several sentences in the TT; or, when SL phrases are extended or "raised" to clause level in the TT etc. (Kinga Klaudy and Krisztina Károly 2005²⁰: 15).

On the basis of the obtained results of our analyses, we claim that particular renditions of the key lexemes break the mould of their prototypical meanings and, in line with Ronald Langacker's views (1987²¹: 37), display a substantial, often impres-

not only 'travels by plane', but also movement in general, a shifting perspective and a bit of madness' (Hoffman 2019).

¹⁹ TOKARCZUK O., 2007, op. cit.

²⁰ KLAUDY K., KÁROLY K., *Implicitation in Translation: Empirical evidence for operational asymmetry in translation*, *Across Languages and Cultures*, 6(1), 2005, pp. 13-28.

²¹ LANGACKER R., *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar: Theoretical prerequisites*, Stanford University Press, 1987.

sive variety of interrelated senses and conventionally sanctioned usages, thus forming a complex semantic category. Therefore, bearing in mind their novel and often unexpected semantic values, we claim that the translator's choices exemplify the translator-as-author approach as observed throughout the target text.

What sets our study apart from others works concerning translations of Tokarczuk's narratives is the fact that none of the available publications focused primarily on the dynamics of meaning behind translations of selected lexical items throughout her novel, which oftentimes proves crucial for the nuanced understanding of the work.

Meaning as contextual

Recent trends in linguistic semantics can be labelled as 'cognitive' and 'contextual' since they point to the pivotal role played by conceptualization and context in the attribution of meanings to lexical items. To be more specific, it can be claimed that meaning construction should be understood as a type of on-line mental activity operating on underspecified linguistic units in context (William Croft and Alan Cruse 2004²²; John Sinclair 2004²³; Vyvyan Evans 2006²⁴; Günter Radden, Klaus-Michael Köpcke, Thomas Berg, Peter Siemund 2007²⁵; Alan Cruse 2011²⁶; Patrick Hanks 2013²⁷, among others). This could be illustrated by the examples provided by Cruse (2011²⁸: 100),

[o]nce we try to grapple with the notion of 'the meaning of a word', we come up against a serious problem, namely, that the interpretation we give to a particular word form can vary so greatly from context to context. The observable variations range from very gross, with little or no perceptible connection between the readings, as is *They moored the boat to the **bank*** and *He is the manager of a local **bank***, through clearly different but intuitively related readings, as in *My father's firm built this **school*** (...) and *John's **school** won the Football Charity Shield last year* (...), to relatively subtle variations, as in the case of (...) *walk* in *Alice can **walk** already and she's only 11 months old* and *I usually **walk** to work*.

²² CROFT W., CRUSE A., *Cognitive linguistics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

²³ SINCLAIR J., *Trust the text*. London, Routledge, 2004.

²⁴ EVANS V., *Lexical concepts, cognitive models and meaning construction*, *Cognitive Linguistics*, 17, 2006, pp. 491-534.

²⁵ RADDEN G., KÖPCKE K. M., BERG T., SIEMUND P., *Aspects of Meaning Construction*. John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2007.

²⁶ CRUSE A., *Meaning in Language. An Introduction to Semantics and Pragmatics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2011.

²⁷ HANKS P., *Lexical Analysis. Norms and Exploitations*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, MIT Press, 2013.

²⁸ CRUSE A., op. cit.

It transpires that words occur in some verbal contexts which exploit their semantic potential, or to put it more generally, have an influence on their meaning by activating specific conceptual networks (Gład 2002²⁹: 15). Bearing this in mind, we deem it important to make a distinction between the *sense of a word* and its *textual meaning*. Thus, 'a word's sense is the concept it evokes within the (conventionalized) conceptual network, its textual meaning is its semantic value, i.e. conceptualization, in a given instance of use' (Gład 2002³⁰: 57-58). Gład points out that contextual meanings of lexical items often diverge from their conventional, prototypical senses. The issue of *the sense of a word* and its *textual meaning* seems to be best encompassed by the model of *meaning potential* (Gilles Fauconnier 1997³¹, Jens Allwood 2003³², Jordan Zlatev 2003³³).

A consequence of this approach is that no attempt is made to distinguish between lexical and encyclopedic information in terms of the kind of information that is contained in the meaning potential. Meaning potentials contain both kinds of information – the information deriving from use of language and information deriving from other experience with the world (Allwood 2003³⁴: 43).

Thus, assuming that semantic value of the word is a function of aspects such as: a conceptual network it triggers, links between a given word and semantically related ones (or a given conceptual network and other networks), and the role of the context, for the sake of the analyses conducted in this work, we will rely on a distinction between *the sense of a word* and its *textual meaning*. Such a distinction will be maintained in the qualitative analyses of the translations of selected lexical items in *Flights*.

Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the renderings of *podróż* into English

According to *Cambridge Dictionary*³⁵, the senses of the Polish lexeme *podróż* embrace meanings such as:

- a) *travel* (noun) 'the activity of travelling';
- b) *journey* (noun) 'when you travel from one place to another';

²⁹ GŁAZ A., *The Dynamics of Meaning. Explorations in the Conceptual Domain of Earth*, Lublin, Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2002.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ FAUCONNIER G., *Mappings in Language and Thought*, Cambridge, 1997.

³² ALLWOOD J., *Meaning potentials and context: Some consequences for the analysis of variation in meaning*. Berlin, Mouton De Gruyter, 2003.

³³ ZLATEV J., *Holistic spatial semantics of Thai* [W:] Casad E., Palmer G., (red.), *Cognitive Linguistics and Non-Indo European Languages*, Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter, 2003, s. 305–336.

³⁴ ALLWOOD J., op. cit.

³⁵ *Cambridge Dictionary*, [online], <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>.

- c) *trip* (noun) ‘a journey in which you visit a place for a short time and come back again’;
- d) *passage* (noun) ‘the movement or progress from one stage or place to another’;
- e) *crossing* (noun) ‘a journey across water’;
- f) *peregrination* (noun) ‘a long journey in which you travel to various different places, especially on foot’.

It figures that only half of these have been included in Croft’s choices, which expand the list by renderings such as *voyage*, *commute*, or *way*.

Translated variant	Frequency of use
travel(s)/travelling	23
journey	18
trip	15
descriptive phrase	12
voyage	6
commute	2

Table 1. Translations of “*podróż*” as explicated from Jennifer Croft’s translation of *Bieguni* by Olga Tokarczuk. Source: Own calculations.

Out of 76 contextual uses of *podróż*, the majority have been translated in accordance with its expected (prototypical) English senses, i.e. *travel(s)*, *travelling*, *journey*, or *trip*. A less substantial part of the renditions has been performed in line with the strategy of providing a longer, descriptive phrase, for instance, ‘getting to Ísafjörður’ (‘*podróż do Ísafjörður*’), ‘Ten years – that’s how long it took Eryk to get home’ (‘*Dziesięć lat – tyle trwała podróż Eryka do domu*’), etc. The marginal English textual meanings of *podróż* encountered in ‘Flights’ were *voyage* (6 instances of use) and *commute* (2 instances). When it comes to the last category, consider the following passage, covering the whole vignette titled ‘Cleopatras’:

Jechałam autobusem razem z kilkunastoma kompletnie zakrytymi kobietami w czerni. Przez wąską szparę widać im było tylko oczy – i zdumiewała mnie staranność i piękno makijażu. To oczy Kleopatry. Kobiety z wdziękiem piły wodę mineralną za pomocą plastikowej rurki; rurka znikła w fałdach czarnego materiału i odnajdowała tam gdzieś hipotetyczne usta. W kursowym autobusie

I rode a bus along with about a dozen fully veiled women. Through the slits in their garments you could only see their eyes – and I was astounded by the care and beauty of their make-up. They were the eyes of Cleopatras. The women gracefully drank bottled water with the aid of straws; the straws would disappear into the folds of the black material and find, somewhere within it, the women’s hypothetical lips.

puszczono właśnie film, który miał nam umilić **podróż** – to Lara Croft. Patrzyłyśmy, zafascynowane, na tę gibką dziewczynę o połyskliwych ramionach i udach, która kładła trupem uzbrojonych po zęby żołnierzy³⁶.

They'd just put on a movie up front, intended to improve our **commute** – on the screen was Lara Croft. Now all of us women looked on in fascination as that lithe girl with the gleaming arms and thighs felled soldiers who were all armed to the teeth³⁷.

Croft's choice of *commute* appears to narrow down the textual meaning of *podróż* into 'travelling regularly a long distance for work'. This does not appear to be corroborated by the contextual information derived from the passage as it is not clear that the narrator is on their way to work. If anything, the vision of a tour bus, with a movie displayed on the screen up front, is brought to mind. Thus, the generic *journey* would be more grounded in the context. Ergo, what can be observed here is the explicitation technique applied by the translator, leaving their mark on the interpretation of the text.

When it comes to other textual meanings of *podróż* as explicated in the target text, Croft, quite prototypically, sticks to *trip* rather than *journey* when the contextual clues point towards visits to a place done for pleasure or a particular purpose. Hence the title of one of the vignettes: 'Seven years of trips' ('Siedem lat podróży'), as it covers stories of a couple's annual travels on holidays. In the case when the context shifts towards a more generic meaning of *podróż*, Croft tends to switch into *journey*:

Kiedy wyruszam w **podróż**, znikam z map³⁸.

Whenever I set off on any sort of **journey** I fall off the radar³⁹.

It is interesting to note that when Tokarczuk introduces *podróż* in the sense of 'a long, tiring journey', Croft decides to provide its specific textual meanings, i.e. either *expedition* 'a long and carefully organized journey, especially to a dangerous or unfamiliar place' or *voyage* 'a long journey, by ship or spacecraft':

A tak muszą bez reszty oddać się czasowi podróży po szynach, odwiecznym zwyczajem przodków przebyć osobiście każdy kilometr, przejechać każdy most, wiadukt i tunel w tej **podróży po ziemi**⁴⁰.

Instead they must fully surrender to the time taken by rail travel, must personally traverse every kilometre according to the age-old custom of their ancestors, go over every bridge and through each viaduct and tunnel on this **voyage over land**⁴¹.

³⁶ TOKARCZUK O., 2008, op. cit., p. 64.

³⁷ TOKARCZUK O., 2018, op. cit., p.107.

³⁸ TOKARCZUK O., 2007, op. cit., p. 28.

³⁹ TOKARCZUK O., 2018, op. cit., p. 48.

⁴⁰ TOKARCZUK O., 2007, op. cit., p. 33.

⁴¹ TOKARCZUK O., 2018, op. cit., p. 57.

Rzeczy jak to rzeczy – niezgłębione, miękkie wylinki wielorazowego użytku, ochronne futerały dla kruchego pięćdziesięciokilkuletniego ciała, kombinezony przeciw promieniom słonecznym i wzrokowi ciekawskich. Niezbędne **w długiej podróży** i podczas kilkutygodniowego pobytu daleko, daleko, na krańcach świata⁴².

They're just things – soft, inscrutable skins that can be shed time and time again, protective. Indispensable **on her long voyage**, as well as when she gets there, for her weeks at the ends of the earth⁴³.

This contrasts with yet another, more generic use of *podróż* as exemplified in a different passage:

Unieważniła całą **jego długą męczącą podróż** i przygotowane przemowy, możliwe scenariusze⁴⁴.

She had rid him of the whole of his **long and tiring journey** and prepared speeches, possible scenarios⁴⁵,

where the consistent, expected rendition of *długa męcząca podróż* could be *voyage*.

Of great interest to any translation researcher could be passages saturated with a multitude of specific meanings revolving around *podróż*. Let us consider the following example:

Przypomina mi się, co przypomniało się kiedyś Borgesowi, że gdzieś czytał: ponoć duńscy księża w czasach budowania duńskiego imperium ogłaszali w kościołach, iż ten, kto weźmie udział w wyprawie na biegun północny, łatwiej dostąpi zbawienia duszy. A ponieważ nie było wielu chętnych, przyznawali, że to długa i trudna **wyprawa**, nie dla każdego, ale tylko dla tych odważnych. Lecz chętnych wcale nie przybywało. Więc żeby z tego wszystkiego wyjść z twarzą, księża sprostowali swoje ogłoszenie – właściwie każda **podróż** może być traktowana jak **wyprawa** na biegun, nawet **niewielka wycieczka**, nawet **przejażdżka miejską dorożką**⁴⁶.

I'm reminded of something that Borges was once reminded of, something he had read somewhere: apparently, in the days when the Dutch were constructing their Empire, ministers announced in Danish churches that those who took part in North Pole expeditions would be practically guaranteed salvation of their souls. When nevertheless there were few volunteers, the ministers acknowledged that the **expedition** was a long and arduous one, certainly not for everyone – only, in fact, for the very bravest. But still few came forward. So to avoid losing face, the ministers finally simplified their proclamation: actually, they said, any **voyage** could be considered **an expedition** to the North Pole, even **a little trip**, even **just a ride in a public carriage**⁴⁷.

⁴² TOKARCZUK O., 2007, op. cit., p. 147.

⁴³ TOKARCZUK O., 2018, op. cit., p. 227.

⁴⁴ TOKARCZUK O., 2007, op. cit., p. 81.

⁴⁵ TOKARCZUK O., 2018, op. cit., p. 131.

⁴⁶ TOKARCZUK O., 2007, op. cit., p. 51.

⁴⁷ TOKARCZUK O., 2018, op. cit., p. 86.

While *wyprawa* is consequently rendered as *expedition*, then *każda podróż*, which should imply its generic use, i.e. *any sort of journey*, is surprisingly rendered as *voyage*, which bears the traces of narrowing down the original lexeme's meaning and testifying to explicitation strategy.

Another passage of the source text particularly pregnant with many senses of *podróż* is the following one:

Jej codzienna **podróż** jest **podróżą** wahadłową po wdzięcznie zakrzywionym łuku, osiem kilometrów wybrzeża, tam i z powrotem, z domu do pracy i odwrotnie. Morze jest w tej **podróży** zawsze obecne i śmiało można powiedzieć, że jej **podróż** jest **podróżą morską**⁴⁸.

Her daily **commute** is a pendular **voyage** along an elegantly curved arc, eight kilometres of coast, there and back, from home to work and vice versa. The sea is ever-present in this **journey**, and one could say without hesitation that hers is a **maritime voyage**⁴⁹.

While at a first glance all the English lexemes appear to be fully justified by the contextual clues, the passage has a chance to be reinterpreted when juxtaposed with the text to come:

W pracy jednak przestawała myśleć o mailach, wracała do siebie, a tu nie było miejsca na mgliste wspomnienia. Gdy tylko zjeżdżała z podjazdu pod domem i włączała się do **ruchu** na szosie, zawsze była lekko podekscytowana – tyle rzeczy czeka na nią w laboratorium i biurze⁵⁰.

At work, she'd stop thinking about his emails. She was herself again, and anyway there was no place for hazy recollections here. As soon as she'd pulled out of the driveway at home and merged onto the **highway** she was always kind of excited at all the things that awaited her in the lab and in her office⁵¹.

This additional information clarifies the context of travelling, and specifies that the character's commute is done by car. From this perspective, the first use of *voyage* in the previous passage does not find any justification in the text but should be regarded as the translator's interpretation, while the latter use of *voyage* should be considered metaphorical.

As can be observed in the abovementioned qualitative and quantitative analysis of the English renditions of *podróż*, in certain cases Croft relies on the strategy of explicitation, substituting more general meanings of lexical items with more specific ones,

⁴⁸ TOKARCZUK O., 2007, op. cit. p. 151.

⁴⁹ TOKARCZUK O., 2018, op. cit. p. 231.

⁵⁰ TOKARCZUK O., 2018, op. cit. p. 151.

⁵¹ TOKARCZUK O., 2018, op. cit. p. 231.

thus leaving her mark on the text's interpretation. Such an approach appears to be indicative of the translator-as-author approach, confirming the thesis of our work⁵².

Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the renderings of "ruch" into English

*Cambridge Dictionary*⁵³ lists the following senses of the Polish lexeme *ruch*:

- a) *action* (noun) 'movement';
- b) *activity* (noun) 'the state of being active or lively';
- c) *motion* (noun) 'the act or state of moving';
- d) *motion* (noun) 'a single movement or gesture';
- e) *move* (noun) (in board games) 'an act of moving a piece';
- f) *movement* (noun) 'activity';
- g) *movement* (noun) 'an organization or association';
- h) *traffic* (noun) 'vehicles, aircraft, ships etc moving about'.

It turns out that such a network of meanings is significantly expanded in Croft's translation of 'Bieguni'.

Translated variant	Frequency of use
movement	31
motion	22
descriptive phrase	13
traffic	3
[omission of the phrase]	3
commotion	2
move	2
migration	1
position	1
actions	1
gesture	1

Table 2. Translations of "ruch" as explicated from Jennifer Croft's translation of Bieguni by Olga Tokarczuk. Source: Own calculations.

⁵² It must be noted though that since this part of the study focused exclusively on the translations of *podróż*, it could not take into account the synonyms of the phrase (e.g. *wyprawa*, *droga*, etc.), which could, nevertheless, be quite insightful when it comes to the conclusions of this project.

⁵³ *Cambridge Dictionary*, op. cit.

Out of 80 contextually sanctioned uses of *ruch*, the majority of its instances have been rendered as *movement* or *motion*. It is interesting to note that while *movement* is usually attributed to a particular object, e.g. 'movement of a foot' ('ruch stopy'), 'movement of the Engraver' ('ruch Grawera'), 'the movements of his bright, slender hands' ('ruchy jego jasnych, smukłych dłoni'), etc., the use of *motion* appears to be attributed to a general process of moving, not bounded by any particular start or finish, as exemplified by the following instances of use: 'a thing in motion' ('to, co jest w ruchu'), 'couple of thousand people, locals and tourists, melting in the heat, staying in motion?' ('kilka tysięcy ludzi, miejscowych i turystów, trwających w ruchu'), 'it is an order of transferral and of timetables in the service of motion' ('to porządek połączeń i rozkładów na usługach ruchu'), 'the subtle pleasure of experiencing internal motion' ('subtelna przyjemność doznawania wewnętrznego ruchu').

It is quite surprising to note that yet in some other passages, apparently referring to *ruch* in a generic way, the translator opted for *movement*:

Niedługo będzie można powiedzieć, że to miasta dołączyły do lotnisk w charakterze miejsc pracy i sypialń. Wiadomo przecież, że prawdziwe życie odbywa się w **ruchu**⁵⁴.

Soon we may well say that it's the cities that supplement the airports, as workplaces and places to sleep. It is widely known, after all, that real life takes place **in movement**⁵⁵.

The distinction between *motion* and *movement* is brought to the foreground in the following passage:

Ten, kto rządzi światem, nie ma władzy nad **ruchem** i wie, że nasze **ciało w ruchu** jest święte, tylko wtedy mu uciekasz, kiedy się poruszasz⁵⁶.

He who rules the world has no power over **movement** and knows that our body **in motion** is holy, and only then can you escape him, once you've taken off⁵⁷,

where one could claim that a consistent use of *motion* rather than *movement* could be sanctioned. On the other hand, even a specific instance or manner of moving gets rendered as *motion* by Croft:

Stewardesy, piękne jak anioły, sprawdzają nasze kompetencje do podróży i łagodnym ruchem ręki pozwalają nam zanurzyć się w miękkich, wyłożonych dywanem krągłościach tunelu, który powiezie nas na pokład samolotu i potem powietrzną, chłodną drogą w stronę nowych światów⁵⁸.

The flight attendants, beautiful as angels, check to make sure we're fit to travel, and then, with a benevolent **motion of the hand**, permit us to plunge on into the soft, carpet-lined curves of the tunnel that will lead us aboard our plane and onto a chilly aerial road to new worlds⁵⁹.

⁵⁴ TOKARCZUK O., 2007, op. cit., p. 30.

⁵⁵ TOKARCZUK O., 2018, op. cit., p. 51.

⁵⁶ TOKARCZUK O., 2007, op. cit., p. 139.

⁵⁷ TOKARCZUK O., 2018, op. cit., p. 214.

⁵⁸ TOKARCZUK O., 2007, op. cit., p. 216.

⁵⁹ TOKARCZUK O., 2018, op. cit., p. 322.

This, however, seems to be in line with the standard sense of *motion* as denoting ‘a single movement of your head or hand, especially one made in order to communicate something’ (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*⁶⁰). Croft’s discerning ability to detect a nuanced application of the varying senses is visible in her selection of *gesture* as an equivalent for *ruch* in the passage:

Zrobiła nieokreślony **ruch ręką**. Zniecierpliwiony⁶¹.

She makes a vague **gesture with her hand**.
Of impatience⁶²,

where the movement of the hand, produced out of impatience, is interpreted functionally as a gesture aiming to show what a character means or how they feel.

Another distinct textual meaning to be analysed pertaining to *ruch* is the one used in the context of the vehicles moving along a road or a street. Prototypically, such a context should point towards *traffic* as the most equivalent lexeme of choice. This seems to be confirmed, e.g. by a couple of renditions of *ruch* in the context of scarce traffic in the northern part of Iceland and cab traffic which had to be redirected en route of the funeral procession. However, the unit appears yet again in the beginning of the vignette titled ‘Apuleius the Donkey’:

Sprawa z osiołkami wygląda tak, że są raczej kosztowną inwestycją, która zwraca się długo i wymaga pracy. Poza sezonem, gdy nie ma turystów, trzeba mieć za co je nakarmić, zadbać o ich sierść, muszą być schludne. Ten ciemnobrązowy to samiec, ojciec całej rodziny. Nazywa się Apulejusz – tak go nazwała jedna turystka. Ten zaś ma na imię Jean-Jacques, chociaż to samica, a ten najjaśniejszy to Jean-Paul. Mam jeszcze kilka po drugiej stronie domu. Teraz poza sezonem pracują tylko dwa. Ale kiedy zaczyna **się ruch o świcie**, przyprowadzam je na miejsce, zanim jeszcze przyjadą autokary⁶³.

The deal with donkeys is that they are a rather costly investment, returns are slow and it takes a lot of work. Outside high season, when there are no tourists, you have to be able to finance their food and take care of their coats – they have to be kept neat. This dark brown one is a male, the father of a whole family. His name is Apuleius – that’s what one tourist lady called him. That one over there is called Jean-Jacques, although it’s a female, and that lightest one is Jean-Paul. I have a few more on the other side of the house. Now, in the off-season, only two are working. Now, in the off-season, only two are working. But when the **morning traffic starts** I bring them out here, before the tour buses arrive⁶⁴.

⁶⁰ *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, [online], <https://www.ldoceonline.com/>.

⁶¹ TOKARCZUK O., 2007, op. cit., p. 160.

⁶² TOKARCZUK O., 2018, op. cit., p. 241.

⁶³ TOKARCZUK O., 2007, op. cit., p. 64.

⁶⁴ TOKARCZUK O., 2018, op. cit., p. 109.

It seems that the phrase *ruch o świcie* could also be interpreted as the town coming to life after a night's rest in the sense of general commotion, rather than the mere traffic of the vehicles on the roads. This is even suggested by the temporal and iconic juxtaposition of *ruch o świcie* happening before the tour buses have a chance to arrive. Thus we claim that such a rendition could be classified as explicitation whereby a more general sense of a phrase is replaced by a lexical unit with a more specific meaning. A similar understanding of the streets being lively in the town could be evidenced in another passage:

Ludzie ruszyli już z miejsc i na ulicy panuje **poranny ruch**, choć słońce jeszcze nie weszło⁶⁵.

People are in motion already, the streets overtaken by **morning movements** even though the sun is not yet out⁶⁶.

While one could expect the lexeme *traffic*, or perhaps *commotion*, to be selected by Croft in the translation of the passage, instead the reader is confronted with *morning movements*. Here, for a change, the translator's choice fits the strategy of implicitation, which 'occurs (...) when a SL unit with a specific meaning is replaced by a TL unit with a more general meaning' (Klaudy and Károly 2005⁶⁷: 15). This could be further contrasted with the movement in the streets being translated indeed as *commotion*, highlighting the aspect of noisy activity rather than regular traffic per se:

Odwraca głowę do okna, żeby służące nie zauważyły łez, i widzi zwyczajny **miejski ruch**⁶⁸.

She turns her head to the window so the servants don't notice her tears, and she sees the ordinary city **commotion**⁶⁹.

It seems that the contexts for the two abovementioned passages are alike, if not the same, yet the translator's choices differ.

What should be also extrapolated in the context of *ruch*, is quite a common strategy (13 instances of use) of relying on an equivalent descriptive phrase used to convey its meaning, e.g. 'A crisp morning, the streets are lively, sunrise (...)' ('Rzeński poranek, ruch, wschód słońca (...)'), 'some stations are completely shut down' ('niektóre stacje w ogóle wyłącza się z ruchu'), 'he does force it forward again' ('zmusza ją [nogę] do ruchu), etc. A particularly interesting example of such a phrase is the rendering of 'włączyć się do ruchu na szosie' (literally: 'enter the road traffic'):

⁶⁵ TOKARCZUK O., 2007, op. cit., p. 139.

⁶⁶ TOKARCZUK O., 2018, op. cit., p. 213.

⁶⁷ KLAUDY K., KÁROLY K., op. cit.

⁶⁸ TOKARCZUK O., 2007, op. cit., p. 119.

⁶⁹ TOKARCZUK O., 2018, op. cit., p. 184.

W pracy jednak przestawała myśleć o mailach, wracała do siebie, a tu nie było miejsca na mgliste wspomnienia. Gdy tylko zjeżdżała z podjazdu pod domem i **włączała się do ruchu na szosie**, zawsze była lekko podekscytowana – tyle rzeczy czeka na nią w laboratorium i biurze⁷⁰.

At work, she'd stop thinking about his emails. She was herself again, and anyway there was no place for hazy recollections here. As soon as she'd pulled out of the driveway at home and **merged onto the highway** she was always kind of excited at all the things that awaited her in the lab and in her office⁷¹.

In this particular passage, Croft points towards a peculiar interpretation, rendering the generic *szosa* ('road') into the specific *highway*, thus implying an important, wider road that joins cities or towns together, directly available through the character's driveway at home. Once again, such an interpretation fits the characteristics of explicitation technique.

Apart from the abovementioned examples, what is worth noting is the marginal selection (1 instance of use each) of *migration*, *position*, *actions*, *gesture* to convey the meaning of *ruch*. Consider the following examples:

Wszystko jest dobrze zorganizowane; ruchome chodniki wspomagają **ruch podróżnych** z jednego terminalu na drugi; a potem z lotniska na inne lotnisko (niektóre z nich oddalone są od siebie o kilkanaście godzin lotu!), dyskretna służba porządkowa trzyma zaś pieczę nad doskonałym funkcjonowaniem tego wielkiego mechanizmu⁷².

Everything is well-lit; moving walkways facilitate **the migration of travellers** from one terminal to another so they may go, in turn, from one airport to another (sometimes at a distance of some sixteen hours of flight!) while a discreet staff ensures the flawlessness of this great mechanism's workings⁷³.

Here the act of passangers moving from one terminal to another is portayed by Croft as *migration*, which prototypically is used to denote a situation 'when large numbers of people go to live in another area or country, especially in order to find work' (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*⁷⁴). Again a strategy of explicitation is applied here, narrowing down the word's meaning. Such an observation can be further reinforced by an investigation of the rendering of the vague term *kilkanaście* ('over a dozen') as *sixteen* ('some sixteen hours of flight').

When it comes to the use of *position* and *gesture*, they seem to be correlated with the translator's interpretation of the function of *ruch* as used in the source text.

⁷⁰ TOKARCZUK O., 2007, op. cit., p. 151.

⁷¹ TOKARCZUK O., 2018, op. cit., p. 231.

⁷² TOKARCZUK O., 2007, op. cit., p. 30.

⁷³ TOKARCZUK O., 2018, op. cit., p. 51.

⁷⁴ *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, op. cit.

Jego wzwód był już teraz całkiem znaczny, dziewczyna upiła trochę białego wina, zdaje się, że to grecka retsina, i usiadła na podłodze, krzyżując nogi i ukrywając miejsce, które tak poruszyło doktora. Domyślił się, co **znaczy ten ruch** – lgniemy ku horyzontowi tego wieczoru⁷⁵.

By now his erection was significant. The girl had had a little white wine – a Greek retsina, he thought – and she sat down on the floor now, crossing her legs and hiding the place the doctor was so moved by. He could guess what **her position** meant: they were edging towards the evening's end⁷⁶.

The scene of the girl crossing her legs should be interpreted in this passage as a rejection of the possibility of a sexual intercourse with the doctor. In this context, however, the girl's reaction could be interpreted not only in the meaning of *position* but also of *move*, 'something that you decide to do in order to achieve something' (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*⁷⁷) (similarly to the use coming from another passage in the book: 'do niego należał **ruch**' is rendered as 'his was the next **move**'). Another marginal example observed in the English translation of „Bieguni” is that of *false actions* rendered as *pozorne ruchy*:

Chodzi im o zbudowanie zastygłego porządku, o uczynienie upływu czasu pozornym. O to, żeby dni stały się powtarzalne i nie do odróżnienia, o zbudowanie wielkiej maszyny, w której każde stworzenie będzie musiało zająć swoje miejsce i **wykonywać pozorne ruchy**⁷⁸.

What they want is to create a frozen order, to falsify time's passage. They want for the days to repeat themselves, unchanging, they want to build a big machine where every creature will be forced to take its place and **carry out false actions**⁷⁹.

It may be illuminating to note that the fixed phrase *ruch pozorny* is conventionally rendered as *apparent motion*, denoting an optical illusion in which stationary objects viewed in quick succession or in relation to moving objects appear to be in motion (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*⁸⁰), a concept deeply embedded in the science of physics. In order to fully understand the use of the phrase *false actions* from the perspective of a wider context, including the deictic meaning behind 'they', let us quote its preceding paragraph:

Whoever pauses will be petrified, whoever stops, pinned like an insect, his heart pierced by a wooden needle, his hands and feet drilled through and pinned into the threshold and the ceiling. [...] This is why tyrants of all stripes, infernal servants, have such deep-seated hatred for the nomads – this is why they persecute the Gypsies and the Jews, and why they force all free peoples to settle, assigning the addresses that serve as our sentences⁸¹.

⁷⁵ TOKARCZUK O., 2007, op. cit., p. 69.

⁷⁶ TOKARCZUK O., 2018, op. cit., p. 115.

⁷⁷ *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, op. cit.

⁷⁸ TOKARCZUK O., 2007, op. cit., p. 140.

⁷⁹ TOKARCZUK O., 2018, op. cit., p. 215.

⁸⁰ *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, [online], <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>.

⁸¹ TOKARCZUK O., 2018, op. cit., p. 215.

Since *they* refers to the diabolic creatures, i.e. tyrants, whose intent is to maintain infernal status quo, where all their subordinates must be kept under control, and must be assigned a fixed position in the hierarchy, it proves legitimate to observe that any form of the latter's activity should be viewed as apparent (seeming to have a particular feeling or attitude, although this may not be true) rather than false (intended to deceive others). This, in turn, would justify the choice of *apparent motion* rather than *false actions*. Yet again, such an observation points towards Croft's interpretation of the passage, not always parallel with the contextual clues provided.

On the basis of the qualitative and quantitative analysis, it should be concluded that *ruch* exhibits an impressive network of interrelated meanings in the English translation of 'Bieguni'. Apart from the prototypical senses, i.e. the ones of *movement*, *motion*, *traffic*, and *move* observed in the target text, the semantic network associated with the Polish lexeme *ruch* is updated in Croft's translation by additional meanings attributed to it. These are: *commotion*, *migration*, *position*, *actions*, and *gesture*. Additionally, what should be mentioned among the translator's choices is the reliance on equivalent verbal phrases and omissions of the phrase involved.

Last but not least, we claim that selected renditions of the lexeme in question exemplify the strategy of explicitation used by the translator, thus revealing Croft's contribution through novel interpretations of the meanings of *ruch*. It could be suggested that the differences between what is expected and what is delivered do not result from the differences between the linguistic systems per se but rather stem down from the dynamic, open-ended character of the translator's construction of meaning.

Conclusions

Our survey indicates a rich network of interrelated contextual meanings behind *podróż* and *ruch*, as used by Jennifer Croft in her translation of 'Bieguni' by Olga Tokarczuk. Such a phenomenon is only to be expected in the light of the characteristics of contextual meaning, i.e. words having their dynamic, semantic potential exploited in particular contexts.

The qualitative and quantitative analysis of the English renditions of *podróż* proves that Croft, in addition to opting for the standard English terms such as *journey* and *travel*, substitutes the generic, unspecific meaning of *podróż* with instances of more semantically intricate terms, e.g. *commute*, *voyage*, or *trip*. Additionally, apart from the prototypical senses, i.e. the ones of *movement*, *motion*, *traffic*, and *move*, the semantic network associated with the Polish lexeme *ruch* is updated in Croft's translation by somewhat unexpected meanings. These are: *commotion*, *migration*, *position*, *actions*, and *gesture*. While the majority of the analysed renditions attest to the semantic faithfulness between the source text and target text, other instances can be viewed as showcasing Croft's individual attempts at interpreting the nuanced meanings of the items subject to the analysis. These particular interpretations, oftentimes undertaken

as standing next to the expected, prototypical meanings, seem to endorse our claims pertaining to explicitation (i.e. replacing a more general meaning with a more specific one), thus confirming the translator-as-author hypothesis.

It must be acknowledged that our study relies on a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the translations of the two key terms underscoring the leitmotif of the novel. This article should, however, be regarded as an invitation to open up alleys for further investigations, for instance, involving semantic networks behind other lexical items essential for the understanding of Tokarczuk's work, such as *widzieć*, *poznawać*, etc. It could be assumed that similar observations would be made regarding the nature of the translation through exposing contexts in which the translator leaves their interpretive mark on the target text.

Such a conclusion appears to be corroborated by an instance of explicitation observed in one of the passages, which could stand for the overarching motto of the whole narrative:

Ruszaj się, ruszaj. Błogosławiony, który idzie ⁸² .	Move. Get going. Blessed is he who leaves ⁸³ .
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It is quite striking to observe that *idzie*, a conjugated form of the Polish verb *iść* ('to go', 'to walk', 'travel', 'to move', as exemplified by *Cambridge Dictionary*⁸⁴), subsumed under the superordinate category of being in motion, is rendered by Croft as an act of leaving, thus indicating an urge to go away from a place or a person. Thus, such a choice, befitting explicitation strategy, has considerable consequences on the interpretation of the maxim, implying that the real essence of life is not to be active, not to be in motion per se but rather to leave (the familiar behind), to get out of one's comfort zone. Yet again such nuanced differences in the textual meanings between the source and target text support our claim viewing the translator as an author of the narrative.

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⁸² TOKARCZUK O., 2007, op. cit. p. 140.

⁸³ TOKARCZUK O., 2018, op. cit., p. 215.

⁸⁴ *Cambridge Dictionary*, op. cit.

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**A translator as an author:
on the dynamics of meaning behind *podróż* and *ruch*
in the English translation of 'Bieguni' by Olga Tokarczuk**

Abstract: The aim of this article is to examine the renderings of lexical items essential for the structure and the content of Tokarczuk's 'Bieguni'⁸⁵, i.e. *podróż*, and *ruch*, in the English translation performed by Jennifer Croft. Since we believe that both a wide-angle lens and a microscope are needed to view the composition properly, we offer both a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the terms in question. In particular, 78 instances of the use of *podróż*, and 80 instances of the use of *ruch* are subject to the scrupulous comparative analyses when it comes to their translated equivalents, providing an in-depth description of their context-embedded textual meanings, and an attempt to demonstrate that some of the translator's choices befit the characteristics of explicitation.

Keywords: Olga Tokarczuk, Jennifer Croft, 'Flights', translation, dynamics of meaning.

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⁸⁵ TOKARCZUK O., 2007, op. cit.