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Non-Binary Language Forms in the Polish and German Translations of Bernardine Evaristo's British Novel *Girl, Woman, Other*

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Formy niebinarne w polskim i niemieckim przekładzie brytyjskiej powieści Bernardine Evaristo "Girl, Woman, Other"

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Streszczenie

Praca porusza temat form dotyczących osób niebinarnych w języku angielskim, polskim i niemieckim. Podmiotem badań jest brytyjska powieść Bernardine Evaristo p.t. „Girl, Woman, Other" i jej przekład na język polski dokonany przez Agę Zano oraz na język niemiecki przez Tanję Handels. Po wprowadzeniu w teorię przekładu literackiego i przedstawieniu najistotniejszych dla badania strategii tłumaczeniowych, zdefiniowane i opisane są formy inkluzywne oraz historia ich występowania dla każdego z omawianych języków. Najbardziej rozpowszechnione są one w języku angielskim, na czele z używanym z liczbą mnogą zaimkiem "they" figurującym w jego niebinarnym znaczeniu w kilku słownikach. Polskie formy inkluzywne opracowywane zostały szczegółowo przez kolektyw Zaimki.pl, który proponuje wiele rozwiązań neutralnych płciowo zarówno dla zaimków jak i wymagających tego rzeczowników, czasowników i przymiotników. W języku niemieckim, najczęściej występującym elementem neutralizującym płciowość jest tzw. "gender gap", tj. użycie znaków typograficznych między rdzeniem rzeczownika a jego żeńską końcówką. W dalszej części pracy podrozdział powieści Evaristo poświęcony niebinarnej postaci Megan/Morgan oraz oba przekłady książki przeanalizowane są pod kątem części mowy, które w danym języku są nacechowane płciowo, przedstawiając inkluzywne rozwiązania, na które zdecydowały się tłumaczki. Odzwierciedliły one formy najczęściej używane przez polsko- i niemieckojęzyczną społeczność queerową, zwracając uwagę zarówno na ich potrzeby, jak i charakter gramatyki tych języków. Przekłady różnią się wyborem niektórych strategii tłumaczeniowych, wynikającym z zasobów języka polskiego i niemieckiego.

Słowa kluczowe

forma niebinarna, język inkluzywny, literatura queerowa, neutralność płciowa,
rodzaj gramatyczny, tłumaczenie literackie

Non-Binary Language Forms in the Polish and German Translations of Bernardine Evaristo's British Novel *Girl, Woman, Other*

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Introduction

Nowadays, more and more people mention various gender identities, and together with the growing awareness of their meaning, rises the demand for the accurate linguistic devices which would make their expression possible. There are many works about inclusiveness in linguistics, i.e. applying forms which do not exclude, discriminate or diminish any person, regardless of their gender identity. Sometimes characters in movies, books, or games are misgendered in translations due to a lack of systematized rules in language regarding gender neutral forms. Szymon Misiek in his work *Misgendered in Translation?: Genderquerness in Polish Translations of English-language Television Series* (2020) gives examples of referring to non-binary characters with masculine, feminine, or plural forms instead of the accurate, gender-neutral ones (pp. 8-15). The knowledge about various queer identities and their preferred linguistic expressions (honorifics and forms used to refer to them) is a challenge in today's society and, among others, linguistic environments. The works including non-binary characters, such as *Girl, Woman, Other* written by Bernardine Evaristo, are essential to introduce those new linguistic features to readers in order to domesticate them and make them more and more natural, as one of the often appearing criticisms towards inclusive language is its artificiality or weirdness (RJN, n.d., Frequently Asked Questions).

The aim of this thesis is to analyze and compare the non-binary forms used in the British novel *Girl, Woman, Other* by Bernardine Evaristo and its German and Polish translations. It also discusses the changes within the inclusivity introduced in those languages over the years, explaining the motives of the newly implemented forms and their recognition by the linguistic sources such as dictionaries. The analysis is based on the translations of the above-mentioned British novel into Polish and German, specifically on one subchapter of the book devoted to the non-binary character Megan/Morgan.

The thesis is divided into three chapters. The first one provides the readers with the essential information on the translation, including its various definitions created by linguists and researchers such as Jakobson, Munday, Mounin, Nida, and Taber, the division of the translation into types, with a particular focus on literary translation together with its characteristic features. The chapter concludes with a description of the chosen translation strategies, chiefly ones applying to the translation of literature developed by Kazakova. Chapter 2 is dedicated to the non-binary forms. It explains the definition of this term, as well as the difference between the adjectives *gender-inclusive*, *gender-neutral*, and *gender-fair* which

appear throughout existing works on non-binary forms as determiners of language. The chapter also discusses the development of non-binary forms in English, Polish, and German. Chapter 3 focuses on the analysis of the novel *Girl, Woman, Other*, giving information on the book's topic and background, as well as on the author of the book and two translators. Finally it concentrates on the gender-inclusive language in each version of the book and concludes with the comparison of the Polish and German translations.

Chapter 1: Translation

1.1 Defining translation

Over the centuries, there have been many approaches to defining translation linguistic studies. The English term *translation* is said to have been first documented around 1340. It originates from the Latin *translatio* meaning 'transporting; transfer of meaning' which then entered English through the Old French word *translacion* (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2021).

For Roman Jakobson, a Russian linguist and literary theoretician, the core component of translation is a sign, to which Jakobson refers in his book *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation* (1959). He states that "There is no *signatum* without *signum*" (p. 233), where *signatum* is explained as "meaning" and *signum* refers to the Latin "sign; signature". Based on this, he distinguishes three kinds of translation. According to him, translation means interpreting verbal signs either with different signs within the same language (intralingual translation), signs of another language (interlingual translation), or nonverbal signs of a specified system (intersemiotic translation).

Jeremy Munday (2013), a British linguist and translator, adopts a different, broader approach to the topic pointing out that translation can be understood as a discipline (field of study), as a process (translating), and as a final product of the translation process. Taking into consideration this division, Jakobson's definitions correspond only to Munday's understanding of translation as a process.

An analogous view is held by French linguist Georges Mounin (1963) who treats translation as "a series of operations where source materials and final products are significations"[1] (p. 232), where "significations" denote the meaning of the linguistic forms. Moreover, in his book *Les Problèmes Théoriques de la Traduction* he states that the linguistic operation is integrally linked to the translator's cultural knowledge: "To translate a foreign language, one has to perform two conditions […]: Studying a foreign language; studying (systematically) the ethnography of the community of which this language is the expression"[2] (p. 236). He emphasizes that "No translation is completely adequate if those two conditions are not fulfilled"[3] (p. 236). This view is also shared by American linguist Eugene Nida (1945), who

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[1] Self-translation.
[2] Self-translation.
[3] Self-translation.

claims that "words cannot be understood correctly apart from the local cultural phenomena for which they are symbols" (p. 207).

Eugene Nida and Charles Taber in their book *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (1969) present an innovative approach to translation, having collated it with the previous definitions of this term. They emphasize the importance of the receptor of the message and their response. In their view, the translator ought to compare this response to the reaction presumably produced in the readers of the original text. Thereby, the focus is on the recipient, not the translated text itself.

There are three other core aspects of the translation process according to Nida and Taber. Firstly, the purpose of the translation is to reproduce the message contained in the utterance. To fulfill this, one must introduce changes concerning vocabulary and grammar. Secondly, the translator ought to find the closest natural equivalents of particular terms or phrases. By "natural" the authors understand such choice of expressions and grammatical forms which result in a text that conforms with the target language and does not sound like a translation. Finally, they put emphasis on the major importance of meaning. Based on the example from the Bible's translation, they state that the content should be made "unambiguously clear" through the specification of a given term (p. 13).

1.2 Literary translation

As stated by Renthlei (2013), traditional linguists distinguish two types of translation: literary translation – which he associates with literature in general – and non-literary translation (p. 30). He mentions that the subjects of literary translators' research include not only analyzing the meaning of the text but also studying its style, which is normally not taken into consideration when translating non-literary texts.

However, Sachin Kethar (2005), a bilingual writer and translator based in India, collates the traditional approach to defining literary translation with the recent developments in the field of literary theory. He states that the traditional approach to literary translations "considers finding equivalents not just for lexis, syntax or concepts, but also for features like style, genre, figurative language, historical stylistic dimensions, polyvalence, connotations as well as denotations, cultural items and culture-specific concepts and values" (para. 3). According to the recent developments, however, literature is seen "in much broader social and cultural framework" (para. 6). It is also described as a "social institution and related to other social institutions" (para. 6). Kethar claims that translation theory "examines the complex interconnections between poetics, politics, metaphysics, and history. It borrows its analytical

tools from various social sciences like linguistics, semiotics, anthropology, history, economics, and psychoanalysis" (Kethar, 2005, paras. 3-6).

Ernst R. Wendland, an American academic author conducting research on Bible translation and African languages, has described the ambiguity of the term "literary translation" in his text *Perspectives on a Literary Translation* (2023). He differentiates four ways in which this term could be understood (p. 34). The first one concerns literary texts translated from the source language mechanically and literally, whereas the remaining three senses of the term concern literary translations. He explains them as follows:

> (2) a literary rendering in the TL [target language] of a nonliterary SL [source language] original; (3) a fully literary translation (functionally equivalent) of a literary SL document; and (4) a selective literary rendering of certain marked literary features (structural and stylistic) of a SL text, such as balanced lineation, symmetrical syntactic parallelism, pleasing lexical collocations, condensation, imagery, figuration, rhetorical heightening, and intertextual allusion. I am here using literary translation with particular reference to a version of the third or fourth type (p. 34).

Cheng Zhang, a researcher based in Cambridge, UK and the author of *The Role of Literary Theory in Literary Translation* acknowledges a wide scope of types of texts which are ranked into the group of literary works. She states that the term "literary theory" is commonly associated with "rendering the great works of literature from one language into another" (p. 124), whereas she finds those words to cover a broader topic. Based on Mervyn Davies' Copyright Act implemented by the Parliament of the United Kingdom in 1956, Zhang notices that literary works in the act are referred to "without placing limitations on either style or quality" (p. 124). She concludes that "in this perspective, literary works incorporate all kinds of books, plays, poems, short stories and writings, including such items as a collection of jokes, the script of a documentary, a travel guide and an opera libretto" (p. 124).

1.3 Translation strategies

As mentioned by Sanjun Sun (2012), an associate professor of translation studies at Bejing Foreign Studies University, the translation strategies are first divided into literal and free translation, which are called variously by different researchers, e.g. word-for-word translation as an opposite of sense-for-sense translation (St. Jerome), formal equivalence as opposed to dynamic equivalence (Eugene Nida), or foreignization brought into apposition with domestication (Lawrence Venuti) (Sun, 2012, p. 1).

However, speaking specifically of literary translation, diverse types of literary texts demand different translation strategies, as observed by Tamara Kazakova (2015), a researcher and lecturer in the field of Translation Studies at Saint Peterburg State University (p. 2842). In the article "Strategies of Literary Translation" published in the "Journal of Siberian Federal University" Kazakova describes and criticizes the so-called "intuitive strategies" used for translating literary texts, which are opposed to the systematic criteria given for documentary translation (p. 2846). Intuitive strategies are applied to manage complications such as undefined readership, the author's personal tone of writing, or barriers arising from culture or language.

Those strategies include the observer-strategy, qualified by Kazakova as an unbiased strategy, and opposed to the biased ones called helper-strategy and enlightener-strategy (p. 2845). Kazakova mentions that observer-strategy is characterized by the neutralization of the author's style and showing indifference towards the reader instead of personalizing the text. Furthermore, the chosen equivalents are claimed to be formal, rather than functional. Adherent-strategy is a type of observer-strategy which follows principles such us leaving in the target text the grammatical forms typical for the source language or transliterating culturally determined words. According to Kazakova, the literal translation resulting from using unbiased strategies has disastrous effects for the subjective information included in the original text, notably when author's idiolect was dominant in it. However, she finds it appropriate to apply those strategies in the texts dedicated to specialists, as they will not have as many obstacles with comprehending them as non-specialist readers would. Kozakova explains that helper-strategy, on the other hand, gives more descriptions and analogues allowing the reader to avoid intercultural or interlingual difficulties. She criticizes excessively bold translator's contributions: "The most unwelcome interference of such helper translator into the impact of the text on the reader is the change of emotive or evaluative coloring of the information, just in case the reader will not suffer the troublesome interpretation" (p. 2846). She shares a similar view on the enlightener strategy providing readers with additional explanations: "The enlightener-translator is, as it were, sure that the reader does not know or does not want to refer to dictionaries or other sources of information" (p. 2846). Nevertheless, she considers this strategy advantageous when historical, literary, or cultural background of the work is crucial.

Chapter 2: Non-binary forms

2.1 Gender in language

Regarding the expression of gender and gender asymmetries, languages can be divided into three types: genderless, natural gender, and grammatical gender languages (Sczesny et al., 2016). Genderless languages are for example Finnish and Turkish which means that the same form of a noun refers to both male and female gender, e.g., Turkish *ögrenci* meaning 'student' applies for both "she" and "he" (Sczesny et al., 2016, Table 1). There are only two ways to express gender: through attributes, e.g., "female student", and lexical gender nouns such as "father". The last category mostly includes words referring to professions or kinship (Lardelli, 2023). English, together with Danish or Swedish, is an example of a natural – or notional, as called by Lardelli (2023) – gender language (European Parliament, 2018). In those cases, gender is differentiated by personal pronouns (*she* and *he*); however, most personal nouns do not carry information about gender (Sczesny et al., 2016). The last language type concerns the languages in which every noun has grammatical gender, as it is in the case of Polish, German, or French (European Parliament, 2018; Sczesny et al., 2016). Words such as pronouns, articles, or determiners when referents to gendered nouns – also are gender-inflected, i.e., contain grammatical information about the gender, e.g., *eine kluge Studentin* 'a clever (female) student' but *ein kluger Student* 'a clever (male) student' – each of the German words is inflected according to its gender (Lardelli & Gromann, 2023).

While discussing the need to pay attention to gender in language, it is essential to differentiate adjectives determining language*: gender-neutral*, *gender-inclusive*, and *gender-fair*. In accordance with the guidelines for gender-inclusive writing published on the governmental website of Canada, the first two terms are regarded as synonyms (2023). Lardelli and Gromman, however, do not consider them equivalents, but see both as examples of gender-fair language – a term mentioned by them repeatedly (2023). The authors explain that gender-fair language is used "as an umbrella term for gender-inclusive, the explicit inclusion of all genders beyond the binary, and gender-neutral strategies, which omit any gender-specific references in language" (p. 213). The aim of the application of the hyponym "gender-neutral language" is therefore "to entirely remove gender references from language", whereas gender-inclusive language is used "to make all genders visible" (p. 215). The term "gender-fair language" is used also by Sczesny et al. (2016), who apply the abbreviation GFL in their article,

and by Zacharski and Ferstl (2023). The terms in this thesis will be used in compliance with Lardelli and Gromman's definitions.

One of the inseparable terms from the subject of GFL is the adjective *non-binary*, which appears in various dictionaries as having several meanings. The first one refers to the adjective *not binary* as the opposite of *binary* and is defined as "not simply one thing or another" by Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.), "not consisting of or involving two parts" by Oxford English Dictionary [OED] (n.d.), or "not restricted to two things or parts" by Marriam-Webster Dictionary [MWD] (n.d.). The second meaning concerns gender identity. According to MWD, the term *non*-binary is defined as "relating to or being a person who identifies with or expresses a gender identity that is neither entirely male nor entirely female" (n.d.). As specified by Cambridge Dictionary, this adjective refers to "having a gender identity that is not simply male or female" (n.d.). OED (n.d.), however, defines it in two ways: (1) "of a person: not identifying as male or female; having a gender identity that does not conform to traditional binary notions of gender (according to which all individuals are exclusively either male or female)" and (2) "designating such a gender identity; of or relating to (people with) such a gender identity". Sometimes, the used form in reference to the adjective "non-binary" is also an acronym "enby" (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.).

2.2 Non-binary forms in English

In the English language, personal nouns are chiefly gender-neutral and verbs do not take gendered suffixes. According to the guidelines on gender-neutral language in the European Parliament (2018), such language is characterized by application of gender-neutral pronouns and avoidance of gender-specific names of professions and functions such as "chairman", "actress", "stewardess", or "headmaster", usually through neutralization (p. 5).

In September 2019, the pronoun "they" in its non-binary use was added to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the oldest American dictionary and is "used to refer to a single person whose gender identity is nonbinary" (para. 6). In the article "Singular 'They'" published in their "Arts & Culture" section, MWD (2024) adds: "we've struggled to find the right language to describe these [non-binary] people – and in particular, the right pronouns" (para. 5). As written further, the pronoun "it" used in the 17th century in reference to people "who didn't fit a gender binary" was considered grammatically the most fitting form; however, as it is dehumanizing, the adopted singular "they" is "vastly preferable" (para. 5). The update of dictionary (MWD, para. 1), questioned by some, is explained by Peter Sokolowski, an editor-at-large of Webster's Dictionary. In an interview with *Time*, an American news magazine, he explained: "if a word

is frequently used and likely to be encountered, then it goes in" (2019, para. 6). Sokolowski mentions that "social forces change language, and we are part of monitoring that change" (para. 6). Furthermore, determined by the number of searches on the website, "they" became Webster's Word of the Year 2019 (MWD, 2019).

The pronoun "they" is applied in two other grammatical situations. The first one is when this part of speech refers to plural nouns and, therefore, is used with plural forms of verbs. The second one is "used with a singular antecedent to refer to an unknown or unspecified person" or "to a single person whose gender is intentionally not revealed" (MWD, paras. 3-4). As emphasized by MWD (2024) in additional notes on conjugation, even though non-binary "they" refers to singular person, it is followed by a plural verb.

The form "they" in a non-binary use is considered grammatically correct also in Collins Dictionary (n.d.): "you use 'they' to refer to a person who is non-binary and who wishes to be referred to in this way", and Oxford Dictionary (2019), which states that it is "used with reference to a person whose sense of personal identity does not correspond to conventional sex and gender distinctions, and who has typically asked to be referred to as 'they'". This substitute for the third-person-singular pronoun is also recommended by Chicago Manual of Style: "some people identify not with a gender-specific pronoun but instead with the pronoun they and its forms or some other gender-neutral singular pronoun; any such preference should generally be respected", as informs Purdue Online Writing Lab in their article "Gendered Pronouns & Singular 'They'" (2024). However, there are some resources which do not include the non-binary use of "they", such as Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.) or Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (n.d.).

The word "they" has had various meanings over the years. It was used already in the 14th century in reference to a singular person in situations when their gender was not known, as reported by British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC] in the article "A brief history of gender-neutral pronouns" (2019). The given examples of the recorded term include *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer from 1386 or *Hamlet* written by William Shakespeare in 1599. LBGTQ+ Service operating within Massachusetts Institute of Technology (LBGTQ Services, 2020) added an anonymous French poem *William the Werewolf* to the list, which is deemed to be the earliest recorded use of "they" in its gender-neutral meaning (n.d.). The poem called in the original *Guillaume de Palerme* was written in the late 12th century and translated into Middle English between 1350 and 1360 by a poet known as William, informs Richard Scott-Robinson, the poem's translator and reteller (2016). Dr Emma Moore, a professor of linguistics at the University of Sheffield, shares that the singular "they" was in use until around the18th

century (BBC, 2019, para. 12). From that moment onwards, the male pronoun substituted it as a reference to a representative of non-specified gender (para. 13). Subsequently, the generic masculine forms became a controversial topic for suffragists between 1870s and early 1900s, as reported by Dennis Baron, an American linguist and research professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, in the interview given to College of Liberal Arts & Science [LAS] (2020). BBC claims that the pronoun "they" in today's non-binary meaning has not appeared in the academic writing much; nevertheless, it was first recorded in an academic paper in 2017 (2019, para. 18). Despite that, the rising tendency of the term's application can be observed on the Books Ngram Viewer's chart (2019). Its persistent drop was ongoing from around 1815 until 1980s, and started to increase around 1990, maintaining this state until 2019, when the scale of the charts ends.

As mentioned in Webster's Dictionary, the use of a plural verb with this pronoun "can make the grammatically conservative uncomfortable" (n.d., para. 3). The author mentions the pronoun *you* which initially was plural. That is not the only reference to the historical background presenting the dynamic nature of English which appears in the discussion on the gender-fair attempts in this language. Baron, who raises the subject of the history of pronouns use in his book *What's Your Pronoun? Beyond He and She* (2020), discusses in the interview mentioned above the first example of a gender-neutral language that he had invented (LAS, 2020). The mentioned forms include the pronoun *e* with *em* for the object and *es* for the possessive, as well as *zie* or *hir* dating back to 1841 (para. 8). According to him, "somebody coined pronouns because they felt a word was missing from English […]. A few of the words made it into dictionaries. None of them ever achieved widespread use" (para. 9). To this period refers also the information published by LBGTQ+ Service (2020). They enumerate multiple variations of gender-nonconforming pronouns used in newspapers in the 1850s: "Xe, Ze, Phe, Er, Ou, and Ne" (1:26). Another pronoun was *thon*, which according to the organization did not rise in popularity (1:30). The Center of Diversity & Inclusion at the American University in Washington D.C. (n.d.) has published another set of pronouns, which are claimed to be often used by trans, genderqueer, and gender non-conforming people, according to a website Gender Neutral Pronoun Blog (2010). They present subject pronouns: *ze*, *e/ey*, *per*, *they* and corresponding to them possessive pronouns: *hir/hirs* or *zie/zirs*, *eir/eirs*, *per/pers*, and *their/theirs* (American University, n.d. Table 1). Even more options are mentioned in the interview conducted with Baron for Cable News Network [CNN] in 2023: *xe/xyr*, *fae/faer*, *ze/zir*, *ze/hir*, *ae/aer* (para. 10). However, as reported in BBC's article, dr Emma Moore, when asked in BBC Radio's program "Newsbeat" about other potential forms to refer to non-binary

people, answered: "it has the advantage of already being part of grammar - there have been attempts to make new non-binary pronouns, but they haven't been as successful because they're not already embedded in grammar" (para. 12).

Another linguistics form mentioned in the sources sharing their opinion on gender-fair language is the honorific. Webster's blog dedicates to it an article "Mx. – A Gender-Neutral Honorific" (2017) in which the authors explain the history behind this gender-neutral title used in reference to people not identifying by any particular gender. They report that *Mx.*, instead of *Mr.* or *Ms.*, was used in print in 1977 in the American magazine *Single Parent*. In September 2017, the word was added to Webster's Dictionary.

2.3 Non-binary forms in Polish

In contrast to English and nine other languages mentioned in Nonbinary Wiki's article "Gender-Neutral Language", Polish grammatical gender is very pervasive (2024). However, there have been attempts to create gender-fair language. Rada Języka Neutralnego [RJN] 'The Council for the Neutral Language' is the collectivity whose mission is to fight for inclusivity in language through collecting, studying, forming, and promoting non-binary and gender-neutral language (RJN, 2024), which they do by running the website "Zaimki.pl". RJN promotes non-binary forms (used in reference to non-binary people) including neuter gender and so called *neutratywy* – nouns consistent with the neuter gender, and gender-neutral forms used when referring either to a group or to people whose gender we do not know (n.d.), which consist of neuter pronouns, avoidance of gendered forms and various forms of neuter nouns. The last ones are separated into groups called analogously to feminine forms known as *feminatywy*: *iksatywy*, *osobatywy*, *neutratywy*, and *dukatywy/dukaizmy*. (RJN, n.d., para. 4). The names have been created by the members of RJN (the name *neutratyw* has been proposed by Paweł Dembowski), therefore there are no official English equivalents (A. Vos, personal communication, July 16, 2024). Nevertheless, professor Jadwiga Linde-Usiekniewicz from the University of Warsaw, a linguist and the author of over 100 books and articles (Pracownia Lingwistyki Migowej, 2019, p. 1), has given a sample translation of the term *feminatywy* already in the title of her article "The Case for Feminatives in Polish" (2022). Based on this, RJN agree that the mentioned groups can be named cognately (A. Vos, personal communication, July 16, 2024). Hence, I will use the following terms: *neutrative*, *personative*, *dukative*, and *x-ative*. Each of them is discussed in detail below.

Considering the nature of Polish as a grammatical gendered language, neuter gender is a complex topic. It consists of the use of those parts of speech which in Polish express neuter

gender through conjugation and declination, e.g., verb forms such as *chciałobym* 'I would like to', *spotkałom* 'I met', *mogło* 'it could' and adjective forms like *zadowolone* 'content', *urzekające* 'captivating', or *przyjacielskie* 'friendly'. The non-binary pronouns are *ono* in nominative case and one of the following in genitive: *jego* (masculine form), *jej* (feminine form), *jejgo* (combined form), *ich* (plural form), and *jeno/jenu* (postgender form) (RJN, n.d., Formy Neutralne section). According to the latest report compiled by members of the collectivity RJN, the forms *ono/jego* are used by 28.7% of non-binary people (RJN, 2024).

Neutratives are nouns formed with suffixes that neutralize their binary markedness (n.d., Neutratywy section). They are grammatically consistent with the neuter gender described above. The most often applied suffixes are *-rze*, *-cze*, *-o*, and *-um*, which are present in normative Polish language (para. 1). Andrea Vos, one of the collectivity members, presents the forming process of neutratives based on examples (Vos, 2022). The forms are for instance *autorze* 'author' – deriving from feminine *autorka* and masculine *autor*, through the application of the suffix *-rze*, as in the word *morze* 'sea'; or *artystum* 'artist' – the male noun *artysta* blended with the Latin suffix *-um*, as in *forum*. Neutratives are used by 12.3% of non-binary people, as proceeds from the mentioned report.

The descriptive form containing the word *osoba* 'person' and a present participle or an adjective is called *osobatyw* 'personative'. Its function is to refer to a group representing different genders or a person whose gender is unknown (RJN, 2024). It is combined with pronouns *she/her*, as *osoba* is a feminine noun in Polish. An example could be an opening greeting in letters or e-mails, such as *drogie osoby studiujące* 'dear students', literally 'dear studying persons') or an already common expression *osoba towarzysząca* 'escort, accompanying person'. The frequence of the use of this form is significantly higher than the previously mentioned variants of gender-neutral nouns: 68% of non-binary surveyed people have declared applying it to their language (RJN, 2024).

The least common forms among the respondents were *dukatives* (5.1% of non-binary language users). In the explanation, the authors of Zaimki.pl refer to *dukaizmy*. The inspiration for the form comes from Jacek Dukaj's science fiction novel *Perfekcyjna Niedoskonałość* (Eng. *Perfect Imperfection*), published in 2004. For this book's purpose, Dukaj created forms referring to his characters representing post-human creatures called "phoebe" devoid of gender. He also published *post-gender grammar* (Dukaj, 2022): a set of grammar rules for forming post-gender forms in Polish. He emphasizes, however, that everyone can use the forms they prefer. The words classified as *dukaizmy* include e.g., *robiłum*, *byłubyście*, *poszłubym*, as well as *onu*, or *jenu* (the characteristic vowel "u" is used while forming past tense or conditionals), whereas

dukatives are the nouns corresponding to them, such as *partneru* 'partner', or *twórcu* 'artist'. (RJN, 2022, Gramatyka Postpłciowa dla "Perfekcyjnej niedoskonałości" section).

Members or RJN propose a graphical alternative for the binary language (RJN, n.d., Iksatywy section): so called x-atives. This solution consists of substituting the element differentiating the feminine and masculine variants of the word with a graphic sign, a placeholder such as a letter "x", an asterisk (*) or an underscore (_). In this way, instead of choosing between *ona* 'she', *on* 'he', or *ono* 'it', one can write for example *onx*. The plurals are formed by doubling the chosen sign: e.g. *onxx*. The same rules apply to verbs, adjectives, or any other words containing gender nature, for instance *przyjaciołx* 'friend', *Europejkxx* 'Europeans', *kosmicznx* 'cosmic'. According to the report, x-atives are used by 16.1% of non-binary representatives.

The last category of inclusive language mentioned on the forum is the set of gender-neutral pronouns other than personal ones called *neopronouns*. In the article "Zaimki nie tylko osobowe" published in 2021 on the blog of Zaimki.pl, Andrea Vos discusses the male linguistics dominance present in Polish even in sentences with pronouns such as *ktoś* 'someone', and *nikt* 'no one'. Section "(Nowa) odmiana zaimków przez rodzaje" proposes some alternatives: (neuter *ktosio*, feminine *nikta*, postgender *ktosiu*) and a proposition to apply forms other than masculine (non-masculine *wszystkie* 'all', or feminine/personative *któraś [osoba]* 'some [person]'). The emphasis on feminine gender is put also in the further section "'Neutral' feminine gender". Vos argues that if masculine forms have been considered neutral for years since, by implication, they were referring to the word *człowiek* 'human', then we can easily use feminine forms since the word *osoba* 'person' is feminine; for example: instead of saying *każdy [człowiek]*, one could say *każda [osoba]*.

The collectivity raises the subject of the grammatical correctness of non-binary forms (RJN, n.d., Rodzaj Neutralny section). They redirect readers to the guidance of Rada Języka Polskiego [RJP] (Eng. 'The Council for the Polish Language') issued in 2003 by the chair of RJP, prof. dr hab. Andrzej Markowski. Answering a correspondent's question about the correctness of the first person singular neuter past forms *byłom* 'be' and second person singular *byłoś*, Professor Markowski refers to Encyklopedia Języka Polskiego (1999). According to his analysis, there is no objection to forming first and second person neuter forms in the past tense; therefore, from the grammatical point of view, those forms are consistent with the Polish language system. Markowski discusses the semantic aspect of the topic, reaching the conclusion that it would be possible to use such forms in reference to, for example, the anthropomorphized sun (its Polish equivalent *słońce* is a neuter noun). He claims that the forms are classified as

potential ones; however, they are not used on a daily basis. This opinion is shared by prof. dr hab. Jerzy Bralczyk, prof. dr hab. Dąbrowska and prof. dr hab. Walery Pisarek, but denied by prof. dr hab. Jadwiga Puzynina, who claims that the forms are nonsystemic, and therefore the above-mentioned sun is not anthropomorphized. According to professor Mirosław Bańko, a Polish linguist, lexicographer, and a staff member in Polskie Wydawnictwo Naukowe [PWN] 'Polish Scientific Publishers', the use of neuter forms and forms referring to both masculine and feminine genders via the so-called "splitting" (e.g. *chciało/a* 'he/she wanted') makes the sentences longer and more complicated, as in Polish there are no rules referring to this method of word formation (Słownik Języka Polskiego PWN, 2011). Therefore, he recommends searching for neutral solutions and omitting those forms. Another Polish linguist and a professor of humanities, Jerzy Bralczyk, accepts the non-binary pronouns (Wirtualna Polska, 2021, Książki section). For a non-binary person who does not want to express themselves using masculine or feminine forms, Bralczyk proposes the use of the neuter pronoun *ono*, as he finds the introduction of an additional grammatical gender unnecessary (paras. 12-13).

2.4 Non-binary forms in German

Zacharski and Ferstl (2023) present three sources of information about gender in the German language: grammatical, lexico-semantic, and conceptual (p. 295). The grammatical level refers to the fact that German is a gendered language in which all nouns carry a grammatical gender (*der* – masculine, *die* – feminine, or *das* – neuter). Lexico-semantic level refers to the gender being a part of the word meaning, e.g., *der Hengst* 'the stallion' describes a male horse, whereas *die Stute* 'the mare' refers to a female horse. The last-mentioned level goes beyond pure linguistics. As Zacharski and Ferstl (2023) put it, "in contrast to the fixed nature of grammatical and lexico-semantic gender, gender stereotypes are fuzzy categories based on cultural and general world knowledge" (p. 295). That is supported by Kotthoff et al. (2018) in their article "Genderlinguistik. Eine Einführung in Sprache, Gespräch und Gechlecht": "The gender markers in German are highly present and they not only serve as a grammatical reference but also inevitably build and consolidate gender images"[4] (p. 256) and by Carolin Müller-Spitzer in her work *Geschlechtergerechte Sprache: Zumutung, Herausforderung, Notwendigkeit?* (2021): "The grammatical gender controls the direction of association"[5] (p. 3).

The most often mentioned strategy to form non-binary nouns in German is the use of typographical symbols such as asterisk (*), colon (:) or underscore (_) (Lardelli & Gromman,

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[4] Self-translation.
[5] Self-translation.

2023; Olderdissen, 2022; Waldendorf, 2023). "Gender star" was even a German Anglicism of the Year 2018 (Anglizismus des Jahres, n.d.). According to a non-governmental organization Women Engage for a Common Future [WECF], the asterisk refers to all genders (not only male or female persons, but also intersex, non-binary and transgender persons), as they report in the section "Sprache und Gender" (Eng. 'language and gender') updated in 2024. Christine Olderdissen in her book *Gender-leicht: Wie Sprache für alle elegant gelingt* (2022) explains in which types of nouns such symbols can be used (Allergie Gegen das Maskulinum section). She claims that the most common and recommended symbol by the queer community is a gender asterisk, followed by a gender colon, and the least used is an underscore, known as a *gendergap* (para. 4). According to Olderdiessen (2022), this solution has its roots in the opposition to the *-er* suffix expressed by some people who are "allergic to […] generic masculine" (para. 1). Words ending in *-er* are usually masculine nouns and in order to form a feminine equivalent, the suffix *-in* is added, e.g. *der Lehrer* '(male) teacher'; *die Lehrerin* '(female) teacher'. In the case of such nouns, Olderdissen suggests the use of gender-asterisk, e.g. *Lehrer*in* in singular or *Lehrer*innen* in plural. Another indication to apply this strategy is the use of anglicisms, e.g., *User*in*, *Follower*innen* (para. 7). However, it is not used with nouns which do not have feminine variant; for instance, *Mitglied* 'member' or *Opfer* 'victim' function gender-neutrally (para. 6). As for the pronunciation of such forms, the gender star can be pronounced as a glottal stop, which sounds as a short pause (Miller, 2023).

The similar approach is represented by Anica Waldendorf (2023). She divides gender-inclusive language [GIL] into binary feminisation and non-binary inclusive language (Table 1) and emphasizes that "the key distinction is whether the person noun is inclusive towards women, or also towards non-binary people" (Introduction, para. 12). Within the second category she names three types: star (*Forscher*in* 'researcher'), colon (*Forscher:in*), and gap (*Forscher_in*). Kotthoff and Nübling (2018) as the alternative for generic masculine mention not only a gender star but also *Binnenmajuskel* 'internal capital', known as camel case, i.e. non-standard typographic convention where a word referring to a person indicates gender inclusivity through a capital letter inside it, e.g. *ForscherIn* (Glosbe Dictionary, n.d.).

This method is described by Meg Miller in her essay "Shifting Symbols: The Gender Star" (2023). She mentions the feminist linguist Luise F. Pusch, who was one of the persons who in the 1970s and 1980s proposed the use of the *Binnen-I*, also called *inner I* (para. 4). Miller explains that at the beginning of the 21st century, this form was criticized for "not leaving any room for other gender, or for those who do not identify with a gender at all" (para. 5). Gender star, on the other hand, "symbolizes a spectrum of many sexes, which in all directions

shine", writes Miller quoting Hannah Witte, graphic designer who wrote her thesis on so-called *typohacks* – typographical symbols, such as asterisk, slash, dot, colon, brackets, or capital "I" (para. 10) and finds them "an imperfect but necessary quick fix as language catches up with cultural and societal change" (para. 2).

Lardelli and Gromman (2023) propose four approaches to gender-fair German (pp. 217-218). Firstly, they refer to the above-mentioned use of a gender star or other gender characters. What differentiate this description from the previous ones is extending it to other parts of speech, e.g., to the noun *Student*in* refers the possessive *ihre*seine* 'their', article *die*der* or *di*er* 'the', personal pronoun *sie*er* or *si*er* 'they', and question pronoun *welche*r?* 'which one?' (p. 219, Table 1). Another strategy mentioned by Lardelli and Gromman relates to gender-neutral characters, such as an asterisk or an *-x* (*-xs* for plurality), as well as new endings, used in contexts where gender is unknown or irrelevant (p. 219, Table 2). Neutral characters appear in words instead of a suffix denoting gender, e.g. *Studierx* or *dix* (definite article), whereas new ending is for instance *-ens* coming from the middle of the word *Mensch* 'human'. *Studentens* or *dens* are the examples of such formed terms. Lardelli (2023) claims that the use of an asterisk means separating the masculine form of a noun from the feminine ending *-in* (p. 3). However, to create a non-binary term one has to follow other strategies, such as an *-x* instead of a gendered suffix (Lardelli, 2023, p. 3). The third possibility includes the use of gender-neutral nouns; e.g. participles (*Studierende* for 'students'), collective nouns and compounds (*Lehrkraft* 'teaching stuff' or *Fachperson* 'specialist'), as well as reformulating sentences in such a way that they do not contain gendered components. Finally, the authors of the journal describe various neosystems including a so-called Sylvain convention or "NoNa system" (pp. 220-221). Sylvain system introduces a fourth grammatical gender called indefinite or liminal[6] created through new pronouns and endings for each word class, e.g. articles *din/einin*, personal pronoun *nin*, or possessive *meinin* (p. 221, Table 5). The "NoNa system" has been developed by two non-binary persons running the website Geschlechtsneutrales Deutsch 'Gender-Neutral German'. The personal pronoun proposed by them is *hen* and the endings include *-ai* and *-t* combined with the masculine and feminine endings, e.g. *eint gute Freund*in*, *welchin/din*, or *meinins* (p. 220, Table 3). The pronoun *hen* and *nin* have the same function but are proposed by different authors.

In reference to the ending *-ens* described by Lardelli and Gromman (2023), Verein für Geschlechtsneutrales Deutsch (Eng. 'Association for Gender-Neutral German') proposes the pronoun *en* which was developed in 2018 during a LGBTIQA+ congress in St. Pölten, Austria

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[6] Adjective 'liminal' is defined as „of, relating to, or being an intermediate state, phase, or condition: in-between, transitional" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, n.d.).

(Pronomen section, para. 3). The new form has been chosen, as it follows the scheme of the already existing pronouns *er* und *es*, namely the letter "e" with a consonant, and "n" is the most common consonant in German (para. 4). The proposed declension is as follows: *en/ens/em/en*. The above-mentioned *-ens* functions as a possessive pronoun. The association adds three alternative solutions: *hen* (borrowed from Swedish), *dey* (in analogy to English 'they'), and *sier/xier*, the forms proposed by Illi Anna Heger.

Heger ("Anna Heger," 2024) is a German based non-binary creator of comics and graphic novels (Über section, para. 1). Since 2009, they have worked on alternative German third person singular pronouns not marked for gender (para. 4), which they call *Traschpronomen* 'gossip pronoun', as it is used to talk about others (Grammatik Verstehen und Benutzen section, para. 1). The are also the author of the project "Pronomen ohne Geschlecht" (Eng. 'Pronouns Without Gender') from 2013, described among others in the article under the same title on the website Mädchenmannschaft (Eng. 'girl's team'). They inform that there are 28 forms still being developed by translators (n.d., para. 4); however, the website Nichtbinär-Wiki presents as many as 44 possibilities (n.d., Pronomen section). Heger presents the history of the neopronouns changing over the years 2009-2021 (Historie: Versionen der Pronomen ohne Geschlecht section). The first one (Version 1.0) created because of Heger's cooperation with Felix Hill included *sif* (relative pronoun *dif*, possessive pronoun *sir*). In subsequent variants Heger proposed *sier* (2010) and *xier* (2012). As reported by Verein für Geschlechtsneutrales Deutsch e.V., *xier* was introduced because of the critics that *sier* is too close in pronunciation to *sie* 'she' (n.d., *Sier* und *Xier* section). The possessive neopronoun *xies* is used just like *ihr* 'her', *sein* 'his', or *mein* 'my', which are also gender neutral (Grammatik Verstehen und Benutzen section, para. 4). The earliest use of *xies* can be found in an article about the non-binary performer Rae Spoon published in the music magazine *Visions* (Verbreitete Verwendung section, para. 2). Nevertheless, in the open survey conducted in 2021 by Verein für Geschlechtsneutrales Deutsch e.V. among 500 respondents, the form *xier* has been rejected, probably due to the fact that in German words starting with the letter *x* are foreign terms (n.d., Kollektiver Entscheidungsprozess section, para. 2). The most recent pronoun *dey* first appeared in popular media in 2016 and has been used since then (Heger, 2024, Dey Pronomen in Texten, Serien, Filmen und Videospielen section). In the following year, the most often chosen pronoun was *en* (para. 3).

Despite forms used in reference to a third party, there are also gender-appropriate forms of addressing a person, as presented in the brochure prepared by the Department of Equal Opportunities and Diversity at Ludwigshafen University of Business and Society (2022). In

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reference to a group of people whose gender is unknown, the authors recommend the utterance *sehr Geehrte* instead of the typical *sehr geehrte Damen und Herren* 'dear ladies and gentlemen'; in this case, the word *geehrt* 'dear' is a deadjectival noun used to avoid using the gendered words (p. 2). Another possibility is to mention the person's function, e.g. *sehr geehrte Mitglieder des Senats* 'dear members of the Senate'. In accordance to the authors' suggestion, when addressing a non-binary person or a person, whose gender is unknown, the adjective *geehrt* adopts the previously described typographical symbols, for example *sehr geehrte*r Laura Lopez* or *sehr geehrte:r Laura Lopez.* The same would apply to the titles: *Dr.*in*, *Prof.:in*, etc.

According to Katarzyna Domagała-Pereira, a Polish journalist, publicist, and the author of the article "Genderowe dylematy. O języku neutralnym płciowo w podzielonych redakcjach" (2022), the discussion about gender in Germany has been taking place since the 1980s. First it referred only to feminization but later also concerned people who identify themselves as neither female nor male (para. 6). Domagała-Pereira reports that in Germany since 2018 it has been possible to officially define one's gender as "other" (para. 14). That did not change the fact that according to Rat für deutsche Rechtschreibung (Eng. 'Council for German Orthography'), using symbols to create non-binary forms are incorrect and the request from March 2022 to change it was denied (para. 27). Nevertheless, Duden – "Germany's pre-eminent dictionary", says Kathrin Kunkel-Razum for Goethe Institute (2020) –included various options of gender-neutral utterances in their book *Die Deutsche Rechtschreibung: Das umfassende Standardwerk auf der Grundlage der amtlichen Regeln* from 2020 ("Duden," n.d., Geschlechtrgerechter Sprachgebrauch section).

2.5 Problems and trends in the translation of non-binary forms

As described above, there are distinct types of languages depending on their use of gendered forms. On this account, it might be challenging to translate forms from one language to another, if they do not have corresponding structures, e.g. gendered suffixes in Polish verbs and their neutral forms in English (Misiek, 2020, p. 167). Moreover, in some languages the inclusive language is not systematized, as emphasized by Andrea Vos (2024), hence there is a vast and constantly growing set of possibilities for translators to choose from (Heger, 2021).

A.K. Afferez, the author of the critical essay "Translating Genderqueerness" published in an American literary journal *Ploughshares*, writes that due to such abundance of existing non-binary forms, it might be dilemmatic to coordinate texts written by different translators and make the inclusive solutions consistent (2023, para. 7). Translation should be also "culturally

competent", as argued by the translating group Eriksen in the article "Gender-Inclusive Translation" (2022, para. 21). The difficulty of this aspect lies in the variability of cultural norms and, therefore, language (para. 22).

In terms of trends, Anica Waldendorf (2024) who studied the increase of gender-inclusive language in German media states that she has chosen German language due to its score in Gender Equality Index (para. 9), a tool created by European Institute for Gender Equality [EIGE] which measures advancement of gender equality in European countries (EIGE, n.d., Gender Equality Index). Germany has an average score in comparison to other countries, therefore, the language "is gender-equal enough to make the idea of using GIL a possibility, but not gender-equal enough to make change expected", writes Waldendorf (para. 9). That demonstrates that the topic of gender equality is prevalent throughout the German society and so is the language used to describe this subject.

Chapter 3: Non-binary forms in the British novel *Girl, Woman, Other* by Bernardine Evaristo and its Polish and German translations

3.1 The novel

The study subject of this thesis, Evaristo's novel *Girl, Woman, Other* published in 2019, is an example of the use of gender-fair language in British literature. The gender-neutral forms appear in reference to a non-binary character. In this chapter they are analyzed together with their equivalents in the Polish and German versions, and the texts' authors are briefly presented.

3.1.1 Author: Bernardine Evaristo

Born in 1959 in London, Bernardine Evaristo is a 65-year-old author of mixed heritage. Her mother is of English, Irish, and German descent, whereas her father is of Nigerian and Brazilian parentage ("Bernardine Evaristo," n.d.). This is mirrored in Evaristo's works, as discrimination on the grounds of origin or nationality is one of the most often covered subjects, others being feminism, Black history, self-identification, and diversity.

Bernardine's education has also contributed to the shape of the literary works created by her. She was studying at the University of London, where she obtained her doctorate in Creative Writing – the domain which she is now lecturing at Brunel London University. As a teenager she became acquainted with art through Greenwich Young People's Theatre.

Evaristo describes herself as "a longstanding advocate and activist for inclusion in literature and the arts" ("Bernardine Evarito," n.d., para. 1). Over the years she has also been a curator and initiator of various projects supporting communities of artists of color, especially Black female writers, addressing their under-representation. Today she is a member of various literary organizations; e.g. in 2022 she became the head of the Royal Society of Literature – a registered charity for readers and writers in or from the United Kingdom.

Evaristo is not only the author of novels but also the writer of a great many poems, essays, theater dramas or journal articles, creating non-fiction as well as fiction stories ("Bernardine Evaristo," 2022). She made history when she became the first Black woman and Black British person to have won the Booker Prize, receiving this literary award in 2019 for the novel *Girl, Woman, Other*. Her writings have won her over 76 awards and nominations[7].

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[7] As of 2022.

Various of Evaristo's works will be developed to be presented onstage as well as on a screen and have already been broadcasted on the radio in the form of plays. Her books have been translated into over 40 languages in over 60 versions.

3.1.2 Girl, Woman, Other

Evaristo's eighth novel published in 2019 is her best-known work (Wikipedia, 2023). Apart from winning the Booker Prize (The Booker Prize, 2019), it was announced as the Fiction Book of the Year 2020 by British Book Award (The Bookseller, para. 3). The same literary award administered by The Bookseller named Bernardine the author of the year (Penguin, 2020). It also won the Indie Book Award in the Fiction category (Booksellers, 2020). Moreover, as reported by the author's official website, for a few weeks *Girl, Woman, Other* had the leading position on the bestsellers' list of *Sunday Times* and kept the place in the Top 10 for 44 weeks ("Bernardine Evaristo," 2022).

The book consists of five chapters divided into subchapters, each of them focusing on one of 12 people. The protagonists are chiefly Black women of different ages and at different points in their lives, from a 19-year-old character to a 93-year-old one. They are characterized by diverse sexual orientations, cultural backgrounds, professions, and social classes ("Bernardine Evaristo," 2022). The characters appear across chapters as someone else's daughters, mothers, lovers, or friends. The backbone of this novel is its intersectionality formed by multiple narratives. This unconventional literary form is what the author called "fusion fiction" (The Guardian, 2019). Clare Bucknell (2019), an English author and reviewer, explains the book's structure in *London Reviews of Books*, a British literary magazine published every other month since 1979. According to her, the form of the work created by Evaristo "keeps [the novel] in pieces, a complex collection of fragments that are not meant to speak as one" (para. 12). This style includes using line breaks, characteristic typically for a free verse, and not applying full stops at the end of paragraphs nor capitalizations at their beginnings except for those framing the subsections of each chapter (para. 7). Some words are written in block capitals or with spaces between the letters.

What characterizes the book is also its autobiographical nature, as Evaristo admits in *Porter*, a British fashion magazine. In the essay written for International Women's Day in 2020 she says: "In my novel *Girl, Woman, Other*, the characters of Amma and Dominique (lesbian feminists who run a black and Asian women's theater company) best illustrate my younger countercultural sartorial sensibility, as they similarly strive to break free from society's shackles" (para. 3). In the same essay she calls herself "a literary experimentalist who treasures

individuality" (para. 8), explaining that the emphasis put on inclusivity was one of her aims. She states that she wrote *Girl, Woman, Other* "to explore the plurality of black British womanhood, from the very young to the very old" (para. 6) and adds: "I sometimes apply the term 'womxn' to the novel, which was coined to embrace women of color and trans women" (para 6). It is visible already in the introduction to the novel where Evaristo (2019) emphasizes the marginalized groups, to which she devotes attention in the book, by writing the following dedication:

> For the sisters & the sistas & the sistahs & the sistren & the women & the womxn & the wimmin & the womyn & our brethren & our bredrin & our brothers & our bruvs & our men & our mandem & the LGBTQI+ members of the human family (p. [5]).

Those modifications of the nouns such as *sister*, *brother*, *woman*, or *man* are Evaristo's form to express that each of those terms might denote more diversified persons and, therefore, according to the definition formulated by the United Nations, they can be called examples of gender-inclusive language (n.d., para. 2). More specified instances, i.e., forms referring specifically to non-binary people, are discussed below.

3.1.3 Non-binary forms in the original

In the above-mentioned essay for *Porter*, Bernardine Evaristo presents the character to whom she dedicates the first subsection of the fourth chapter (Evaristo, 2020, para. 7). The readers of *Girl, Woman, Other* (2019) are introduced to Megan, an eighteen-years-old girl of mixed descent: Ethiopian, African American, Malawian, and English (p. 311). In this part of the chapter, Evaristo refers to the character with the pronouns *she/her*; however, as the story moves on, Megan tries out different pronouns together with Bibi – Megan's closest friend and lover, who makes them acquainted with the queer world:

> They discussed the best gender-neutral alternatives such as ae, e, ey, per, they, and tested each word to see if the words tripped off the tongue or tripped over it, ditto with the alternatives to his and hers: hirs, aers, eirs, pers, theirs and xyrs Megan decided to try out they and theirs (p. 328).

In the next sentence, Evaristo switches from female to non-binary pronouns and from that moment on uses only gender-neutral ones in reference to the girl: "Morgan (no longer Megan) / has self-identified as gender-free for six years now, they've learnt to be cool with it when people don't use or understand their preferred pronouns / initially they wanted to punch their lights out" (p. 328).

Evaristo chooses to use the form *they* with plural referents which, as described in the subchapter 2.2, is the most common pronoun among the users of gender-fair English. The personal pronouns *e*, *ey*, *per* and possessive pronouns *hirs*, *eirs*, and *pers* were presented on the blog Gender Neutral Pronoun in 2010. Dennis Baron mentions the pronouns *e* and *hir* in his book (2020), whereas the form *ey* can be found for example in the list of pronouns named by Baron in the article for CNN (2023). Besides pronouns, Evaristo also uses the neutral honorific: "fancy me bumping into Mx Morgan Malinga" (p. 339).

The difficulty with gender-fair language applied by Evaristo could be differentiating whether *they* refers to a non-binary or a plural noun. Consider the following example:

> Morgan's relieved to have escaped the schmoozing egotarians of London's cliques / a couple of them had been forced to say hello when they stood in their flight path, but instead of stopping for a chat had quickly moved on, Morgan wanted to have at least a couple of meaningful convos with the natives before they left, how ridiculous to come all the way down to London and spend it alone (p. 329).

At first, in the fragment "when they stood in their flight path", it might be challenging to comprehend whether "they/their" refer to Morgan, or to "egotarians of London's cliques".

3.2 Polish translation

Aga Zano's translation of *Girl, Woman, Other* is one of its 21 language versions available so far. It was published in 2021 under the title *Dziewczyna, Kobieta, Inna* which is a literal translation of the original one. The following Section is dedicated to its translator and the gender-fair language she applied in the text.

3.2.1. Translator: Aga Zano

Born in 1989 Agata Zano, known in the literary world as Aga Zano, is a Polish translator who specializes in prose, non-fiction, popular literature as well as children's and young adult literature (Stowarzyszenie Tłumaczy Literatury, n.d.). She is also a copywriter, reviewer, and publicist. Zano graduated from Interdisciplinary Individual Studies in the Humanities in Warsaw. Moreover, she studied at Theater Academy, the Queen's University in Belfast and the University of Edinburgh, and received a scholarship from Literature Ireland – a national agency promoting Irish literature abroad. She is a member of the Polish Literary Translators Association. In 2023 she was nominated to the Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński Translation Award of the Mayor of Gdańsk for the translation of *Girl, Woman, Other*. In the next year she won two awards: Stanisław Barańczak Prize-Scholarship awarded by Poznań Literary Award, to which

she was nominated among others for her work on Evaristo's novel, and the Vivelo Book Award in the category of the best translation (Stowarzyszenie Tłumaczy Literatury, 2024, Aktualności section). The Chair of Poznań Literary Award, Marcin Jaworski, says that "Minorities are important to her; she can create suggestive, convincing, invigorating equivalents of idioms concerning Black people or queer English women non-existent in the Polish language"[8] (Poznańska Nagroda Literacka, 2024, para. 2).

3.2.2 Non-binary forms in Polish translation

Aga Zano decided to use the pronouns *ono* and *jego* as the translation of *they* chosen by Morgan which are the first mentioned forms by the collectivity Zaimki.pl (RJN, n.d., Niebinarne Zaimki i Inne Formy section). They are called "neutral gender" and are said to be used by 28.7% of non-binary persons (2024, Niebinarny Spis Powszechny). The list of pronouns considered by Morgan and Bibi are in Polish version as follows: *onu*, *ono*, *vono*, *ne*, *oni*, *ony* (p. 353). It is visible that Zano did not translate each word separately, and therefore did not chose a 'word-to-word' strategy, as there are six pronouns in the Polish sentence, and the original contains only five of them. This solution could stem from the attempt to convey the current use of non-binary pronouns in the Polish language. The translator's answer to the question about her decision has confirmed this: according to Zano (personal communication, July 20, 2024), one-to-one translation is not necessary in the case of such a list, and the order of the words is rather technical and not the essential matter (Appendix 1, para 2). She shares that she chose those forms that are most commonly used by Polish people and that function currently in the language. The translator also draws attention to the aspect of the problematic conjugation of verbs in Polish. As a result, most non-binary persons in Poland use binary pronouns, in accordance with the referent given to them at birth, or by reversing it, e.g. using "she" instead of "he" or conversely (para. 2). 18.6% of the persons surveyed by Zaimki.pl have mentioned the difficulties with mastering the grammatical forms as the reason for not using the non-binary forms (2024, Niebinarny Spis Powszechny: raport, Motywacje section). Zano has proposed the pronoun *ono* which is in fact the third most used form in Polish. She states that the application of the reversed form (in this case – masculine pronoun) would make the whole non-binary matter in this chapter lose its sense, even though it would correspond with (1) the Polish reality and (2) Evaristo's choice of the most frequently used non-binary pronoun in

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[8] Self-translation.

English. Compatible with pronouns *jego* in the genitive case is also the masculine use of the adjective pronoun *samemu* 'on their own'.

The second grammatical category which is characterized by its gender-neutral nature are nouns. In most of the cases, Aga Zano chooses neutratives: she translates the word *influencer* as *influencerzę* (p. 358), *trans warrior* as *transwojowniczę* (p. 359), *spokesperson* as *rzecznczę* (p. 362), *visitor* as *gościę* (p. 363), or *Mx* as *pano* (p. 365). Most of the neutratives proposed by Zano have the suffix *ę* in the nominative case, as in the words like *kaczę* 'duckling', *kurczę* 'chick', or *książę* 'prince'. RJN proposes the ending *-e*, as in *morze* 'sea', *powietrze* 'air', *kłącze* 'rootstock', or *poddasze* 'attic'. A common denominator for those words is that they are inanimate nouns, whereas the nouns created by Zano, as well as most of the terms with an analogous form existing in Polish, are animate (except words such as *znamię* 'mark, stigma' or *ramię* 'arm'). This distinction is one of the characteristic qualities of the Polish language which does not appear in English. As explained by American Psychological Association, animate noun is "a noun denoting a living entity capable of being the agent of an action", whereas "an inanimate noun is one denoting any other entity" (APA, 2018). It is also possible that Zano was simply following the rules determined by a Polish dictionary Wielki Słownik Języka Polskiego [SJP], according to which some groups of singular neuter nouns in nominative have *-ę* in the final position, despite its more or less nasal pronunciation (Słownik Języka Polskiego, 2024, Końcówka *-ę* w Wybranych Formach Deklinacyjnych section).

Zano has also used personatives: the original clause *go see, transgirls, transboys, ladyboys & butchies, all the queers & all the queens & the intersectional warriors out there and all my fellow non-binary darlings* has been translated as *słuchajcie osoby / transdziewczyny, transchłopaki, ladyboysi i buczynki, queery i gejuchy, intersekcjonalne osoby walczące i wszystkie moje kochane niebinarne skarbeńki* (p. 360). She has started the phrase by addressing all the listed persons together with use of the word *osoby* 'person (pl)'. The similar strategy has been applied in the sentence *osoby muszą uważać, żeby im to nie uderzyło do głowy* (p. 359) (Eng.: *it can go to a person's head if they're not careful*). The noticeable difference is in the translation of the word *warrior*. Two variants of the term are present: a neutrative *transwojownicze* (Evaristo: *you're a true trans warrior*; Zano: *jesteś prawdziwym* transwojowniczem) and a personative *osoby walczące* for 'warriors'. It might be related to the grammatical number – personatives are seen as a convenient solution to refer to groups of people (RJN, n.d., Neutralne Rzeczowniki section).

In two cases, Zano decided to propose the binary solution. She translates *crossdressers* as *crossdresserzy i crossdresserki* (p. 361). In this case, the reason for this choice might be

found in the meaning of the term. In accordance with the Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.), a crossdresser is "a person who sometimes wears clothes usually worn by a different gender; usually a man who sometimes wears the clothes, make-up, jewelry, etc. usually worn by women"; therefore, it refers to the social view on the binary division that something (here: elements of fashion) is either feminine or masculine. Hence, Zano's linguistic solution illustrates this culturally determined duality. The other example is not as clear: Zano translated the fragment *standing rooted in the spotlight, confronted by row of unsmiling students, all of them more educated that the person they've come to hear* (p. 336), as *wszystkie oczy na nim, rzędy poważnych studentów, a każdy i każda z nich bardziej wykształcone od osoby, której przyszli posłuchać* (p. 362). The nominative plural form *studenci* 'students' is a generic masculine and so is the verb *przyszli* 'came' referring to it; however, in combination with the pronouns conjugated in both masculine and feminine form (*każdy i każda*), it could be questioned.

The most problematic in the Polish non-binary language, according to Zano (2024), is the conjugation of verbs. Nevertheless, she consistently uses the verbs corresponding with pronouns and nouns in neuter gender, marked by the suffix *-o*, for example: *wyszło* 'go out' (3 p. sing., past tense, neuter), *podwinęło* 'tuck' (3 p. sing., past tense, neuter), *wymknęło się* 'sneak out' (3 p. sing., past tense, neuter), *zapaliło* 'light up' (3 p. sing., past tense, neuter) (p. 356). This choice appears to be the most justified considering the grammatical correctness (Markowski, 2003) and agreement with the neutratives (RJN, n.d., Niebinarne Zaimki i Inne Formy section).

The remaining non-binary forms belonging to other word classes show compliance with the choice of pronouns: *Morgan (no longer Megan) has self-identified as gender-free* in the Polish version is *Morgan (już nie Megan) identyfikuje się jako wolne od płci* (p. 356). The ending of the adjective *wolne* 'free' (3 p. sing., neuter) corresponds to the neuter word *ono*.

At the end of the Polish version of the novel, Zano shares her view on "allegiance" of the translation (2020). She mentions that the English language has big influence on today's Polish queer idiolect, which is why she was making use of inclusive language and word formation of the LGBT subcultures and activists (pp. 491-494). She writes:

> Foreignness and exclusions come among others from the lack of patterns and reference points, and those cannot be given by the people who aren't listened to. Because of that, while selecting the manners of self-identification of queer and non-binary persons, I was trying as often as possible to ask for the opinion of the people involved and bring attention to their sensibility. In this case, allegiance is owed to those on whose behalf

we speak. […] These aren't the universal solutions, but I made efforts so that they are as close to the living reality of our times as possible[9] (pp. 493-494).

Those words explain Zano's motives to choose these particular variations of the Polish gender-fair language, as well as assure the reader that the source of information that has inspired and taught her has been chosen with the utmost care.

3.3 German translation

Analogously to the Polish version of Evaristo's novel, in this Section the German translation is discussed. Tanja Handels' work was published in 2021 under the title *Mädchen, Frau, Etc.* Cornelius Dieckmann, the author of the book's review in the article „Verse für eine abkürzte Welt" (Eng. 'Verses for an abbreviated world') claims that the adverb *etc.* is an indication of transparency (Tagesspiegel, 2021, para. 18). It also refers to the presence of abbreviations in today's reality, as well as those in the book consisting of 12 different perspectives (para. 18).

3.3.1 Translator: Tanja Handels

Born in 1971 in Aachen, Germany, Tanja Handels has been an active literary translator since 2003. She is a graduate of English philology, comparative studies, and theater studies at four different universities in Germany and England. She also completed a postgraduate research course in literary translation from English at the University of Munich, having gained experience in The Atlas Society where she worked as a translator, editor, and project manager. As she admits on her website ("Tanja Handels," 2024), of particular interest to her are novels by English, Irish and American authors. She also translates 19th and 20th-century non-fiction books concerning literature, movies, theater, and fashion, as well as biographies, journal articles, and essays. (para. 1). Handels affirms that more important than the genre itself is "to capture the specific tone, the taste, many colors of the source text and transfer it into German language, using its stylistic devices"[10] (para. 2). In addition to the translator profession, Handels works as a lecturer in the field of literary translations and is the first chairwoman of the Munich Translators' Forum. In 2019 she won the Heinrich Maria Ledig-Rowohlt award, "which honors outstanding literary translations", as informs TAZ, a German daily newspaper (2021), and in

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[9] Self-translation.
[10] Self-translation.

2020 she claimed the Excellence Scholarship from the German Translators' Fund for the translation of *Girl, Woman, Other* ("Tanja Handels," n.d., Auszeichnungen section).

3.3.2 Non-binary forms in German translation

In the German translation of *Girl, Woman, Other*, in the first fragment including the neutral-gender language, i.e. the description of Morgan and Bibi's search for the accurate pronouns, the following forms are used: *em*, *ey*, *hen*, *per*, and *sier* for personal pronouns and *ems*, *eys*, *hens*, *pers*, and *sien* as the alternatives for *sein* and *ihr* (possessive pronouns) (p. 404). All of them are included on the list proposed by Nichtbinäre-Wiki (n.d., Pronomen section). Tanja Handels' translation of *they* — the pronoun Morgan ultimately decides on, is the form *sier*, which is the most recent one together with *xier* and *dey* (Heger, 2024, para. 1). Handels declines it as the pronoun *er* due to its analogous ending, i.e. *siem* (p. 409) like *ihm* in the dative or *sien* (p. 405) like *ihn* in the accusative.

As described before, the characteristic feature of the German inclusive language is a gender star, which is present in Handels' translation multiple times: *Londoner*innen* 'Londoners' (p. 407), *Rezensent*innen* 'critics' (p. 410), *Krieger*innen* 'warriors' (p. 412), or *Crossresser*innen* 'crossdressers' (p. 414). She uses this typographical character not only before the feminine plural suffix *-innen* to include all genders, but also at the end of the word *trans* in different contexts: *trans* Menschen* 'trans people' (p. 414), *mähnlichweiblich-trans*Spektrum* 'male-female-trans spectrum' (p. 414), *trans* Haltung* 'trans position' (p. 417). As explained on WECF's website, asterisk is sometimes used to draw attention to the word with which it appears (n.d., Sternchen Für Alle section). It is illustrated with the word *Frau** 'woman', which "applies to all persons who identify themselves as women" (para. 1) and the symbol "makes it clear that the term 'woman' means more than just the physical-biological quality" (para. 2). An analogous definition of the term *trans**, known as *trans asterisk* or *trans star* (Steinmetz, 2018), can be found in Oxford English Dictionary: "originally used to include explicitly both transsexual and transgender, or (now usually) to indicate the inclusion of gender identities such as gender-fluid, agender, etc., alongside transsexual and transgender" (OED, 2018). According to OED lexicographer Jonathan Dent, queer community have used the umbrella term *trans** since the 1990s, as reported in Katy Steinmetz's article written for *Times* (2018, para. 7). This rhetorical device in Handels' translation might therefore carry a similar message, e.g., *trans* Menschen* might suggest the emphasis put on everyone who identifies as transgender or transsexual.

In some instances, Handels' translation of the gender-fair language in the German version of the novel includes anglicisms. For instance, Handels did not change the honorific *Mx* used by Evaristo, even though the possibilities have been proposed by the German queer community (Department of Equal Opportunities and Diversity at Ludwigshafen University of Business and Society, 2022; Nonbinary Wiki, n.d., Gender neutral language in Germany section). Another word which remained the same is *Follower* (p. 419), even though the context (*eine Million Follower*) demands a plural form, and this anglicism is used in German with a suffix *-s* in plural form (*Followers*). The same term, however, has been used with a gender asterisk nine pages back: *weil sier auf Twitter mehr als eine million Follower*innen hat* (p. 410), which is a translation of the phrase *on account of their Twitter following of over a million followers* (p. 332). The different use of this term does not seem like a deliberate translation decision, considering that in the original text the word *followers* has been used in the same form in both fragments.

In addition to the use of typographical characters in the creation of gender-neutral nouns in German, there is also another method that Handels applied in her translation, i.e., participle *Studierende* for English 'students'. The word created by the addition of the suffix *-ende* to its base form is one of the methods described by Lardelli (2023) used to avoid determining the gender of persons to whom the term *Studierende* is referred and could be translated in a descriptive way as 'studying persons', similarly to the Polish personative *osoby studiujące*. This form seems to be a correct and fitting solution; however, compared with the other plural nouns created by Handels through the application of the gender star, it is less coherent.

3.4 Comparison of the Polish and German translations

The differences between translations of distinct elements representing the inclusive character of the Polish and German language, as well as their common denominators, have been presented in three tables. They are categorized by the word classes: pronouns, verbs, and nouns.

Table 1

Comparison of the non-binary pronouns in the Polish and German translations

English	Polish	German
Ae, e, ey, per	Onu, vono, ne, oni, ony	Em, ey, hen, per
Hirs, aers, eirs, pers, xyrs	Jejgo, jeno, jemu, jejo, nego, ich	Ems, eys, hens, pers
They, theirs	Ono, jego	Sier
Spend it alone	Spędzić wieczór samemu	Allein herumstehen

The first two rows in the table present the non-binary pronouns (personal and possessive), which were not chosen by Morgan but were considered by them. In both the Polish and German translations, the words are taken from the resources of the gender-fair language used by queer communities at that time (2020 in the case of the Polish translation, 2021 — the German one). The translations are not literal but instead reflect the idiolect used among the group in question. The words in the third row show the neopronouns used ultimately in reference to Morgan. Those chosen by Zano mirror the most frequently used forms amid Polish speakers, just like the ones in the original (RJN, 2024, Niebinarny Spis Powszechny). Handels decides on one of the three most popular forms: *sier* is used by German speaking persons alternately with *dey* and *xier*. The translator might have chosen the form as it is least influenced by English. What is interesting is the fact that Handels mentions in this sentence only the personal pronoun, dropping the possessive *ihr*. It might have resulted from the fact that the chosen form already exists – the same word corresponds with the feminine pronoun *sie* 'she'. Nevertheless, it could be considered essential to draw attention to this choice and its reason. It could be motivated by the gender which was assigned at Megan/Morgan's birth, or with the will to eliminate the widespread generic masculine.

Finally, the bottom row shows the adjectival pronoun, which is gendered in Polish, due to which Zano had to choose an accurate suffix. She decided on *samemu*, i.e., a masculine form corresponding to the pronoun *jego*. In German it was not needed, as *allein* corresponds to all genders.

Table 2

Comparison of the non-binary verb forms in the Polish and German translations

English	Polish	German
They've learnt	Nauczyło się	Sier hat gelernt
Morgan loosened up	Morgan wyluzowało	Morgan wurde lockerer
You haven't met her?	Poznałoś moją mamę?	Ihr kennt euch nicht?

The aspect of verb forms having a non-binary elements has a grammatical explanation, as Polish is the only language from the discussed ones in which this part of speech is gendered. This can be clearly seen in the table. Zano had to find a gender-neutral alternative for the traditional female and male suffixes, whereas in Handels' translation this was not an issue.

Table 3

Comparison of the inclusive nouns in the Polish and German translation

	English	Polish	German
1	which apparently turned them into an '**influencer**'	co najwyraźniej zrobiło z Morgan "**influencerzę**"	was **sie** offenbar zur »**Influencer-Persönlichkeit**« macht
	fancy me bumping into *Mx* Morgan Malinga!	kto by pomyślał, że wpadnę tu na **p a n o** Morgan Malingę!	unfassbar, dass ich hier so einfach auf *Mx* Morgan Malinga treffe!
	you're a true **trans warrior**	ty jesteś prawdziwym **transwojowniczem**	du führst den waren **trans*Kampf**
2	go see, […] the intersectional **warriors** out there	idźcie i oglądajcie, […] intersekcjonalne **osoby walczące**	bloß nicht verpassen! […] intersektionalen **Krieger*innen** da draußen
	it's their **following** that counts	liczy się społeczność **followersów**	was zählt, sind die **Follower*innen**
	I interpret trans to include non-binaries like me […] and **cross-dressers**	bycie trans obejmuje […] **crossdreserów i crossdresserki**	er umfasst nicht-binäre Personen wie mich […] ebenso wie **Crossdresser*innen**
	standing rooted in the spotlight, confronted by row of unsmiling **students**, all of them more educated than the person they've come to hear	wszystkie oczy na **nim**, rzędy poważnych **studentów**, a **każdy i każda** z nich bardziej wykształcone od osoby, której **przyszli** posłuchać	konfrontiert mit reihenweise ernst blickenden **Studierenden**, die allesamt gebildeter waren als die Person, die sie hier zuhören wollten
	soon there'll be no need for proper **critics**, the so-called 'experts'	wkrótce już nikt nie będzie potrzebował prawdziwych **krytyków**, tak zwanych "ekspertów"	bald werden sowieso keine **Rezensent*innen** im herkömmlichen Sinn mehr gebraucht

Various translation strategies have been applied by both Zano and Handels to convey the inclusive nature of nouns used by Evaristo. The table has been divided into groups based on decisions made by the Polish translator. The first group presents singular nouns for which Zano found the equivalents in the form of neutratives. In the case of *influencer* and *Mx*, Handels left the words unchanged in her translation, whereas to translate the phrase *trans warrior* she decided on reformulating it into a verbal phrase, i.e., use the gender-neutral rewording strategy.

The rest of the examples show plural nouns together with Handels most frequently made decision, i.e., the use of gender star, as well as a participle. In contrast, the translation of words from the second group into Polish is not consistent. Each of the five terms has been translated through the application of a different strategy: the use of personative (*osoby walczące*), adding a collective noun describing a group of people (*społeczność*), applying both female and male form of the noun (*crossdeserzy i crossdresserki*), using male noun with corresponding male and female pronouns (*studenci*, *każdy i każda*), or using the generic masculine form (*krytycy*).

Some phrases could have been translated differently, e.g. *rzędy poważnych studentów, a każdy i każda z nich bardziej wykształcone od osoby, której przyszli posłuchać* does not sound grammatically correct. The alternative here could be the application of the personative: *rzędy poważnych osób studiujących, a każda z nich bardziej wykształcona od osoby, której przyszły posłuchać*. Furthermore, if the gender-fair forms have been included in plural nouns, it would be clearer if this decision was consequent, such as with the translation of the word 'critics' into krytycy instead of for example osoby krytykujące.

This comparison demonstrates that translation choices in Polish and German do not depend on the type of the original term but demand an individual approach to each of them and a deliberate search for a solution every time. It is possible with the application of the sense-for-sense strategy which focuses on maintaining the meaning of the source text (Guo & Wan, 2022), and in case of Evaristo's book that includes having regard to views of non-binary people. One could also state that both Zano and Handles applied the intuitive strategies here, in particular observer strategy. They have conveyed the author's aim to emphasize the role of inclusive language, without giving subjective information or additional explanations.

Conclusion

In each language, the creation of non-binary forms is different due their various grammatical nature and current knowledge concerning gender identities among the community using the language. English — the language of the source text — is an example of a natural gender language, which means that most of the nouns do not carry grammatical gender. The target texts, on the contrary, were produced in Polish and German – two gender languages, in which every noun has one of the three grammatical genders: feminine, masculine, or neuter. Moreover, gender is marked also in other word classes, such as verbs (Polish) or adjectives (Polish and German). Translators whose target language belongs to the second group are more challenged, considering both the number of terms they need to pay attention to and the creativity they need to show while finding an accurate solution.

Not all ideas for elements of gender-inclusive language are systematized: the English gender-neutral pronoun *they* is present in several dictionaries; the Polish inclusive forms are not officially recognized, even though the gender-neutral words are correct according to RJP; and the German gender star is more and more common but still not officially correct. However, as presented on the example of Bernardine Evaristo's novel *Girl, Woman, Other*, gender-neutral forms can be translated into both Polish and German by applying distinct strategies. In the Polish translation, Aga Zano uses neosystems (personatives, neutratives, and neopronouns), gender-neutral verbs, and collective nouns. The strategy most frequently chosen by Tanja Handels is the use of gender star and neopronouns, but she also applies participles, reformulates sentences, and retains some of the original forms presented by Evaristo.

Both translations exemplify that in contact with a fluid language – such as that used within the queer community, as the nomenclature is still being developed – the word-for-word strategy would not a be suitable form of translation, since the target text needs to reflect the language used by the members of a given community: first and foremost by persons affected by the language, i.e. those who need the mentioned terms to fully express themselves in compliance with their identity, and only then by other people describing them. Translators play a crucial role because of the power that their translation decisions hold. As Lardelli (2023) points out, "translators can therefore become advocates for gender-fair language contributing to increasing gender equality not only for women but also for all genders beyond the binary" (p. 3).

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Abstract

The thesis discusses the topic of forms concerning non-binary persons in English, Polish and German. The subject of the study is Bernardine Evaristo's British novel *Girl, Woman, Other* and its translations into Polish by Aga Zano and into German by Tanja Handels. After an introduction to the theory of literary translation and a presentation of the translation strategies most relevant to the study, inclusive forms are defined and described, as well as their history of occurrence for each of the discussed languages. Such forms are most widely used in English, the most common of which is the non-binary pronoun *they*, noted in several dictionaries. Polish inclusive forms have been developed by the collectivity Zaimki.pl, which proposes several gender-neutral solutions for pronouns as well as nouns, verbs, and adjectives. In German, the most common gender-neutral element is the so-called "gender gap", i.e. the use of typographic marks between the noun stem and its feminine ending. The analytical part of the thesis includes the analysis of the subsection of Evaristo's novel devoted to a nonbinary character Megan/Morgan and of the two translations, focusing on the parts of speech that are gendered in the respective languages. It also shows the inclusive solutions that the translators have chosen. They reflected the most commonly used forms by the Polish- and German-speaking queer communities, paying attention to both their needs and the nature of these languages' grammar. The two language versions differ in their choice of certain translation strategies, which stems from the language structures of Polish and German.

Zusammenfassung

Die Arbeit untersucht das Thema der nicht-binären Personenformen im Englischen, Polnischen und Deutschen. Der Gegenstand der Untersuchung ist Bernardine Evaristos britischer Roman „Girl, Woman, Other" und seine Übersetzung ins Polnische von Aga Zano und ins Deutsche von Tanja Handels. Nach der Einführung in die literarische Übersetzungstheorie und der Darstellung der für die Studie wichtigsten Übersetzungsstrategien, werden die inklusiven Formen und ihre Entstehungsgeschichte für jede der behandelten Sprachen definiert und beschrieben. Am weitesten verbreitet sind sie im Englischen, angeführt vom Pluralpronomen *they*, das in mehreren Wörterbüchern in seiner nicht-binären Bedeutung aufgeführt ist. Die polnischen Inklusivformen wurden vom Kollektiv Zaimki.pl detailliert

ausgearbeitet, das eine Reihe von geschlechtsneutralen Lösungen sowohl für Pronomen als auch für Substantive, Verben und Adjektive, die sie erfordern, vorschlägt. Im Deutschen ist das häufigste geschlechtsneutralisierende Element der so genannte „Gender Gap", d. h. die Verwendung von typografischen Zeichen zwischen dem Substantivstamm und seiner weiblichen Endung. Im folgenden Abschnitt werden der Teil des Evaristo-Romans, der der nicht-binären Figur Megan/Morgan gewidmet ist, und die beiden Übersetzungen des Buches im Hinblick auf die in der jeweiligen Sprache geschlechtsspezifischen Wortarten analysiert und die von den Übersetzern gewählten inklusiven Lösungen vorgestellt. Sie haben die von der polnisch- und deutschsprachigen Queer-Gesellschaft am häufigsten verwendeten Formen wiedergegeben, wobei sie sowohl deren Bedürfnisse als auch die Beschaffenheit der Grammatik dieser Sprachen berücksichtigt haben. Die Übersetzungen unterscheiden sich durch die Wahl bestimmter Übersetzungsstrategien, die sich aus den polnischen und deutschen Sprachressourcen ergeben.

Streszczenie

Praca porusza temat form dotyczących osób niebinarnych w języku angielskim, polskim i niemieckim. Podmiotem badań jest brytyjska powieść Bernardine Evaristo p.t. „Girl, Woman, Other" i jej przekład na język polski dokonany przez Agę Zano oraz na język niemiecki przez Tanję Handels. Po wprowadzeniu w teorię przekładu literackiego i przedstawieniu najistotniejszych dla badania strategii tłumaczeniowych, zdefiniowane i opisane są formy inkluzywne oraz historia ich występowania dla każdego z omawianych języków. Najbardziej rozpowszechnione są one w języku angielskim, na czele z używanym z liczbą mnogą zaimkiem "they" figurującym w jego niebinarnym znaczeniu w kilku słownikach. Polskie formy inkluzywne opracowywane zostały szczegółowo przez kolektyw Zaimki.pl, który proponuje wiele rozwiązań neutralnych płciowo zarówno dla zaimków jak i wymagających tego rzeczowników, czasowników i przymiotników. W języku niemieckim, najczęściej występującym elementem neutralizującym płciowość jest tzw. "gender gap", tj. użycie znaków typograficznych między rdzeniem rzeczownika a jego żeńską końcówką. W dalszej części pracy podrozdział powieści Evaristo poświęcony niebinarnej postaci Megan/Morgan oraz oba przekłady książki przeanalizowane są pod kątem części mowy, które w danym języku są nacechowane płciowo, przedstawiając inkluzywne rozwiązania, na które zdecydowały się tłumaczki. Odzwierciedliły one formy najczęściej używane przez polsko- i niemieckojęzyczną

społeczność queerową, zwracając uwagę zarówno na ich potrzeby, jak i charakter gramatyki tych języków. Przekłady różnią się wyborem niektórych strategii tłumaczeniowych, wynikającym z zasobów języka polskiego i niemieckiego.

Pytanie: W pierwszym zdaniu, w którym pojawia się język niebinarny, wymieniła Pani sześć form zaimków, nad którymi zastanawiają się (jeszcze) Megan i Bibi, gdy w oryginale jest ich pięć. Czy chciała Pani wybrać te formy, które są w polskim najczęstsze, niezależnie od wymienionych przez Evaristo propozycji? Zastanawia mnie też kolejność, w jakiej zostały one wymienione.

Odpowiedź Agi Zano (20 lipca 2024) – *transkrypcja*:

Tłumaczenie "jeden do jednego" nie jest konieczne w przypadku takiej listy zaimków. Wydaje mi się, że wybrałam te, które funkcjonowały w języku, były obecne po polsku. To było dla mnie istotniejsze niż ich liczba. Gdyby po polsku funkcjonowało siedem częstych zaimków, to pewnie wprowadziłabym siedem. Nie wydaje mi się, żebym je w ogóle liczyła; wybrałam te brane pod uwagę przez polskie osoby i je zaprezentowałam. Tłumaczenie nie zawsze jest czymś lustrzanym. Czasem musi takie być, gdy wymaga tego rytm i sens tekstu, ale czasami inne aspekty są ważniejsze; wydaje mi się, że w tym przypadku ważniejsze było to, jakich przykładów użyć, jakie były w tamtym momencie dostępne i najchętniej używane. Musimy brać też pod uwagę, że w polszczyźnie najczęściej używane formy niebinarne to, paradoksalnie, formy binarne. Według dostępnych na dzisiaj ankiet, najszerzej i regularnie przeprowadzanych przez kolektyw Zaimki.pl, osoby niebinarne w Polsce najczęściej mówią o sobie "ona"/"on" – czasami w zgodzie z tym desygnatem, który dostały przy urodzeniu, a czasami na odwrót. Dopiero na trzecim miejscu jest "ono", a na kolejnych inne formy. Jeżeli miałabym oddać to realistycznie, musiałabym w przekładzie skonstruować zupełnie inny wywód niż ten stworzony w oryginale; polszczyzna musi radzić sobie z tematem binarności całkowicie inaczej niż angielszczyzna przez to, że mamy tak silnie upłciowiony język. Problemem z polszczyzną są nie zaimki, tylko raczej odmiana czasownika. Jest to wyzwanie dla polszczyzny jeśli chodzi o niebinarność, dlatego dzisiaj większość osób niebinarnych obchodzi je używając formy odwróconej, nadal tej asygnowanej przy urodzeniu, albo obu naprzemiennie. Ta lista zaimków też jest więc czymś umownym, ponieważ trzeba pracować na tym, co jest dostępne. Ostateczny wybór był dosyć prosty, bo w oryginale postać wybiera formę "they", która jest najpowszechniej używana w języku angielskim. Gdybym chciała być całkowicie wierna polskim realiom, musiałabym wprowadzić którąś z najczęściej używanych przez polskie osoby

niebinarne wariacji wokół form binarnych, ale wtedy cały wywód [dot. niebinarności] nie miałby racji bytu w przekładzie. W związku z tym musiałam zaproponować trzecią najbardziej używaną formę, czyli właśnie "ono" i nie skupiałam się na formach wciąż ważonych w języku i używanych jeszcze rzadziej.

Co do kolejności, są to już bardzo techniczne kwestie. Osoba, która tworzy przekład nie myśli często o tym aż z taką dokładnością, jako że pisze literaturę. Na pewno nie było to matematyczne z mojej strony; wydaje mi się, że patrzyłam po prostu na powszechność tych słów, na rytm. Tłumaczenie nie jest tak lustrzaną kwestią, żeby przekładać ją "jeden do jednego", zwłaszcza w przypadku literatury, więc takie matematyczne rozważania czasami są przeciwskuteczne. W tym przypadku być może chodziło o ich popularność w stosunku do popularności zaimków oryginalnych.

Tak samo przeciwskuteczne bywa czasami pytanie o szczegółowe rozwiązania osoby tłumaczącej osoby piszącej, bo zazwyczaj w pracy literaturoznawczej nie mamy jednak takiej możliwości; wydaje mi się to niebezpiecznym pójściem na skróty, bo ogranicza pole potencjalnych rozwiązań, zdejmuje z badacza/badaczki ciężar samodzielnych poszukiwań i analiz, a zachęca do oczekiwania, że ktoś zaoferuje nam jedyną właściwą interpretację. Jest to niepomocne, bo często ja nie potrafię tego szczegółowo wyjaśnić, a nieraz ciekawsze od tego, co mogę ci powiedzieć jest to, jak sama coś odczytasz, porównasz, zanalizujesz, jak czegoś się dopatrzysz. Nawet osoby, które tworzą literaturę mogą zaoferować mniej ciekawe odpowiedzi, niż osoby trzecie, które ją analizują.

Appendix B

Inquiry to collectivity Rada Języka Neutralnego

Pytanie: W tworzeniu pracy po angielsku pojawia się trudność tłumaczenia na ten język polskich określeń, takich jak "osobatywy", "neutratywy", czy "dukatywy". Czy funkcjonują może jakieś ekwiwalentne terminy?

Odpowiedź Andrei Vos (16 lipca 2024):

Bardzo dobre pytanie. Nie mogę sobie przypomnieć żadnego istniejącego użycia po angielsku. "Neutratywy", "osobatywy", "dukatywy" i "iksatywy" pochodzą oczywiście od słowa "feminatyw", więc tłumaczyć na angielski można by analogicznie. Wiktionary[11] nie ma angielskiego tłumaczenia słowa, Wikipedia też nie[12]. Znalazłom parę przykładów tłumaczenia go jako "feminative", np. w tym journalu[13], co moim zdaniem jest najsensowniejszym rozwiązaniem, analogicznie do łac. adjectivum → adjective czy substantivum → substantive robi sens feminativum → feminative.

Moją propozycją byłoby zatem:

* neutratyw → neutrative
* osobatyw → personative
* dukatyw → dukative
* iksaty → x-ative

Wymyśliłośmy wszystkie te słowa po polsku, więc równie dobrze możemy wymyślić im tłumaczenia. Przed wysłaniem odpowiedzi spytałom resztę kolektywu. Szymon Misiek pisze rozprawę doktorską po angielsku i mówi że używa w niej dokładnie tych form, które podałom wyżej. Reszta też nie ma nic przeciwko takim wersjom. Więc jak najbardziej: oficjalną opinią Rady jest, że właśnie w ten sposób można tłumaczyć.

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[11] *Feminatyw - Wiktionary, The free dictionary*. Wiktionary. (n.d.). https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/feminatyw

[12] Wikimedia Foundation. (2024, July 2). *Feminatyw*. Wikipedia. https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminatyw

[13] Linde-Usiekniewicz, J. (2023). The case for Feminatives in Polish. *Acadmia. The Magazine of the Polish Academy of Sciences*, *4*(76). https://doi.org/10.24425/academiapas.2022.144690