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## THE RECONSTRUCTION OF LISA TOLGFORS' IDIOLECT IN THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF ZYGMUNT MIŁOSZEWSKI'S *BEZCENNY*

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**Abstract:** This paper addresses the problem of translating nonstandard language in contemporary popular fiction. The discussion is based on an adventure novel written by Zygmunt Miłoszewski (*Bezcenny*) and its English translation produced by Antonia Lloyd-Jones (*Priceless*). Idiolect of Lisa Tolgfors – one of the protagonists in the story – poses a major challenge to the translator as the character's language plays a number of roles in the text and, in addition to being properly recognised, its functions ought to be adequately reproduced in the target text. To analyse the extent to which the translator has succeeded in reconstructing the idiolect, its different functions in the source text have been determined. The comparison of the nonstandard language that is formed in the ST and recreated in the TT has revealed that even though certain functions have been successfully recreated, the idiolect is – to a large extent – normalised, the consequence of which is the aesthetic impoverishment that can, additionally, contribute to a different perception of the character by Polish and English readers of that novel.

## 1. *Bezcenny* as an example of a linguistically heterogeneous text

Zygmunt Miłoszewski enjoys the status of one of the most popular contemporary Polish penmen<sup>1</sup> and is predominantly known for his trilogy about prosecutor Teodor Szacki. The books have brought Miłoszewski to literary stardom in Poland and helped secure a number of prizes including two High Calibre Prizes for the best Polish crime novel.<sup>2</sup> The writer's popularity in his homeland has attracted the attention of foreign publishing houses and resulted in the introduction of his fiction into other literary polysystems such as Czech, Russian, French, Ukrainian and German. Miłoszewski's presence in the English literary system began with the publication of *Entanglement* (2010) to be followed by two remaining instalments of his crime series: *A Grain of Truth* (2012) and *Rage* (2016). A fiercely competitive English market turned out to be a fairly hospitable place and foreign readers have enthusiastically embraced the fictional world conceived in a former journalist's mind as is testified by numerous prize nominations<sup>3</sup> as well as favourable reviews that his prose has received there. Gill Harris, reviewing *Entanglement* for *Oxford Mail* wrote that the text "is not only a masterful crime novel, it's a riveting insight into six pivotal weeks in the life of its hero, world weary State Prosecutor Teodor Szacki", adding that "this witty and unusual book has all we require from a thriller" [Harris 2010].

The success would not have been possible without Antonia-Lloyd Jones who – as an intermediary between Polish and English cultures – translated the novels, making them available to English-speaking readers. It is also her who was assigned the task of rewriting *Bezcenny* (2013) – the author's attempt at deviating from crime fiction – in a code that would be understandable to them. Her work has effectuated the publication of *Priceless* (2018) – the fourth novel which allows readers in the English-speaking world to enjoy Miłoszewski's writing.

Having gained acclaim as a successful crime fiction wordsmith, Miłoszewski decided to produce a narrative tapping into another convention. *Bezcenny* is an adventure story which revolves around exploits of four individuals who, working for the Polish government, go on a mission to find the most valuable or even

<sup>1</sup> As of 2017, Miłoszewski sold 1.5 million copies of his books. Source: <https://plus.dziennik-zachodni.pl/miloszewski-teodor-szacki-sie-zuzyl-a-ja-nie-chce-odcinac-kuponow/ar/12702744>.

<sup>2</sup> The High Calibre Prize is the most important Polish award for writers who published the best crime novel in a given year. Miłoszewski has received it twice: in 2008 (<https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/wielki-kaliber-dla-miloszewskiego/md241>) and 2012 (<https://culture.pl/pl/wydarzenie/zygmunt-miloszewski-z-nagroda-wielkiego-kalibru>).

<sup>3</sup> One of the most prestigious prizes Miłoszewski has been nominated for is the European Book Prize. The author received the nomination in 2015 for one of the instalments of his trilogy about Szacki: *A Grain of Truth*. Source: <http://archiwum.thenews.pl/1/11/Artykul/213267,Two-Polish-novels-selected-for-European-Book-Prize>.

priceless (thus the title) painting by Raphael Santi that once belonged to the state but has not been spotted since the War. The team of four protagonists includes Zofia Lorentz – a specialist on missing artworks, employed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Karol Boznański – an art dealer, Anatol Gmitruk – a retired secret service major, and Lisa Tolgfors – a robber released from prison to help with the task. The variety of personalities, professions and backgrounds is meant to ensure the success of the operation. During the course of events, the situation gets out of control and, in addition to travelling the world looking for the piece of art, the characters are forced to find ways of avoiding a hitman whose job is not to let them achieve their objective.

Notwithstanding the fact that the thematic interest of the novel is distinctly different from Miłoszewski's foregoing output, the text retains characteristics of the writer's inimitable style that has enabled him to make a mark in Poland's literary scene. Perhaps one of the hallmarks of *Bezcenny* is the linguistic diversity of the supercode constructed by the author. The four protagonists do not only vary in terms of their backgrounds and professions but they are also individualised by the language they use. The character that stands out most is Lisa Tolgfors – the only team member who is not a native speaker of Polish. She is a famous thief of Swedish origin who gets caught during one of her robberies and is sent to prison in Poland. Lisa is characterised by a meticulously crafted idiolect which possesses many distinctive features. First of all, Lisa uses three languages – in addition to her native Swedish, she communicates in Polish and English. As the text is aimed at Polish readers, when the Swede engages in a conversation in English, the narrator “translates” the dialogues into Polish; however, it is usually made explicit which language is the actual means of communication between characters in a given passage. Having said that, it should also be noted that foreign words and sentences do appear in the novel: one can encounter elements of both English and Swedish that Lisa employs in her speech. Secondly, depending on the language she chooses, her speech is remarkably diverse. While her English does not come across as particularly unusual, Lisa's Polish is by all means nonstandard. The Swede tends to produce rather simple utterances; she mixes registers and makes all sorts of mistakes, ranging from grammatical ones to incorrect usages of specific vocabulary items. Additionally, her speech is fraught with lexis borrowed from prison slang, the effect of the protagonist's incarceration in a Polish penitentiary.

Due to the accumulation of nonstandard features of the protagonist's language as well as the inclusion of words from foreign tongues, *Bezcenny* falls into the category of what Krzysztof Hejwowski refers to as polyphonic texts. These are writings which are characterised by “different varieties of the source language – dialects, sociolects, idiolects, registers – or elements of another language” [Hejwowski 2004, 184]. Such a stratification reflects the extratextual reality which – after all – is not unified but forms space where different

languages clash with one another. In fact, the existence of different varieties of one language is, according to Mikhail Bakhtin [1982, 87], a constitutive feature of the novel genre. By the employment of different languages which represent various points of view, a writer is able to present a more complete picture of the world he or she creates: one which is possible to be seen from different perspectives and where different voices can be heard. What needs to be emphasised, however, is that the two approaches to polyphony represented by the abovementioned scholars should not be equated: Hejwowski concentrates on linguistic aspects of the text whereas Bakhtin's idea is rather concerned with characters' voices understood as their approaches and perspectives engaged in dialogic relationships. To avoid terminological confusion, Ewa Kujawska-Lis [2017, 25] proposes another term describing texts with more than one variety of language. She refers to such prose as linguistically heterogeneous and this very label is used here.

The necessity to reconstruct the linguistic organisation of a literary text in translation is highlighted when one agrees with Janusz Sławiński who claims that what distinguishes a literary text from other writings is its aesthetics function [Sławiński 2000, 117]. Failing to reproduce the linguistic variety would engender a significant emasculation of the artistic value of a target text. Formal measures of this kind do not have any inherent aesthetic merit as such; however – according to Leen Verheyen – in literature they do produce aesthetic effects because there is a specific function assigned to them [Verheyen 2015, 26]. Although there are theoreticians who insist that linguistically heterogeneous texts cannot be successfully rendered, translators have repeatedly proved them wrong, demonstrating that it is, at least to some extent, possible to reconstruct nonstandard linguistic elements. The difficulty of such a reconstruction – as Kujawska-Lis opines [2011, 338] – depends on the role that different varieties of language play in the composition. Literary texts constitute a semantic whole and the same stylisation technique can lead to various effects. The functions are possible to be re-expressed by means of various techniques and procedures that ought to be selected on the basis of parameters in a given piece of writing [Kujawska-Lis 2011, 339]. One of the most comprehensive lists of such techniques was proposed by Hejwowski [2016, 226-244]. The Polish scholar enumerated such procedures as a transfer, transcription, neutralisation, functional equivalent or several forms of stylisation. Presently, stylisation is the most popular solution [Dębska 2012, 83]. The techniques can be, additionally, supplied with explanations or the translator's comments to point to those shades of meaning that could not be immediately grasped or which cannot be fully replicated. That the linguistic diversity makes the translation unfeasible can be easily refuted when one refers to Roman Lewicki's [1986, 57, 59] words, who claimed that even in original works, dialects are not reflected in a complete fashion. They are always an approximation whose aim is to evoke certain associations

in readers' minds. The techniques presented by Hejwowski and other researchers<sup>4</sup> who developed their own categorisations will normally allow translators to reconstruct the nonstandard speech to some extent that can be deemed satisfactory. Satisfactory in a sense that the existence of marked elements of language in both the source and target texts will provoke a similar kind of reaction in the readers of respective works.

The problem of translating nonstandard language varieties, including idiolects, has received some attention from researchers who have investigated personal dialect found in both literary texts and non-artistic discourse. A comparative analysis of Tilly Slowboy's individual style in Polish versions of Dickens's *The Cricket on the Hearth* was conducted by Aleksandra Budrewicz [2017] who highlighted differences in style and language noticeable in the translation series while Jan Rybicki [2006] explored the character idiolects in English translations of Henryk Sienkiewicz's *Trilogy*. His analysis has revealed that translations preserve the patterns of idiolect differentiation which characterize the original, although with different linguistic means. Idiolect in literary genres was also a focal issue of Anna Pieczyńska-Sulik's article *O przydatności kategorii idiolektu w przekładzie. Na materiale „Wróżb kumaka” Güntera Grassa* [2005] and Agnieszka Adamowicz-Pośpiech [2015] carried out a study on lapsoclect (a particular kind of idiolect) found in Conrad's *Lord Jim*. Both researchers have accentuated the significance of idiolect in a text and difficulties in its translation. The elements of spoken idiolect were, in turn, scrutinized by Joanna Szerszunowicz [2011] who, having analysed constitutive elements of idiolect on various levels, concluded that in order to translate idiolect, it is not enough to be a fluent speaker of a foreign language – cultural competence and encyclopaedic knowledge are also necessary. Notwithstanding the emergence of such analyses, nonstandard language varieties and idiolect seem to be an underrepresented topic in Translation Studies, especially when compared to the number of publications on other fields of inquiry, such as translation of culture-related elements.

In this article, Lisa Tolgfors' idiolect – the most distinctive one appearing in *Bezcenny* – will be analysed to establish the extent to which it has been preserved in the translated version produced by Antonia Lloyd-Jones. The study will reveal which functions that the idiolect serves in the source text are reconstructed in *Priceless* and what techniques have been used to that end. Additionally, an attempt will be made at determining how potential failures at reproducing certain elements of the subcode might contribute

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<sup>4</sup> In his *Dialect in Translation* (1997), Leszek Berezowski proposed a taxonomy of techniques which are used to preserve dialect markers in a target text; however they can also be employed to render idiolect. The scholar devised the classification, having analysed various solutions used by translators faced with a task of producing Polish versions of English literary texts. Hejwowski's techniques, which are mentioned above, are a somewhat simplified categorization of Berezowski's procedures.

to differences in the perception of this character. The analysis will be based on the functional classification of nonstandard elements of language proposed by Lewicki [1986, 65-66]. Claiming that they are meaningful and in literary works should be perceived as intentional, he divided them into two main groups: characterising and narrative ones. Each category consists of a number of different functions but the most common are those of social and individual characterisation, emotional, confrontative and geographical one. All of them can be found in Miłoszewski's novel.

## 2. Lisa's idiolect in translation

Constructing the character of Lisa Tolgfors, Miłoszewski decides to stylise her speech in a way reminiscent of how foreigners use the Polish language. This can help authenticate the character and highlight the contrast between her and the remaining protagonists. While speaking Polish, Lisa uses short and simple sentences, she makes a range of mistakes and contrives utterances which are hard to decipher, if not downright incomprehensible. The simplicity of her language is best exemplified by the fragment in which the Swede describes her friend:

W Szwecja mój przyjaciel i specjalista i nauczyciel. Wie wszystko o piękna sztuka. (211)	"I have a friend there. An expert and teacher. He knows all about fine art." (169)
Ja ręce. On mózg. (211)	"I'm the hands, he's the brain." (169)

Lisa communicates with other characters using simple one-clause sentences, without endeavouring to introduce subordinate conjunctions. Not only are her utterances very short, but also tend to be verbless, which only intensifies the character's struggle with the Polish language. After all, unlike her native tongue, Polish is an inflexional language in which verbs must be modified according to various grammatical categories. Their absence in Lisa's speech might suggest that she has not mastered Polish grammar yet and she does not feel comfortable including verbs in her utterances. Such a conclusion can be corroborated by Lisa's errors in declination. She does not change the form of nouns and uses them all in the nominative case.

Lisa's language in translation seems to be fairly simple, too. Her utterances are relatively short as there are no complex sentences, the message being delivered by means of single clauses. However, the sentences in translation – even if compact – do not come across as language produced by a foreigner. Apart from the fact they lack complexity, the statements are grammatically flawless. Unlike Polish sentences, they have a verb and all the nouns are used in a way that a native speaker would use them. Consequently, the Polish

reader will immediately notice Lisa's specific manner of speaking stemming from her being a non-native, while – as a result of neutralization – for readers of the target text it might not be so obvious.

The number of inaccuracies in Lisa's speech attracts the reader's attention in her almost any utterance. Most often, these are errors related to inaccurate inflection or declination but the proper usage of tenses might also be onerous:

Dużo <b>kamieniów</b> . (270)	"Lots of rocks." (211)
Potem pisałam faks do <b>dyrektora</b> ... (101)	"Then I sent a fake fax to the director..." (78)
<b>Jaka</b> to adres? (132)	"What's the address?" (108)
Jeśli znalazł <b>Anatol</b> , to <b>znajduje</b> i <b>my</b> . (432)	"If he found Anatol and was following him until yesterday, he'll find us too." (324)
Przez ciebie wszyscy <b>nie żyjesz</b> . (432)	"Because of you we're all going to die." (325)

Such mistakes repeatedly remind the reader that Lisa is a representative of another nation and culture. They show the Swede as a person who is capable of using the language communicatively but one who still has room for linguistic improvement. Additionally, imperfect utterances make it possible to instantly identify the person who is speaking even without the narrator making it obvious – after all, no other character of the story displays such reckless disregard to the rules governing the language. A comment, question or remark containing a grammar error leads to the conclusion that it is Lisa whose mouth it came from.

In translation, Lisa's language is consistently neutralised. She does not make any mistakes and fluently communicates with her comrades. English readers may perceive the character as one who is exceptionally apt at foreign languages. Throughout the novel, Lisa uses three linguistic codes and each of them gives the impressions of being a natural form of communication for her – one cannot really notice any striking differences between her English, Swedish and Polish. This may confound the reader since the scene introducing her comprises the Swede's acknowledgement that she finds Polish particularly challenging.

How hard it is for Lisa to communicate in Polish can be observed in episodes when she is forced to switch to another language in order to get the message across. The following excerpt demonstrates that it is easier for her to speak English:

Taka to umowa. Coś spieprzę, to <b>mięcy, między, mięsy, ... damn, international search warrant</b> . I idę na dłuższe posiedzenie. (128)	"That's the deal. If I screw up, it means <b>an intra... intel... intral... shit, an international search warrant</b> . And I'd be put away for a long time." (104)
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Even though both codes are not her first languages, it is evident that the Swede feels much more comfortable using English. She finds it difficult

to pronounce the word *międzynarodowy* and tries to avoid it by substituting this very item with an English equivalent. Miłoszewski artistically creates here the tension between the domestic and the foreign which — according to Edward Balcerzan [2011, 96] — is what makes the heterogenous world of the literary text more attractive.

Although translation practice is not characterised by a set of absolute rules that are to be obeyed, Jerzy Jarniewicz [2012, 174] — among many other scholars — believes that whatever is foreign in a source text, should also remain exotic in a target one as this is an important constituent of its meaning. The fragment is particularly challenging to render in the English version. First of all, because the entire target text is written in English, the translator cannot foreground the person's ability to code switch into this particular language. Readers are supposed to assume that the conversation is carried out in Polish as this is the primary language of discourse in the story. If they do so, English readers of Miłoszewski's novel will not notice the difference in Lisa's proficiency in Polish and English. They will, admittedly, observe problems with pronouncing the word but any indication of the hierarchy of languages will be lost. In addition, because she does not need to resort to the language she knows better, the gap between her knowledge of Polish and English seems to be much narrower than in the original text.

The same characteristic of Lisa's idiolect can also be observed in her usage of neologisms. They appear to be interferences from other languages, particularly English:

<p>– Nie wiecie? – zdziwiła się Lisa. – Tu mamy najbardziej gites ogród zoo w Szwecja.  <b>Tigry są, gorille, niedźwiady i olifanty.</b>  Dwie wielkie.  – Co dwie wielkie?  – Dwie wielkie <b>olifanice.</b> (296)</p>	<p>“We've got the best zoo in Sweden here, said Lisa. There are <b>lions, gorillas</b>, bears and <b>olifanties</b>. Two big ones.”  “Two big what?”  “Two big <b>olifanties.</b>” (233-234)</p>
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The dialogue between Lisa and her Polish colleagues exemplifies the strength of the influence that English has on her verbal expression. The Swede avails herself of words that are not and have never been part of the Polish lexicon such as *tigry*, *gorille* and *olifanty*. She borrows them from English (tigers, gorillas, elephants) as she appears not to know Polish equivalents. Once again, the exchange clearly demonstrates that whenever faced with a lexical gap, Lisa can make use of a language that she speaks better.

Unlike in previous examples, the translator to some extent manages to render communication problems in the dialogue, which she achieves by means of transfer with adaptation. The word *olifanties* does not exist in contemporary English and that is why Lisa's interlocutor fails to comprehend her. Readers of Lloyd-Jones' text might then gain access to this crucial feature of Lisa's sub-code — her foreign language skills are not impeccable, she occasionally struggles



when faced with a need to speak her non-native language. Nevertheless, her competence is far less basic than in the original text. Even if she – for some reason – uses the word *olifanties* instead of *elephants*, she has no problems with other animals: *lions*, *gorillas* or *bears*, which in the original version are either replaced with English-sounding terms or declined in a wrong way. There is also no indication of the cause of the mistake and, as a consequence, target readers are left to wonder where the inaccuracy comes from.

The final feature of Lisa's idiolect which stems from her imperfect knowledge of the Polish language manifests itself in utterances which are quite difficult to comprehend and, thus, do not serve their communicative function. They are not understandable as Tolgfors creates neologisms, confuses similar words or simply utters strings of words that do not communicate the intended meaning. Sometimes, the reader is supposed to guess what the Swede desires to say:

On, on szuka zaginiona kolekcja piękna sztuka. Bardzo dawno szuka. <b>Rafaël może będzie miał kawal czegoś dużego.</b> (210)	"He's looking for a lost collection of fine art. Very old art. <b>Raphael might be part of something big.</b> " (169)
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The excerpt can be subject to many interpretations. Lisa, talking about Raphael, declares that he "might have a part of something big".<sup>5</sup> The translator decides to omit this confusing element, interprets the words in her own way and presents Lisa as a person who can formulate her thoughts in a foreign language in an unambiguous manner thus blurring characteristic features of her idiolect. The translator's approach is clearly functional and dynamic. She focuses on the understandability of the target text rather than on the reconstruction of original linguistic idiosyncrasies.

Zygmunt Miłoszewski creates his Swedish character in such a way so as to constantly remind readers that Lisa is a foreigner. Her learned Polish manifests itself in simple sentences, which are riddled with errors at the level of morphology and lexis as well as occasional difficulties to communicate the intended meaning and the necessity to replace words with equivalents from languages she speaks better. English rendition seems to be much easier to follow as Lisa's idiolect is neutralised. There may be some attempts at simplifying her speech but generally Lisa's language does not differ much from that of other characters. Occasional mistakes do inform readers that Lisa may not be a proficient speaker of Polish (even though Polish is not present in the English translation, it is assumed by readers) and might struggle at times. In general, however, she appears to be a rather competent speaker of foreign languages who has mastered the rules of grammar, is able to apply them correctly and successfully communicate with others.

<sup>5</sup> Word-for-word translation by the author of the article.

The neutralised language in translation might hide certain subtle meanings and create a false impression of Lisa as a competent speaker of Polish. It will also fail to fulfil its important geographical function thanks to which readers of the original text can easily view the character as a foreigner. Since the narrator of the target text includes information about Lisa's origin, the loss is not so massive. English readers do learn she is from Sweden; they are just not constantly reminded about this by means of linguistic markers. One can speculate that nonstandard stylisation in the form of the introduction of a few spelling or grammatical mistakes in the target text would have helped to authenticate Lisa as a person from outside and would be in accordance with what the narrator said about her linguistic capabilities: "Polish was the only language she spoke in a cruder style" [Miłoszewski 2013, 74].

Another function that Lisa's idiolect serves in *Priceless* is the social one. Language can be used to signal the character's status or point to the social group he or she belongs to. What someone says and what means he or she uses to do it can reveal a lot of information about them. Dębska [2012, 117] remarks that in order to highlight this particular function, the writer typically contrasts the language of one character with others. This kind of distinction is normally attainable to be reflected in translation by means of various stylisation techniques.

Miłoszewski utilises this role of Lisa's idiolect as a means of characterisation. The author stylises his character's speech to authenticate the woman and what the narrator says about her. In the course of the narrative, readers learn that she is a famous thief who has spent some time in Polish prison. Although it is not stated straightforwardly, this is probably where she has learnt how to speak Polish. One can come to such a conclusion analysing vocabulary items that dominate her speech — many of them come from prisoners' slang:

Szłam do muzeum codziennie jako różna ja, kumasz? Oglądałam <b>gady</b> wieczorem i wszystkie <b>gady</b> codziennie znikają dziesięć minut przed fajrant, żeby wyjść do domu. (101)	"I went to the museum every day with a different look, get me? I watched the <b>guards</b> in the evening and they all disappeared every day ten minutes before closing time." (78)
W <b>ulu</b> malowałam sobie jeszcze jeden taki z kiepeły, ale <b>gady</b> zabrały – smutno zawiesiła głos. – <b>Gady</b> nie kumają. (102)	"I painted another one just like it from memory while I was in <b>jail</b> , but the <b>guards</b> took it." She paused sadly. "The <b>screws</b> just don't get it." (79)
Poszukam <b>wolny kwadrat</b> – powiedziała, klikając coś w telefonie. (132)	"I'll look for a <b>place to rent</b> " she said, tapping something into the phone. (108)
Masz jakąś <b>banię</b> ? (210)	"Got any <b>hard stuff</b> ?" (168)
Nie każda może <b>strzelić z glana</b> – powiedziała. (128)	"Not anyone can <b>make a break</b> for it," said Lisa. (104)

Koniec pakowania, lalka? – Lisa klasnęła i zatarła energicznie dłonie, musiało jej być zimno w tej kracji. – Bo jak tak, to <b>zwijamy mandzurię</b> . (237)	“You done with the workout, honey?” said Lisa, clapping and rubbing her hands energetically; she must have been cold in that outfit. “ <b>If so, let’s get out of here.</b> ” (185)
Chcesz mi <b>zrobić wiewiórkę, gadzie?</b> – zapytała beztrasko. (213)	“Hey, <b>Snake</b> , you wanna be my <b>purple whale?</b> ” She asked. (171)

The abovementioned expressions constitute just a fraction of utterances in which Tolgfors effortlessly uses words that are typical of prison slang. They are enough, though, to demonstrate that such vocabulary permeates her speech and, thus, contributes to the creation of a very clear picture of Lisa as a representative of the inmate subculture.

Lisa uses lexical items like *gad*, *numer* or *mandzuria* when chatting with other characters who do not belong to the inmate community and might not really know the meaning of such expressions. In fact, this might suggest that Lisa is not aware that this kind of language is not standard Polish but she speaks in this fashion anyway as it is the only Polish she has been exposed to. What she struggles with is, then, the pragmatics of language. She may know the specific meaning of lexical items she employs but seems to have no clue as to what contexts they are appropriate for. As a result, Lisa does not adjust her language to a communicative situation she finds herself in and addresses her companions with language that would be more suitable for a discussion between prisoners.

Because the prison lingo exists in English as well, theoretically it might be used functionally to replace the Polish one. Especially because it is only the lexical level which reflects Lisa's links to prison and there is no need to preserve the phonetic or syntactical layers which would be much more demanding. Even though the translator tries to maintain this function of Lisa's speech by resorting to functional replacement as understood by Hejwowski, she does it inconsistently. There is a substantial reduction in the number of lexical items borrowed from prison slang as compared with the original. *Zwijamy mandzurię* and *wolny kwadrat* which are phrases commonly associated with the prison become standard phrases used in common speech. The same goes for *strzelić z glana* and *bania* which, even if remain colloquial in translation, do not evoke prison associations.

It would be wrong, however, to claim that the translation is totally devoid of prison terminology. *Purple whale* or *screws* are patois expressions which Lloyd-Jones manages to smuggle to her text and, to a certain extent, help construct the image of Lisa and contribute to the creation of her idiolect which gives a similar effect as achieved by Miłoszewski, even if the frequency of such phrases is considerably lower. English readers are not exposed to a large number of words from prison argot, albeit they might be able to notice this particular trait of Lisa's idiolect.

English readers would, however, make an observation that is probably inaccessible to readers of the original text. In translation, Lisa appears to be a person who has access to a wide range of vocabulary in the foreign language. While referring to prison guards, she has at least three words at her disposal: *guard*, *screw* and *snake*. The first one is neutral and does not suggest any links with slang, showing that Lisa knows the standard variety of the language. Two other nouns do come from the vernacular but refer to two distinct things. *Screw* is indeed how English inmates call prison guards; *snake*, however, tends to be used by prisoners as an equivalent of a thief [Ciechanowska 2018, 102]. Lisa's insistence on using the latter in her communication with Anatol Gmitruk – an agent working for the Polish government – may leave readers wondering why she sticks to this expression. Does she know something about his past? Does she know he might be a thief? Nothing of this kind is implied in the original when Lisa uses the term *gad* – a name for prison guards. As a result, Lloyd-Jones might have unwittingly planted a seed of doubt in English readers' minds as to the integrity of an otherwise spotless figure of the major and – as evidenced by events described in the first chapter – a new national hero, thus slightly changing the possible interpretation of the scene.

Such a wide range of synonyms that Lisa employs in *Priceless* can once again suggest that she is an outstanding learner of foreign languages. After all, she knows both standard and nonstandard equivalents of a given word. A similar interpretation would be rather unattainable in the original text – her Polish is clearly nonstandard and she does not normally alternate between its different varieties.

What she does, though, is switch between languages. It has already been stated that Lisa takes advantage of code switching in order to help her express herself when she finds it hard to do so using Polish. Miłoszewski decides to make use of Lisa's bilingualism (or rather trilingualism) in order to cast light onto other features of her personality and social status.

Lisa speaking Polish may appear to be an uneducated individual. What contributes to such a perception is her limited number of words, simplicity of sentences, a number of mistakes she makes and the choice of topics she discusses using this language. This is, however, a false image, which becomes evident when Lisa switches to the language she knows much better. Her dialogues which are – as the narrator informs the reader – carried out in English point to much different attributes of Lisa and depict her as an erudite and knowledgeable character. Her description of Sten Borg, Lisa's Swedish lover, contains a highly poetic language: “Sten Borg musi widzieć uwielbienie w ufnych oczach, musi słyszeć **egzaltowany oddech**, musi widzieć świeże ciało, **pokryte meszkiem jak brzoskwinia**, które dostaje w zamian” [Miłoszewski 2013, 242].

This short fragment reveals a number of properties that make her Polish and English speech so disparate. Her English sentences are not

so brief and simplistic; on the contrary, they are complex and error-free. What strikes the most, though, is the choice of words that Lisa incorporates in her description. Not only is it devoid of any slang items but the speech contains some characteristics of poetic language. Lisa utilises certain literary devices such as repetition: *musi...*, comparison: *jak brzoskwinia*, imagery *pokryte mezkciem* and a selection of sophisticated adjectives that are best exemplified by *egzaltowany*.

The poetic mode that Lisa adopts makes a particularly strong impression when juxtaposed with her attempts at speaking Polish. This creates a feeling that the switching of languages is accompanied by the alteration of personality. Using idiolect as a form of characterisation, Miłoszewski creates the Swede not just as a vulgar thief who can hardly express her thoughts, but one who might, in fact, come from higher social spheres and have received a good education. After all, it would be highly unlikely to create a word group like the one above without some exposure to literature. The achievement seems to be even more impressive when one realises that Lisa does not use her native tongue here.

The shift in the perception of the character made possible by the juxtaposition of Lisa's idiolect in Polish and English allows readers to redefine her. An uneducated criminal who does not deserve trust and respect turns out to be an erudite capable of producing language that none of the other characters can even come close to. We can observe the reorganisation of a social hierarchy of characters in the novel. As Karolina Dębska [2012, 117] claims, the character identified by the most "beautiful" language is the one who is the highest in a social ladder.

Target readers of *Priceless* are, unfortunately, unable to experience a similar surprise and notice more laudable aspects of the Swede. The translator does not accentuate the distinction as there is no effort to preserve the portrayal of Sten Borg at all. As a matter of fact, Lloyd-Jones decides to omit a larger portion of the chapter that includes this particular demonstration of Lisa's linguistic capabilities. One can only speculate about reasons for the omission, but it was definitely not the impossibility of translating the poetic passage. Miłoszewski contrasts Lisa's nonstandard Polish with sophisticated English – a technique that would be possible to be adopted in the translation. English possesses its own distinct poetic language which is distinguishable from informal speech and it would not be such a daunting task to stylise Lisa's speech as a poetic one.

Regardless of the rationale behind Lloyd-Jones' solutions, English readers are not exposed to the whole picture that Miłoszewski paints of Lisa. They are devoid of startling incongruity between Lisa speaking different languages and are immune to the revelation that recipients of the source text confront when they realise that what they might have thought of her is not entirely true and there is much more to the character than they initially

might have assumed. In addition to this semantic loss, the omission also leads to aesthetic impoverishment of the target text as such.

Lisa's position in a social hierarchy is also signalled by topics of discussion she engages in as well as specialist terminology that she uses. If the evaluation of the character was supposed to be performed only on the basis of her Polish speech, one would rather regard her as a member of a lower stratum of society as evidenced by her prison slang, colloquialisms and errors. The perception changes when Lisa switches to English and discusses technical issues:

<p>To <b>termowizja</b>, przetwarza <b>promieniowanie podczerwone</b>, emitowane przez absolutnie wszystko, czego temperatura jest powyżej zera absolutnego. Co oznacza, że nie potrzebujesz ani grama światła, żeby używać <b>termowizji</b>. Bardzo wygodne. Bardziej niż <b>noktowizja</b>, która tylko wzmacnia słabe światło i w kompletnej ciemności, na przykład w sejfie, jest bezużyteczna. (141)</p>	<p>“That’s <b>infrared imaging</b> – it recreates the <b>infrared radiation</b> emitted by everything with a temperature higher than absolute zero. Which means you don’t need any light at all to use it. Highly convenient. More so than <b>night vision</b>, which only strengthens weak light, and is useless in total darkness.” (115)</p>
<p>Jest nadzieja. Zapewne <b>termostat</b> jest tak ustawiony, żeby utrzymywać w domu pod nieobecność właściciela szesnaście, siedemnaście stopni. Teraz temperatura spadła, dopiero co włączył się piec, więc widzimy tylko kreski rur. Za chwilę zobaczymy grzejniki, a za jakieś dwie godziny <b>mostki cieplne</b> przy framugach. (141)</p>	<p>“There is hope. The <b>thermostat</b> must be set to maintain a temperature of sixty-one or sixty-two degrees in the house when the owner’s gone. Now the temperature has fallen, the heating has only just come on, so all we’re seeing is the pipes. In a while we’ll see the radiators to, and in a couple hours the <b>thermal bridges</b> by the door frames.” (115-116)</p>

Lisa's erudite vocabulary shows that she is a professional. She expertly laces her technical comments with specialist terms such as *termowizja*, *noktowizja*, *termostat*, and *mostki cieplne*. These are not words that every speaker of a second language knows, let alone uses with fluency. As a matter of fact, such terminology would be incomprehensible to numerous speakers even in their native tongue as these are vocabulary items from a very specific field of knowledge. The ease with which the Swede incorporates such words indicates that she must possess a comprehensive knowledge about technology. Readers realise that she is indeed an expert who knows the ropes and not just a random thief who could only endeavour to burgle regular houses or mug people on the street.

Specialist vocabulary is preserved in Lisa's speech in the English rendition of the passage. Technical terms constitute, after all, a relatively unproblematic area of terminology as far as the translation process is concerned. These are concrete terms which usually have only one precise meaning and can be found in technical dictionaries. The translator's role was, then, just to find correct dictionary equivalents. Since phrases like *infrared imaging*, *infrared radiation*, *night vision*, *thermostat* and *thermal bridges* find their way into

Lisa's speech in *Priceless*, English readers can come to a similar conclusion as Poles and perceive the Swede as a skilled professional.

An important peculiarity of Lisa's idiolect is the level of vulgarisation in Polish. As it has already been established, the Swede might have been exposed mainly to language used by prisoners which she now copies in her discussions with members of non-penitentiary communities. Lewicki [1986, 65-66] refers to this function of idiolect as the emotional one. Apart from slips and simplicity of sentences, the frequency of vulgarisms is what immediately informs readers which language Lisa is using at a particular moment:

– Bardzo mi w <b>pizdeczkę</b> – powiedziała prawie bez akcentu i uśmiechnęła się przyjaźnie. (96)	“ <b>Stick it up your ass</b> ”, said Lisa, almost without an accent, and smiled amicably. (74)
Lepiej niż chata do <b>ciągania druta</b> albo stara i pięć bachorów. (131)	“Better than a bachelor pad or an old lady and five <b>brats</b> .” (106)
Gady szły i podziwiała nawet, jaka <b>zajebista zajebiozka</b> . (101)	“The guards came and admired the <b>fuckin'</b> amazing work I was doing just before they left for the night.” (79)
Z <b>chujem</b> się chyba na głowy zamieniłeś (229)	“You must have swapped your brains for <b>dog shit</b> .” (182)
<b>Opierdole</b> jak najszybciej, co jest do <b>opierdole</b> , i mogę być tutaj, muszę tylko oddać polski paszport. (128)	“I <b>rip off</b> what needs to be <b>ripped off</b> as fast as possible and stay here, I just have to give back my Polish passport.” (104)
– Wszystko to <b>debile</b> – mruknęła Lisa. – Wszystko <b>debile</b> . (219)	“They're all <b>morons</b> ” muttered Lisa. „ <b>Morons</b> .” (175)
Tak, droga Liso, właśnie to chcę powiedzieć. Że może nie, jak to ujęłaś, „w <b>pizdu</b> ”, ale gdzieś, nie wiadomo gdzie, jest zbiór płócien o wymiarach sto sześćdziesiąt na sto dziesięć centymetrów (...)” (295)	“And so somewhere, God knows where, there's a collection of canvases five foot by three on which your Claude and your Pierre-Auguste portrayed themselves and others you're so fond of removing from museums (...)” (232)

All the expressions above are instances in which Lisa communicates in Polish. Her language is characterised by extremely vulgar words such as *chuj*, *opierdole* and *pizdeczkę*. As a result, Lisa comes across as a degenerated person who stands in a marked contrast to other characters. Once again, readers get a confirmation that Lisa is oblivious to the necessity of adjusting her language to the communicative situation. Her pragmatic abilities appear to be non-existent as the vulgar manner in which she communicates on occasions presented above is not an appropriate mode of expression in those contexts. This problem is highlighted in the last example when Zofia comments on the impropriety of Lisa's words.

This particular idiosyncrasy of Lisa's idiolect seems to be of a paramount significance and ought to be preserved in the English version. The translator generally tries to retain swearwords, hence the introduction of *fuckin* which is a fairly common way in which the English intensify their statements.

Similarly, a popular Polish curse *chuj* is turned into *dog shit* – even though this functional equivalent gives readers a dissimilar image (*chuj* is an uncouth way of referring to a male reproductive organ), the purpose of the statement is maintained.

Not all equivalents that the translator chooses are, however, on the same level of profanity. *Stick it up your ass* is, undoubtedly, an ill-mannered way of responding to a hand extended upon meeting a person; nonetheless, the phrase – as such – does not contain any strikingly vulgar words. Or at least, they do not seem to be as gross as *pizda*, which – in Lisa's interpretation – becomes a diminutive *pizdeczka*. The same goes for the word *stara* which is an impolite way of talking about a wife. In the English version, the translator opts for an expressively neutral expression *old lady* which is just a descriptive equivalent carrying no immediate associations with plebeian slang. While Polish readers instantly notice the emotional weight of the word, English readers may not interpret it in this fashion. Vulgarisms are sometimes also rendered as informal phrases. When Lisa uses the word *opierdołę*, undeniably she is an uncultured sort of person. The verb is a very tasteless way of talking about swindling and is not acceptable in standard language. Since the translator resolves to utilise the phrasal verb *rip off*, she manages to preserve the meaning; nevertheless, it is disputable whether such colloquialisation allows English readers to perceive Lisa as an equally low-minded person. The phrasal verb may be informal, albeit it is not normally considered to be an expletive.

Lisa in rendition might seem to be less offensive also due to omissions employed by the translator. One particularly interesting fragment comes from a chapter in which another protagonist – Zofia Lorentz – lectures her friends on missing pieces of art. This is Zofia who resorts to a swear phrase *w pizdu*, but she does so while responding to Lisa, quoting her words. As Zofia does not normally swear, the peculiarity and uniqueness of the situation draws readers' attention, intensifying the perception of the Swede as an unsophisticated rude person. Even though Zofia's remark as such has its equivalent in the translation, it is devoid of the vulgar quote due to the technique of omission that the translator used.

While it cannot be contented that the language of Lisa in translation has been fully neutralised, the degree of vulgarisation is diminished. Admittedly, there are some examples of truly strong language but the comparison of Polish and English swear words leads to the conclusion that the Swede created by Miłoszewski is more unrefined and flamboyant than her equivalent reshaped by Lloyd-Jones. Nevertheless, the emotional function of Lisa's idiolect is preserved: English readers will also find the character impolite, and the contrast between her mode of expression and that of her associates – even if not as pronounced as in the source text – will be discernible.

The utilisation of a particular nonstandard form of language as well as a specific style of register might also point to the characters' attitude to their



interlocutors, situation or the topic of the conversation [Dębska 2012, 163]. One can observe this function at play whenever speakers consciously opt for a given variety of a language. Adjusting the language to the speech of others might underline solidarity and affability as well as emphasise a bond between two people. On the other hand, turning to a language that considerably differs from that used by others is likely to demonstrate distance and the lack of a close connection. It is, then, a form of dissociating oneself from others.

This relational function of idiolect in *Bezcenny* can be best exemplified by a dispute between the protagonists in which Karol Boznański and Anatol Gmitruk imitate Lisa's speech to show their attitude towards the Swedish thief. Upon finding out about Lisa's romantic relationship with a paid assassin who happens to be on the prowl for them, Anatol expresses his disbelief in Lisa's reliability: "A my już nie wierzymy pani złodziejka" [Miłoszewski 2013, 432]. The major intentionally ignores the declination of the noun *złodziejka* thus imitating the manner in which Tolgfors speaks Polish. This mocks Lisa and implies his unfavourable opinion of the woman. It is him who represents the cultured and righteous society and Lisa – in his eyes – deserves neither respect nor trust. The already adverse feeling he articulates is reinforced by the language.

A similar phenomenon but to a contrasting end is evinced in Karol's response to Anatol's declaration:

Mylisz się, majorze – powiedział. – My wierzymy pani złodziejka. A teraz oddaj to. (432)	OMISSION
Zabiłeś nas, <b>gadzie</b> – powiedział, patrząc wojskowemu w oczy. (433)	"You've killed us, <b>Snake</b> ", said Karol, looking the soldier in the eyes. (326)

The art dealer, an educated and cultured man, copies the inflectional mistake *pani złodziejka*; however, unlike Anatol, he does it with a view to sympathising with the Swede. He does not tease her nor expresses any negative emotions. On the contrary, the modification of his speech allows him to make it clear whose side he is on in the quarrel. It is later intensified by yet another feature of Lisa's idiolect that materialises in Karol's language. The man refers to the major as *gad* – a prison slang label which is the most common appellative that Lisa uses in her communication with Anatol. In the entire story, it is only Lisa who verbalises her thoughts tapping at this particular argot. To detect such a vocabulary item coming from the mouths of somebody else, especially learned Karol, is an event that by all means stresses the uniqueness and gravity of the state of affairs.

As already evidenced, Lisa's language in translation is significantly more correct than the one she is individualised by in the original text. English readers do not notice errors made by Lisa when speaking the native tongue of her companions. Consequently, recipients of *Priceless* would probably not

associate deliberate mistakes made by Karol or Anatol as their attempts at simulating her speech and thus exhibiting their attitude towards Lisa. The mistakes, however, are not there anyway – none of the two utterances discussed above appears in the translation so their relational function is missing from Lloyd-Jones' text. Nevertheless, the translator has managed to retain it in another instance. Karol's friendliness towards Lisa is easily noticeable by English readers who are able to interpret his application of the word *Snake* as an indication of whom he supports. Even if prison slang in the translation is not as abundant as in the original, Lisa is still the one to whom one can ascribe this very appellation.

It is essential to clarify that one utterance expressed in nonstandard language can simultaneously play a number of roles in a literary text. In fact, as Hejwowski argues, very rarely does one function exist independently; however, it is possible to determine the dominant one [Hejwowski 2016, 225]. In *Bezczenny*, Lisa's subcode may characterise the woman, point to her position in the social hierarchy or indicate her attitude towards others. It is conceivable that one utterance satisfies all those purposes. It is the translator's task to recognise the main function and try to replicate it. Below are the excerpts instantiating one more purpose that the idiolect Miłoszewski constructed for his character effectively fulfils:

Niekonieczno. Mamy jeden dobry <b>trup</b> . (208)	"Besides, we have a good <b>lead</b> to follow" added Lisa. (169)
Nie robię ballad ludziom, że prowadzę jakąś bajerę. (209)	OMISSION
– Dziękuję – powiedziała. – Ale jego pamięć chce coś innego niż <b>tosta</b> . (288)	"Thank you" she said. "But his memory deserves something more than a <b>toast</b> ". (228)

The examples illustrate problems Lisa has with the Polish language. She confuses words which results in sentences that may potentially amuse readers. The function which they serve is, then, a humorous one. During a meeting with the Prime Minister whose aim was to discuss the mission the politician assigned the protagonists with, Lisa interrupts the conversation between the man and Zofia Lorentz stating that they *they have one good corpse*. She immediately gets corrected by Karol who elucidates that she means *good lead*. The comical effect is based on a formal similarity between Polish words *trup* (corpse) and *trop* (clue). Lisa confuses the two syntagms, which leads to a ticklish situation, which after a moment becomes even more awkward when Lisa addresses one of the most important people in the state with an exceptionally informal string of words: *Nie robię ludziom ballad, że prowadzę jakąś bajerę*. This is yet another scene in which Miłoszewski deliberately utilises Lisa's ignorance of pragmatics. The difference between an expected

formal register of such a conversation and this kind of unceremonious speech is what contributes to the comical effect of the dialogue, too.

The rendition of a humorous function seems to be of particular importance here as it will help to recreate Zygmunt Miłoszewski's characteristic style of writing which – to a large extent – is centred around comedy. Reviewers frequently acknowledge a humorous layer of his texts, and Ewa Wrona even equates it with an indispensable element of *Bezcenny*, claiming that if treated seriously, the novel would be simply a mixture of well-worn motifs<sup>6</sup>. Since the entire dialogue occurring in the Prime Minister's office is omitted in the translation, the situational humour is – unfortunately – effaced. Admittedly, it would be an exaggeration to say that Lisa's words completely disappear from Lloyd-Jones' text; in spite of the fact that the dialogue with the politician is missing, the translator manages to smuggle the Swede's comment in another passage. She fails, though, to reproduce the play on words which is the basis of Lisa's humorous error so the utterance will not evoke a similar reaction in recipients of the target text. As for the second example, the deviation from an expected register of the talk with the politician does not appear to be exceedingly problematic. After all, the translator would be only required to replicate the dissimilitude between formal and informal varieties of language. In the absence of the dialogue, however, there is no chance to notice this disparity and, consequently, *Priceless* – according to the rules of entropy [Hejwowski, 2016, 58] – begins to be an impoverished relative of the original text.

Comedy is also lost in one more instance – Lisa responds to her companion's toast in honour of the woman's deceased lover with an explanation which, once again, contains a mistake being the ramification of the phonetic resemblance of Polish words *tost* which is a warm sliced bread and *toast* meaning a speech honouring somebody. Trying to say that the man's memory wants something else than honouring him with a drink, she uses the word denoting sliced bread. Because the two meanings are conveyed by the very same vocabulary item in English (*toast*), there must be a loss. Readers of the translation might – at least theoretically – interpret Lisa's words in a similar way that is accessible to Poles but it is highly unlikely. The context of the situation makes it clear that the group are drinking to celebrate the memory of Sten Borg.

### 3. Final remarks

The reconstruction of Lisa's idiolect in the translation presents a considerable challenge. The language spoken by the Swedish character of this linguistically heterogeneous novel performs a number of different

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<sup>6</sup> A review for *Portal Kryminalny* <http://www.portalkryminalny.pl/aktualnosci/recenzje/bezcenny-zygmunt-miloszewski>.

functions, sometimes two or more at the same time, and it is the translator's role to establish their hierarchy. The way in which Zygmunt Miłoszewski constructs this speech allows him to characterise the Swede, convey implied meanings, strengthen the understanding of relations between the characters and add some humour.

The comparative analysis has revealed that even if Lloyd-Jones has managed to preserve certain basic meanings carried by Lisa's idiolect by means of a functional replacement, yet there is a number of losses which might lead to a different perception and characterisation of Lisa than in the original. In *Priceless* she is a more competent speaker of foreign languages who might use simple sentences but hardly ever can one find any mistakes there. There is no huge gap in fluency between her Polish and English, which may corroborate the previous statement. She may use swearwords and informal expressions but the level of vulgarisation of her speech is definitely lower than in the source text.

When compared with the original, the target text is characterised by a significantly lower number of nonstandard features of Lisa's language. Due to the neutralisation of the speech, the English novel is much easier to follow. Grammar mistakes made by Lisa in the source text do not reappear in the translation making it more accessible to target readers. This may have been a conscious decision of the translator which was influenced by marketing factors. Such kind of popular literature is, after all, what needs to sell well. Convoluted writings, especially those in translation from peripheral areas of the polysystem, will not reach many recipients and thus will not bring profits. As Yun Xia opines, translators appear to be "under greater pressure to produce 'acceptable' (or marketable) writing than the original writer is" [2014, 6]. As a consequence of this kind of standardisation, the text loses a portion of its aesthetic value which might also contribute to the way Miłoszewski's style is potentially perceived by the English. This is, then, another study which confirms the assumption that renditions are written in a language which is more conventional than the one used in the source text.

Whether or not the marketing factors have influenced the choices Lloyd-Jones made, one can argue that – from a theoretical standpoint – demanding as it may appear, it is possible to reconstruct Lisa's idiolect in such a way that it resembles the language Miłoszewski created for his character. Bernadetta Darska<sup>7</sup> claims that it is Lisa who is the most interesting character of *Bezcenny*, arguing that she is colourful, ambiguous and surprising. What makes her so is – to a large extent – her language. In the translation, it loses some of its colour and is no longer ambiguous. To avoid it, the translator could, for example, decide to apply functional replacement and colloquial stylisation by means of introducing a number of mistakes into the Swede's speech when

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<sup>7</sup> <https://kultura.onet.pl/recenzje/recenzja-bezcenny-zygmunt-miloszewski/xmmw5g1>.

she speaks Polish in the original. If Lisa omitted auxiliary verbs, ignored articles or confused tenses, readers would have no doubts about her imperfect knowledge of language and, thus, the effect would be somewhat equivalent to one Polish readers experience. Such a solution would, however, lead to problems in passages where Lisa uses fluent English in the original. Also, it does not seem unfeasible to incorporate more slang expressions or make Lisa more vulgar in the target text. The English language has got means to do that; even if there is not always a one-to-one correspondence between elements of prison lingo in Polish and English, one could compensate some losses with the introduction of slang expressions in those passages which do not evoke prison associations in the original. Such an approach to the reconstruction of Lisa's idiolect would help differentiate the Swede from other characters, highlight her individuality and make the protagonist more vivid and compelling.

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