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Stylistic Dominants in English and Polish Poetic Texts: Literary Semantics Facing Translation Studies

Abstract
The article refers briefly to the development, over the last half-century, of the sub-discipline of *literary linguistics* called *literary semantics* in anglophone tradition (mostly British), pointing out its roots in other scholarly paradigms (among others Russian formalism and the Moscow-Tartu school of semiotics) and its close connection with *cognitive poetics*. The author mentions also a development of studies on artistic language in contemporary Polish linguistic theorizing. Conceived by Trevor Eaton as a broad linguistic approach to literary texts, interdisciplinary in nature, literary semantics – in a natural way – enters into dialogue with *translation studies* in the area of research called *comparative stylistics*. The author discusses the notion of *semantic dominant*, introduced into linguistics by Roman Jakobson in 1976 and into the Polish critical theory of translation by Stanisław Barańczak (2004) to designate the most salient element of the poem's complex structure, acting as a clue to its interpretation and translation. The examples provided by Barańczak, voiced as metalinguistic comments on the construal of his own translations of selected English poems as well as critical evaluation of other translators' output, lead us to the conclusion that the concept of semantic dominant should be re-named *stylistic dominant*, the term that better reflects a peculiar characteristic of a multi-level and often multimodal nature of meaning in poetic texts (*plurisignation*, after Wheelwright 1954/1968). What is more, we should talk about *sets* of stylistic dominants (rather than their single occurrences) that act as keys to complex semantics of poetry. An important dominant remains *figuratio*n (*troping* in particular) but the *orchestration* of the poem (the totality of its phonetics and versification) and often its *graphic layout* are of no less import in meaning construction.

Keywords
literary semantics, comparative stylistics/poetics, semantic/stylistic dominant, plurisignation, figuration, equivalence in translation

Streszczenie
Artykuł opisuje zwięźle rozwój (w ostatnim półwieczu) subdyscypliny *lingwistyki literackiej* zwanej w tradycji anglojęzycznej (głównie brytyjskiej) *semantyką literacką*, wskazując na jej korzenie w innych paradygmatach naukowych (m.in. w formalizmie rosyjskim oraz

moskiewsko-tartuskiej szkole semiotyki) oraz na jej bliskie związki z *poetyką kognitywną*. Autorka wskazuje też na rozwój badań nad językiem artystycznym we współczesnej polskiej myśli lingwistycznej. Semantyka literacka, według idei T. Eatona prezentująca szerokie, interdyscyplinarne podejście do tekstów literackich, w naturalny sposób wchodzi w dialog z *translatologią* w obrębie studiów zwanych *stylistyką porównawczą*. Autorka omawia pojęcie zwane *dominantą semantyczną*, wprowadzone do teorii języka przez Romana Jakobsona w 1976 r., a do polskiej krytycznej teorii przekładu przez S. Barańczaka (2004), a oznaczające najbardziej wyróżniający się element złożonej struktury wiersza, funkcjonujący jako klucz do jego interpretacji i tłumaczenia. Przykłady przytoczone przez Barańczaka, zarówno jako metajęzykowy komentarz do konstruowania jego własnych przekładów wybranych anglojęzycznych utworów poetyckich, jak również jako krytyczna ocena wytworów innych tłumaczy, prowadzą autorkę artykułu do konkluzji, że pojęcie dominanty semantycznej winno zostać zastąpione *dominantą stylistyczną*, która to kategoria lepiej odzwierciedla szczególną cechę konstrukcji znaczenia w tekstach poetyckich, przebiegającej na wielu płaszczyznach języka i często multimodalnej, zwaną *wieloznaczeniowością* (*plurisignation*, termin Philipa E. Wheelwrighta, 1954/1968). Ponadto, raczej niż o pojedynczej dominancie stylistycznej, powinniśmy mówić o ich *zespole* jako kluczu do złożonej semantyki poezji. Ważną dominantą pozostaje *figuracja* (a szczególnie użycie *tropów*), jednakże *instrumentacja* wiersza (całość jego fonetyki i wersyfikacji), a często także *układ graficzny* odgrywają nie mniejszą rolę w konstrukcji jego znaczenia.

Słowa kluczowe
semantyka literacka, stylistyka/poetyka porównawcza, dominanta semantyczna/stylistyczna, wieloznaczeniowość, figuracja, ekwiwalencja w tłumaczeniu

1. *Literary semantics* defined

In anglophone tradition, *literary semantics* – as a sub-discipline of *literary linguistics* – possesses its own calendar. The year 1972 marked the appearance of the first issue of *Journal of Literary Semantics* (JLS), to be edited for the next three decades by its founder Trevor Eaton and since 2000 to the present day by Michael Toolan. Eaton had already published *The Semantics of Literature* (1966) and *Theoretical Semics*[1] (1972) before the journal took its shape and in the year 1992 called to life the International Association of Literary Semantics (IALS) at the inaugural conference held at the University of Kent at Canterbury. Consecutive IALS conferences were convened at different European universities (The Institute of English Philology at the Jagiellonian University of Kraków hosting the 2006 event and preparing to hold it, hopefully, in 2018), testifying to an international interest in this area of study. Over the years, literary semantics – an interdisciplinary venture *sensu stricto* – has

[1] *Semics*, the term introduced by Eaton, refers to the study of *semic accompaniment*, that is a series of "mediating reactions" experienced by the reader (readerly strategies and responses). Semics is thus a reader-focused subcomponent of literary semantics, together with the *semantics of literature*, centred on the artistic process of construing literary texts (author-focused) (Eaton 2010/2016: 56).

gained adherents from all over the world, bringing together linguists and literary theorists in a common debate.

Eaton defines this research area quite clearly as a branch of linguistic sciences, yet with the following proviso:

> The literary semanticist is concerned to draw conclusions concerning the nature of literature itself and its relation to other relevant disciplines, notably philosophy, psychology and neurophysiology; he commences with linguistic assumptions, but without linguistic dogma. [...] he tries to describe a work in linguistic terms – this would include the phonetic, lexical, syntactic and metrical elements of a work of literature – but is ready to accept the possibility he will find that parts of his text defy linguistic description, certainly in any narrow grammatical sense. (Eaton 2010/2016: 55)

In this sense, literary semantics is closely related to *stylistics* and *poetics*, yet Eaton thinks that these terms, for various reasons, might prove too restrictive for the branch of study focused on the totality of meaning emerging in aesthetically marked texts at various depths of interpretation.

If Eaton views literary semantics as a basically linguistic enterprise (cf. also Leech and Short 1981/2007; Lambrou and Stockwell 2007/2010; Leech 2008; McIntyre and Busse 2010; Stockwell and Whiteley 2014), John McHardy Sinclair emphasizes that:

> Literature is a prime example of language in use; no systematic apparatus can claim to describe language if it does not embrace the literature also; and not as a freakish development, but as a natural specialization of categories which are required in other parts of the descriptive system. Further, the literature must be describable in terms which accord with the priorities of literary critics. (Sinclair 2004: 51)

This double-sided, linguistically and literature-oriented, qualitative as well as quantitative analysis of literary texts makes literary semantics a multi-directional research area. Undeniably, the idea itself is not a complete novelty for the roots of linguistic interest in artistic texts extend back to Greek and Roman antiquity, with Aristotle's *Poetics* as a famous landmark (cf. Aristotle 1996/Arystoteles 2008), travelling through the Renaissance, Baroque, Classicism, Romanticism down to modern 20th-century linguistics. Conspicuously, Russian Formalism (cf. Shklovsky 1917/1965; Jakobson 1989) and the Moscow-Tartu School of semiotics (cf. Lotman 1971/1977) were strongly literature-oriented. *Cognitive poetics*, flourishing in the Anglo-American and world-wide milieu (cf., among others, Lakoff and Turner 1989; Semino 1997; Stockwell 2002; Semino and Culpeper 2002; Harrison et al. 2014) is another paradigm of literary linguistics, akin to literary semantics in spirit though differing in the technicalities of modelling.

Within contemporary Polish linguistic studies several works can be claimed to instantiate the area of interest delineated by Eaton, to mention only the

leading Polish scholars focused on artistic text, such as Maria Renata Mayenowa (1971/1979/2000), Aleksander Wilkoń (2002a, 2002b), Teresa Dobrzyńska (2003, 2012) or Dorota Korwin-Piotrowska (2015), and very prominently, the cognitively-oriented Lublin school of text studies: Jerzy Bartmiński, Adam Głaz, Anna Pajdzińska, Ryszard Tokarski, with their interest in "the linguistic picture of the world" (cf., among others, Bartmiński and Tokarski 1998; Pajdzińska and Tokarski 2001 – a collective volume on the semantics of artistic text; Bartmiński 2007, 2009). In turn, the collected volumes *Texts and Minds. Papers in Cognitive Poetics and Rhetoric* (Kwiatkowska 2012) and *From Philosophy of Fiction to Cognitive Poetics* (Stalmaszczyk 2016) testify to the successful efforts of the Łódź University linguistic milieu to place Polish research within the mainstream of international scholarly debate in this field of study.

2. Comparative stylistics and poetics

Within a so broadly conceived area of study as literary semantics, one branch of investigation deserves a separate mention. It is a still underdeveloped area of comparative and contrastive studies on the stylistic devices applied in artistic texts produced in different languages. In a series of articles presented at bi-annual international conferences devoted to comparative semantics organized at Kyiv National Linguistic University, I pointed out that problems of stylistics had never occupied a prominent place in Polish-English contrastive studies, which traditionally focused mainly on lexical and grammatical issues (Chrzanowska-Kluczewska 1999, 2001, 2005). Since stylistic devices that simultaneously construe and embellish artistic texts appear at all levels of language, viz.: 1) phonetic, 2) morphological, 3) lexical, 4) phraseological, 5) syntactic, 6) semantic (realized as tropes, often represented by metaphor as an umbrella term) and 7) graphic, contrastive studies boast a huge field open for investigation.

By way of a very cursory outline showing a rather selective approach to topics within *comparative stylistics*, we can go back to the 1960s, when *generative poetics* limited its attention mainly to the syntactic level of text description, trying to reduce style to transformational patterning or to particular transformations thought to be the carriers of poeticity (e.g. non-recoverable deletions, sometimes categorized as *poetic ellipsis*). Soon, lexical violations were added to the list of transformational deviations (Levin 1965; Weinreich 1966), which found its theoretical support in the concept of quasi-semantic selectional restrictions in Noam Chomsky's Standard Theory. In order to accommodate in the linguistic description such phenomena as ambiguity and metaphoricity (perceived as semantic figures), various solutions were proposed, to mention only re-categorization (unconventional PS-rules) and feature-transfer mechanism applied by the so-called *semantic calculator* (Weinreich 1966). A number

of articles followed in an attempt to use a similar "feature grammar" in Polish-English contrastive stylistic studies (cf. Kałuża 1975).

With the development of *generative semantics*, influenced by the ideas of formal semantics and logic, the notion of *presupposition* entered some of the comparative studies (Nowakowska 1977, attempting to reduce metaphor to a clash of presuppositions). Also the question of informational structuring of the text as a whole, one of primary issues of coherence, going back to the Prague School of linguistics with its concept of Functional Sentence Perspective (FSP), came to the fore again. Consequently, some of literary comparative analyses (Nowakowska 1977) invoked the interplay of *theme – rheme*, combined with *topicalization*. At this point Nowakowska (1977: 106) turned to the comparison of the famous opening stanza of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* ("April is the cruellest month...") and its Polish translation by Andrzej Piotrowski, pointing out that the translator focused on the referential equivalence of the two texts, preserving the core meaning of the original but sacrificing the informational structure of the English original through the reversal of theme and rheme.

The fact that Nowakowska drew her empirical material from an English poetic text and its translation into Polish brings us to the main part of our discussion, that is to the fact that comparative/contrastive stylistic research is most fruitfully carried on the translated texts, i.e. interlinguistically.

3. Comparative stylistics in dialogue with translation studies

At this point the original definition of literary semantics as formulated by Eaton calls for a natural extension. Literary semantics, if it wants to contain a sub-field of comparative/contrastive poetics, has to enter into dialogue with translation studies (for which necessity I argued in the abovementioned cycle of my articles). In the contemporary Polish research of this kind, Elżbieta Tabakowska, as a linguist and practising translator, has been developing for years a very consistent *cognitive poetic critical approach* to texts translated from source language (l_1) into target language (l_2) (Tabakowska 1993; Tabakowska 2015 – a collected volume of her articles on the subject).

Tabakowska (2015: 77) relates equivalence in translation to three main "ingredients" of textual structure: 1) *iconicity* of linguistic means in relation to the represented reality, 2) *metaphoricity* and 3) *grammatical means*. The last mentioned element, namely the grammar of the text, reflects its semantic composition. What is postulated, in fact, is the primacy of meaning (conceptualization) over the form but also, in accordance with the cognitive paradigm, the belief in a smooth transition between the modules of language. In addition, already in her first book on translation, Tabakowska (1993) argues for the necessity to

at least make an attempt at maintaining 4) the equivalence of *imagery* between the source and target texts (the idea which I endorse in Chrzanowska-Kluczewska 2005).

The second author whose claims are of particular interest to me is Stanisław Barańczak (1948–2014). Although Tabakowska (2015: 63) notices that professional translators do not, as a rule, carry out a formal analysis of the texts they work on, there exist some exceptions to this regularity in the persons of linguistically-conscious translators. Barańczak is a case in point, having been not only a poet himself but also a literary critic and theoretician of translation, who skilfully applied linguistic terminology in the comments on his own and other persons' translation workshops. In his valuable collection of sketches on translation strategies and techniques *Ocalone w tłumaczeniu* (Saved in translation) (Barańczak 2004, 3rd enlarged edition), which he also describes as a "small but maximalist translation manifesto," he introduces an important notion of *semantic dominant*, to which I want to turn my attention in the section to follow. Better known to theoreticians of translation (cf. Torop 1995/2008: 274), this term has not received enough attention within linguistics proper although the propagator of the notion of *dominant* in linguistics and semiotics was Jakobson, who devoted to it one of his papers (published in Russian in 1976). Jakobson envisaged *dominant* as a major linguistic element that guarantees cohesion, coherence and uniformity of the text.

4. Semantic dominant – a key to translating a poetic text

Barańczak (2004: 20, translation mine) describes a *semantic dominant* as an "absolutely primary element of meaning" of a given poem, a "formal" meaning constituent that can neither be removed nor substituted with anything else, in fact "the key" to the poem's content. Undoubtedly, Barańczak's claim has to be taken in consideration together with the fact that meaning in poetry is an emergent *holistic phenomenon*, born at all levels of representation mentioned in Section 2, a sum total of a wide range of linguistic ingredients plus the imagery they build together. This composite aspect of the semantics of literary texts was discussed several decades ago by philosopher and semanticist Philip E. Wheelwright (1954/1968), who named this phenomenon *plurisignation*. In short, a poetic artwork is a complex object, endowed with several levels of signification, where the overall semantic content is inseparably tied to a peculiar instrumentation (the totality of sound, rhyme and rhythm effects) and frequently to the poem's graphic form as well.

This idiosyncrasy of poetic texts becomes a challenge to so-called *total translation*, the concept introduced into the theory of translation by linguist John C. Catford (1965) and discussed at length by semiotician Peeter Torop in an essay

under such a title (Torop 1995/2008, the original in Russian). Total translation designates the process in which a translator attempts to fill in all the linguistic levels of the source text by the textual material coming from the target language. In a somewhat paradoxical way, the postulated total translation is practically unachievable in the sense that total linguistic equivalence at the plane of form and content is impossible, despite the skill and creativity of the translator. Even in a highly equivalent translation, the equivalence of one or more levels of linguistic representation has to be abandoned. Consequently, Torop points out that the concept of *totality* cannot be taken as an absolute value but rather as a tendency, showing only the direction of the translator's efforts. Edward Balcerzan (2008: 13–14) explains this seeming paradox away: the postulated one-hundred percent equivalence at all levels of language is an idealization impossible to achieve due to structural and semantic differences in the systems of any two languages compared. In brief, the postulated totality can never be total.

In the light of unavoidable difficulties in preserving equivalence at all linguistic levels of a poetic artefact, Barańczak's concept of semantic dominant becomes of theoretical relevance, implying that the translator should search for a hidden key to the meaning of the entire poem, even at the expense of other structural elements. Let us then have a look at what kinds of semantic dominants have been postulated by Barańczak, critically evaluating his own and other translators' output.[2]

To repeat, the category of a semantically dominant characteristic is related to those elements of artwork that offer a clue or clues to the totality of its senses. Barańczak (2004: 35–36, 38) rightly believed that a recognition of this semantically predominant element is a challenge facing the reader and a must for the critical interpreter and the translator. The first example (excerpted) is 17th-century poem "Echo in a Church" by Edward Herbert, Lord of Cherbury (1583–1648, brother to better known George Herbert) and its translation "Echo w kościele":

(1a) Where shall my troubled soul at large
Discharge
The burden of her sins, oh where?
Echo: Here.

Whence comes this voice I hear?
Who doth this grace afford?
If it be thou, O Lord,
Say if thou hear my prayers when I call.
Echo: All.

[2] We should distinguish between the *poetics of translation/translator* (a set of linguistic choices and stylistic devices applied at all levels of translation) and the *critical theory of translation* (Torop 2008: 91). Barańczak practiced a criticism of his own translation poetics, thus a *metapoetics of translation*.

And wilt thou pity grant when I do cry?
Echo: Ay.

[...]
O speak before I wholly weary am.
Echo: I am. (Barańczak 2004: 17)

(1b) Gdzie światłość, która to, co w duszy mej najlepsze,
Odeprze
Grzech, gdy się jego ciemność naprzeciwko ściele?
Echo: W kościele.

Skąd ten głos? To Ty, Panie?
Gdy zewsząd próśb tak wiele.
Czy każde me pytanie
Pojmiesz, każde westchnienie, choćby i najłzawsze?
Echo: Zawsze.

I okażesz mi litość, gdy cierpię po karze?
Echo: Okażę.

[…]
U kogo dług ma wieczny dusza ma uboga?
Echo: U Boga. (Barańczak 2004: 19–20)

Though, apparently, the gist of translation should reside in reproducing the content of the work (in this case a dialogue of a human being, posing important existential questions to God but being answered instead by an echo), Barańczak singles out *the rhyme pattern* as the semantic dominant, which – according to him – is an extreme case of the semantic key. Barańczak had to substitute the original masculine rhymes, typical of English, with the feminine equivalents reflecting a different instrumentation of the Polish language (thus, at the morphological and lexical level no equivalence can hold between the source and target texts) but the idea of the semantically empty "replies" of the church echo, based exclusively on rhyming repetitions, has been faithfully preserved.

In my view, however, it should be noticed that the church echo's responses, mechanical and only seemingly making sense, uncover a deep *irony* of the existential situation of the lyrical ego. The message is that he ought not to take those answers as possessing any deeper meaning he is so desperately craving for. What Barańczak does not mention is the fact that the second, genuinely semantic dominant appears at the level of *figuration*. In my monograph devoted to tropes in artistic language (Chrzanowska-Kluczewska 2013a) I distinguish three organizational levels at which tropes can appear: 1) the level of *micro-tropes* (with figures appearing overtly, within a phrasal or at most sentential

scope), 2) the level of *macrotropes* (extended figuration, covering a larger scope, often as an overt chain or cluster of tropes) and 3) the highest level of *megatropes* (given covertly, which have to be deduced from the text as an entirety). Edward Herbert's poem is a good instance of a work quite literal at the two overt levels (micrometaphors appear but are scarce) yet strongly figurative at the highest level of interpretation. Here, the structuring figure is the already mentioned irony, which describes the human condition on the earth – the man addressing the Lord, who frequently stays mute. The point for which I have argued elsewhere (Chrzanowska-Kluczewska 2005, 2013a) is that figuration is an indispensable element of the overall meaning of poetic texts. Barańczak has managed to preserve the tropological structure of the work, without, however treating it as a dominant. In my view, the presence of irony that emerges as a result of the phonetic play with rhymes, is a second dominant in this poem, truly semantic in nature.

Below, I will – for the sake of brevity – alternatively only mention other types of semantic dominants as identified by Barańczak in the English poems he scrutinized. The importance of figuration in translation becomes foregrounded in Andrew Marvell's "The Definition of Love." The semantic dominant singled out – quite rightly – by Barańczak – is not so much its orchestration but, typically of 17th-century metaphysical poetry, a logical argumentation based on *paradox*. If this precise reasoning fails to be preserved, the intricate network of opposing meanings can be destroyed (which happened in Adam Czerniawski's version, critically evaluated by Barańczak). Additionally, wrong *lexical choices* (among others changes affecting the category of gender) can ruin what Barańczak calls "the logic of metaphor." Here, a semantic dominant is tropological in essence.

Since we are in the 17th century, let us return to the second of the Herbert Brothers, George, and his famous "Easter Wings," translated by Barańczak as "Skrzydła Wielkanocne":

(2a) Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,	(2b) Panie, coś stworzył nas w dostatku błogim,
Though foolishly he lost the same,	Choć człowiek szasta nim i gardzi,
Decaying more and more,	Grzęznąc w upadku srogim,
Till he became	Aż jest najbardziej
Most poore:	Ubogim.
With thee	Daj, Boże.
O let me rise	Wzlecieć przy Tobie,
As larks, harmoniously,	Niech skrzydła dziś otworzę
And sing this day thy victories:	I śpiewem triumf Twój ozdobię:
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.	Nawet upadek w locie mi pomoże.
(Herbert, IS)	(Barańczak, IS)

Most certainly, the semantic dominant, the clue to the interpretation of this poem (which consists of two symmetrical stanzas, of which I have quoted only the first) lies in its *graphic shape*. It is an exemplar of pattern poetry, *carmen figuratum*, where the iconicity of the poem's shape is the most salient feature. The two stanzas imitate a pair of the bird's wings (although a close reading of the text may also imply an allusion to the angelic wings or even to the figure of the winged, resurrected Christ, as in Eastern Orthodox iconology). The second dominant, deftly inscribed into the visual aspect of the poem, is tropological again. It is a *metaphor* of the decline of humanity, caused by Adam and Eve's original sin, and the metaphorical spiritual "poverty," the ideas enhanced by the verses diminishing in length, whereas the flight towards God and the ascension from the moral downfall as well as pictorially represented thinness of misery is signalled by the growing length of the lines. Stanza two contains, in a mirror way, the same metaphor of the fall and the miraculous flight of the spirit, this time applied to an individual fate.

Barańczak's translation deftly recognizes the interplay of troping and visual effects, thus of a *multimodal* nature of this poetic text, verbal and pictorial simultaneously, in which phonetics has also its role to play. The graphic form tones in with the acoustic layer, from the falling intonation signalling the spiritual downfall to the rising intonation that matches the resurrection, heightened by assonances, alliterations and rhymes. Unfortunately, the exquisite alliteration in the last line (**f**all – **f**urther – **f**light) has been lost in translation.

The graphic layer may be important for the overall interpretation of a poetic text in a subtler and less obvious way. While pattern poetry/lettrism/concrete poetry, etc. (cf. Webster 2001) play conspicuously on the shape of the entire work, the importance of such apparently minor devices as the usage of upper-case letters, specific punctuation, length of particular lines, enjambments, etc. should not be underestimated in certain situations. In an article devoted to what may be called *intralingual translation*, Margaret Freeman (2002) carries out a very detailed analysis of the cognitive import of the graphic layout in Emily Dickinson's poetry. The exterior form of the texts in the case of this poet, who left her whole oeuvre in manuscripts, is strongly linked to their semantics. Freeman argues for the value of the embodiment of Dickinson's works in a particular graphic shape. Unfortunately, practically all later transpositions from the written into the printed medium have considerably altered what Freeman names *cognitive frames* that shape Dickinsonian poetics, full of stumbling blocks for readers and editors. By way of comparison, she juxtaposes her own transcription of two-stanza poem No. 77 (according to the numeration in *Unpublished Poems of Emily Dickinson*, issued in 1935), faithful to the original manuscript in a minute way, with one of the "regularized" printed versions. The first stanza appears below:

(3a) Dreams – are well – but
Waking's better –
If One wake at Morn –
If One wake at Midnight
Better –
Dreaming – of the Dawn (Freeman 2002: 28, her own transcription)

(3b) Dreams – are well – but Waking's better,
If One wake at Morn –
If One wake at Midnight – better –
Dreaming – of the Dawn – (Freeman 2002: 26, printed version of 1935)

This particular case of intralingual translation shows how such apparently unimportant graphic editorial choices as shifts in the position of certain words (e.g. "better" in l.5, moved by the editor to the previous line and thus, on structural grounds, changing the meaning implied, namely that it is better to dream of the dawn rather than to wake at midnight, contrary to what the editorial shift suggests), the change of length of particular lines and their unwarranted fusions, influence the reading of Dickinsonian difficult and notoriously ambiguous syntax. Freeman also draws our attention to the fact that the edited versions of Dickinson's poetry have all substituted her idiosyncratic hyphenation with dashes.

If the *syntactic structure*, purposefully non-canonical and elliptical is one of obvious "semantic" dominants throughout Dickinson's oeuvre, the *graphic layout* emerges as an equally important feature, so inextricably tied to the poem's construction and the ensuing interpretation that any *bricolage* with it attempted by editors and translators will of necessity turn against the authorial intention. Freeman is absolutely right in claiming that reading Dickinson is nothing else but "teasing the meaning out" of her texts, which should not be skewed by tampering with their peculiar graphics.[3]

Since our discussion is limited in scope, I continue to mention other types of semantic dominants as identified by Barańczak in the selected English poems he translated into Polish or whose translations by other authors came under his critical scrutiny:

[3] Anna Drzewicka (2002) analyses, in turn, a graphic aspect of the intra- and interlingual translations of the poetry produced by Charles d'Orléans in the 15th century. His works are ridden with symbols and personifications, and highly allegorical in nature. Whereas in his times the capitalization of *abstracta* was not yet in use, typographic conventions introduced later have for centuries signalled such tropological devices. Drzewicka points out that all decisions concerning the usage of upper or lower-case letters in Charles d'Orléan's poetry, unless carefully thought out, may drastically influence the construction of his poetic world. Thus, the introduction of capital letters by translators and editors as a major way of signalling symbols and figures (such as metaphor-personification) as well as allegorization, must be performed with utmost care.

a) A deft combination of a consistently followed *strict form of versification* with the *semantic excess* (*overcoding*) of content, highly emotional and linguistically tangled, close to a hysterical confession, dominates in John Donne's metaphysical Sonnet XIV "Batter My Heart, Three Person'd God" (cf. Barańczak 2004: 36–39).
b) In the critically assessed translation produced by Jerzy S. Sito of Donne's Sonnet X "Death Be Not Proud," one of semantic dominants in the target text becomes *forced archaization* and the application of *anachronistic rhyming* (half-rhymes unsuitable to the conventions of Polish 17th-century versification) together with *omissions of lexical material* that ruins, in places, the core figurative meaning of the poem. Barańczak's criticism, which contains arguable points, emphasizes the role of *orchestration* as a poetic dominant and contains a warning against turning to *anachronistic archaisms* (Barańczak 2004: 39–43; cf. also Barańczak's comments on translating a notoriously difficult Gerard M. Hopkins in de Bończa Bukowski and Heydel 2013).
c) In William Blake's famous poem "The Tyger," which iconically represents "the fearful symmetry" of meekness and violence present within God's creation, a conspicuous feature becomes a skilful cooperation between the dominant figure of *opposition* (*antithesis*) and the *instrumentation* achieved through a very salient trochaic meter (cf. Barańczak 2004: 48–53).
d) A naive-sounding *rhyming pattern* (abba) combined with the *stylistic game of parodying* scientific style emerges as a joint dominant in 20th-century American poet Elizabeth Bishop's poem "Exchanging Hats," full of punning, paronomasias and phraseological shifts (cf. Barańczak 2004: 23).
e) In the case of children's literature, where the dominants are *echoic rhyming patterns*, catchy to the ear and easy to memorize, often heightened on the lexical and semantic level by *absurd strings of phrases, nonsensical epithets*, etc., translators often have recourse to free translation or straightforward adaptation. Barańczak voices the opinion that in translating children's poetry, the basic semantic content may be backgrounded in favour of preserving the playful ambience of *punning*, *morphological and lexical experiments*, etc. He quotes Alan A. Milne's poem "If I Were King," containing a boy's monologue, or rather a litany-like wishful thinking. I quote below the three final couplets:

(4a) If I were King of Norroway,
I'd ask an elephant to stay.

If I were King of Babylon,
I'd leave my button gloves undone.

If I were King of Timbuctoo,
I'd think of lovely things to do. (Barańczak 2004: 73)

(4b) Gdybym był królem w Tarapacie,
Mógłbym nabijać fajkę tacie.

Gdybym był królem w Dyrdymale,
Nie musiałbym się czesać wcale.

Gdybym był królem Fiku-Miku,
Jeździłbym ciągle na kucyku.

(Barańczak 2004: 73, transl. Antoni Marianowicz)

The outstanding feature of the text, apart from a consistent *structural parallelism* of "If (only) I were" construction, is the listing of the countries' names. The original contains the names of really existing states (Spain, France, Greece and ancient Babylon), one purposefully misspelled name "Norroway" and one exotic but historical name "Timbuctoo" well rhyming with "to do." The Polish translator substituted them with *neological formations*, funny but nonsensical names of fictitious lands, to which he adjusted the end-rhymes. Though the basic meaning has been very seriously affected, the overall atmosphere of reverie has been maintained and even heightened in comparison with the original. Still, the appreciation of these neologisms is culture-specific as they refer to such Polish plural nouns as *tarapaty* ('trouble') or *dyrdymały* ('nonsense'), while *fiku-miku* is a Polish glossolalic, thus semantically empty expression used in children's counting-out rhymes.

5. Concluding remarks

From our cursory description of what Barańczak meant by proposing the concept of *semantic dominant* some observations emerge. Firstly, the classification of dominants as *semantic* is rather generous. The reader will have noticed that, although all linguistic devices we have listed above do influence the semantics of the source and target texts, only some of them can be categorized as genuinely semantic. To this group belongs figuration (tropes in particular), together with lexical and phraseological devices. Others are purely *syntactic* in nature (structural ambiguity, non-canonical word order, parallelism, ellipsis, enjambment), still other *phonetic* (rhymes, alliteration, phonetic puns such as homophony/paronomasia, patterns of sound repetition called *schemes*, in sum, the meter and overall instrumentation of the text) and, lastly, *graphic* (shape of the poem, punctuation, line length and arrangement, typography, etc.).

For this reason, I would rather refer to those foregrounded features of the poetics of particular texts by means of a broader term, that of *stylistic dominant*. Actually, Barańczak (2004: 72) at one point uses this term, which I consider to

be much more adequate owing to its greater generality. The notion of *stylistic dominant* covers all linguistic levels that participate in the construal of the holistic meaning and aesthetic effect of an artistic text.

Secondly, it should have become quite transparent that it rarely proves possible to reduce the interpretation of the poem to a single dominant. In the descriptions of the above-studied texts we mentioned more than one dominating stylistic characteristic acting as the key to the poem's interpretation. This intuition was also corroborated by a remark of another outstanding Polish theoretician and critic of translation, Edward Balcerzan. Balcerzan analyses Barańczak's translation of Osip E. Mandelshtam's poem of 1937, rendered in Polish as "Drożdże świata, drożdże drogie" ("Dear yeast of the world") (Barańczak 2004: 445) and basically disagrees that the only semantic dominant conducive to attaining equivalence in translation hinges on the "intonational-instrumental" order of rhythm, sound effects and meter in general. For him every literary artefact is a "game of several dominants, never played out to the end" (Balcerzan 2008: 15, fn. 8, translation mine), either in critical interpretation or in translation. On this basis we can conclude that it seems reasonable to postulate a *set/cluster* of such dominating stylistic features that taken together can function as a clue to grasping the poem as an artistic *totum*, in its entire complex, multilevel significance, Wheelwright's *plurisignation*.

The third element worth highlighting at this point is the importance of figuration, and especially the presence of tropes as an unusually frequent stylistic dominant. What Tabakowska calls *metaphoricity*, I perceive rather as a range of *universal troping*, where the text-forming mechanisms, present at the three hierarchical orders discussed in Section 2, can be described as realizations of what seems to be a set of universally applied tropes (for more details cf. Chrzanowska-Kluczewska 2013a): *metaphor*, *metonymy*, *synecdoche*, *irony*, *simile*, *antithesis*, *catachresis* (a generalized figure of semantic and logical abuse such as e.g. paradox), *euphemia*, *hyperbole*, and *suppression* (cf. Korwin-Piotrowska 2015 on silence and suppression in narrative artistic texts).

Translators, according to various strategies applied, can do the following: 1) omit a given figure (deletion, called also *de-metaphorization* in a generalizing sense), 2) add a nonexistent figure or figures to the target texts (addition, *metaphorization*), 3) shift a figure/trope to another location in the target text, or 4) substitute one figure with another (compensation). Barańczak's comments often refer to the importance of figuration in translation, though in the majority of cases he analysed the mechanism of troping served as one among a group of stylistic dominants.

There exist, however, such poetic texts where tropes become a pivot of the semantic/stylistic frame. Czesław Miłosz, for instance, can be described as a "synecdochical" poet. So-called *body-parts* (*corporeal*) *synecdoches*, instant-

iating the generalizing and totalizing force of this figure (cf. Chrzanowska-Kluczewska 2013b) can play a crucial role in the poetic text, also as powerful image-creating devices. As our closing literary citations let us compare two excerpts taken from Miłosz's poetry, together with their translations. Miłosz (2008: 449, Afterword) acknowledges that poetry can be written only in one's native tongue, spoken since childhood, for which reason he, as an émigré, never "switched languages." Consequently, he rarely translated his own poems into English – usually, he worked in a team with other persons or left his poetry to native speakers of English to translate.

The excerpts have been drawn from two poems that testify to Miłosz's fascinaton with birds and "birdiness." Chronologically the first is "Sroczość" ("Magpiety," 1958), a 12-line-long pondering on what makes a magpie the magpie, while the second, "Oda to ptaka" ("Ode to a Bird," 1959), has been devoted to some unnamed bird of prey (falcon?). What is particularly worthy of attention are *synecdochical chains* (*macrosynecdoches*) that intend to capture the essence of being a bird:

(5a) [...] Skrzeczała sroka i mówiłem: **sroczość**,
Czymże jest **sroczość**? Do sroczego serca,
Do włochatego nozdrza nad dziobem i lotu
Który odnawia się kiedy obniża
Nigdy nie sięgnę a więc jej nie poznam.
Jeżeli jednak **sroczość** nie istnieje
To nie istnieje i moja natura. […] (Miłosz 2008: 128, emphasis mine)

(5b) […] A magpie was screeching and I said: **Magpiety**?
What is **magpiety**? I shall never achieve
A magpie heart, a hairy nostril over the beak, a flight
That always renews just when coming down,
And so I shall never comprehend **magpiety**.
If however **magpiety** does not exist
My nature does not exist either. […]
(Miłosz 2008: 129, transl. Czesław Miłosz and Peter Dale Scott, emphasis mine)

The underlined nominal phrases build a synecdochic chain, the list of the most salient features of the bird (three body parts: heart, nostril, beak and the main capacity of this creature, namely flight). This macrosynecdoche paired with the triple repetition of the key word 'magpiety' in the original (strengthened in the translation to four occurrences), bolded by me to show its even distribution in the poem, constitutes an obvious stylistic dominant. The poem is written in a blank verse, close to a piece of narrative prose, so the instrumentation in this case is rather secondary. The semi-authorial translation has faithfully preserved *figuration* and *lexis* as a pivot of poetic construal.

(6a) O złożony.
O nieświadomy.
Trzymający za sobą dłonie pierzaste.
Wsparty na skokach z szarego jaszczura,
Na cybernetycznych rękawicach
Które imają czego dotkną.
[…]
Kiedy stopa zwalnia uchwyt, wyciąga się ramię.
Chwieje się miejsce gdzie byłeś, ty w linie kryształu
Unosisz swoje ciepłe i bijące serce.
[…]
Ruch nienaganny w ogromnym bursztynie.
Abym pojął w biciu skrzydeł co mnie dzieli
[…] od mojej postaci pionowej […]
Ale dziób twój półotwarty zawsze ze mną […]
(Miłosz 2008: 134, 136, emphasis mine)

(6b) O composite.
O unconscious,
Holding your feathery palms behind you,
Propped on your gray lizard legs,
On cybernetic gloves
That grasp at whatever they touch.
[…]
When your foot loosens its hold, your arm extends.
The place you have left is rocking, into the lines of crystal
You take your warm palpitating heart.
[…]
An impeccable motion in an expanse of amber.
So that I comprehend, while your wings beat,
What divides me […] from my vertical figure […]
But your half-opened beak is with me always. […]
(Miłosz 2008: 135, transl. Czesław Miłosz and Robert Pinsky, emphasis mine)

The beauty of the macrosynecdochic chain of the original (which names eight body-parts and "an impeccable motion" as an essential feature) helps the reader to visualize the bird of prey through its most outstanding characteristics (in addition, synecdoches have been very skillfully combined with metaphors). The translation is very faithful in this respect, keeping an equal number of figures in the same positions, with the tropological dominant playing an outstanding role in this text.

The fourth, final observation to be adduced at this point bears again on the fact, well recognized in translation theory, that total translation can never be total and that the equivalence of all linguistic layers in a poetic text can hardly be maintained. No matter how diligent we will be in identifying semantic/stylistic dominants of a literary artwork, they will be only partly "played out,"

to use Balcerzan's description. The reasons stem not only from the generic dissimilarity of languages but also from the unavoidable existence of *stylistic gaps* between them (cf. Kiklewicz 2015) or empty spots in various cultural realities (cf. Tabakowska 2015: 234). Our *semiosphere*, conceived by Yurij M. Lotman (1990) as a totality of all signing systems and cultures, has by now grown to immense size and is ever growing so a closure of lacunae within this practically unending context (what Balcerzan 2008: 24 calls a *paradigmatic order* of the text, its social and cultural exteriority) is practically unfeasible. That's why semantic/stylistic dominants, although of great import in the comprehension of an artistic text, a clue to its *many-faceted meaning*, are only one among several factors to be considered in translation studies.

My article, hopefully, demonstrates that a very broadly conceived literary semantics (and its close relative cognitive poetics) as branches of literary linguistics must remain in constant conversation with the theory of literature and literary criticism, with philosophy of language, semiotics of art, socio-, psycho- and neurolinguistics, and – importantly – with translation studies and studies in intercultural communication, a set of disciplines so strongly related that their autonomy is nowadays a mirage. The keystone is *artistic language*, the understanding and formal description of whose nature has been and will continue to be an ongoing challenge to all the branches of knowledge just listed.

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