Role Language in Translation: A Comparative Character Analysis of Maria Barring in Andrzej Sapkowski’s *Chrzest Ognia*

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/sijp.2021.64-65.4

**ABSTRACT**

This article presents an analysis of *yakuwarigo* 役割語 implementation in the Japanese translation of Andrzej Sapkowski’s *Chrzest Ognia* (Baptism of Fire). Focusing on the character Milva’s manner of speaking, the author analyses selected passages from the Polish original focusing on stylization (archaization, colloquialisms, vulgarisms). She compares them with corresponding passages from the Japanese translation by Yasuko Kawano, concentrating on the use of *yakuwarigo* in order to compare the character images of Milva in the two texts. Due to a weaker character image and the lack of linguistic markers indicating Milva’s background in the Japanese translation, the author juxtaposes those passages with their counterparts in the English translation by David French, which may have served as the source text for Kawano’s translation. Since Milva’s character image as presented in French’s work is the weakest and least distinctive of the three languages, this might explain the relatively low number of *yakuwarigo* expressions in the Japanese translation.

**KEYWORDS:** *yakuwarigo*, Andrzej Sapkowski, Milva, translation

Although the Japanese term *yakuwarigo* 役割語, commonly translated as ‘role language’, refers to a relatively new linguistic category, the concept of different language features being characteristic of different social, regional, educational etc. backgrounds is certainly not a new one. Even learners of basic Japanese learn to distinguish between *onna kotoba* 女ことば (‘women language’) and *otoko kotoba* 男ことば (‘men language’), or recognize the meaning connotations behind specific personal pronouns. Using *yakuwarigo* helps create a certain – if often stereotypical (cf. e.g. Kinsui 2011, Bun 2018) – image of a character, e.g. a scholar, an elderly man, a macho man, or a lady.

The category of role language was introduced as a tool to analyse the speech of characters in *manga* マンガ or *anime* アニメ; however, it may also be useful for analysing characters in other works of fiction. What is more, role language poses an interesting problem not only from the linguistic point of view, but also from the perspective of translation studies,
particularly the case of translation strategies from Japanese into languages which do not possess the ‘role language’ category (Kinsui 2011, Bun 2018). However, in this paper the issue is approached from the opposite angle, namely, the introduction of *yakuwarigo* into the Japanese translation of a text originally written in a language which does not possess a distinctive role language category, such as Polish.

This paper analyses the extent to which *yakuwarigo* is used in the Japanese translation of Andrzej Sapkowski’s *Chrzest Ognia* (*Baptism of Fire*) in character presentation. The research presented here focuses on the character of Maria Barring, known as Milva, who has an easily recognizable manner of speaking in the Polish original.

**What Is Yakuwarigo?**

In his presentation at the *Comicology: Probing Practical Scholarship* symposium Satoshi Kinsui (2015a) gives the following English description of *yakuwarigo*:

A newly emerging field in Japanese linguistics examines the connection between spoken language features and the depiction of character types in fiction, popular culture (e.g. manga [comic books] and anime [animated cartoons]), the Internet, and beyond. Often in Japanese fiction and popular culture, a character’s vocabulary and grammar vary greatly according to the person’s attributes (gender, age, social status, occupation, region of residence or birthplace, appearance, personality, etc.). Consequently, one can infer the type of role portrayed from the character’s vocabulary and grammar. Examples of established character types in popular culture, associated with particular linguistic features, include the elderly male, the young lady of good family, and the Chinese person. Their fictional utterances often make these established character types easily recognisable in Japanese culture, even if actual people fitting these character types are unlikely to produce such utterances in real life. (Teshigawara and Kinsui as cited in: 1-2)

In a fully Japanese transcript of this lecture, Kinsui (2015b: 1) defines *yakuwarigo* in a more concise way:

Patterns of speech (combinations of vocabulary, syntax, voice peculiarities, set phrases, etc.) strongly associated with the
character image of the speaker (such as sex, age, generation, occupation, social class, regional background, nationality, race) which are found mainly in works of fiction are called yakuwarigo.\(^1\)\(^2\)

Both definitions emphasize the use of yakuwarigo in fictional speech\(^3\) (e.g. characters’ speech in manga or anime), as opposed to real-life utterances. Role language – as the name itself suggests – plays an important role in creating the images of characters:

If we can recall the image of a character (their age, sex, occupation, social class, era [they live in], appearance, personality, etc.), when hearing some particular expressions (vocabulary, syntax, phraseology, intonation, etc.), or if we can recall expressions which may be used by a character when we are shown their image, then such expressions are called yakuwarigo. (Kinsui 2003: 205)\(^4\)

Manner of speaking and character image are tightly interconnected, particularly in the case of stereotypical characters. Moreover, it can be said that yakuwarigo may be particularly useful for creating the character images of characters from fantasy fiction. Due to the specific, often Middle-Ages-inspired setting, the characters in fantasy works tend to exhibit more traits (as compared to characters in modern settings) which make them distinguishable, such as class and/or social background, race, and occupation. These traits are usually reflected in characters’ speech by means of stylization and role language. But it also should be emphasized that speech is not the only factor influencing a character’s image. Therefore, an analysis of only role

\(^1\) All translations into English are by the Author unless otherwise noted.
\(^2\) Orig.: 役割語とは、主にフィクションのなかで、セリフを話す人物の人物像（性別、年齢・世代、職業・階層、地域・国籍・人種等）を強く連想させる話し方のパターン（語彙、語法、音声的特徴、セット・フレーズ等の組み合わせ）のことと言います。
\(^3\) However, Kinsui (2011) points out that to some extent yakuwarigo functions in daily conversations as well. Due to the fact that, depending on the situation, speakers take on different social roles (e.g. a worker, child, parent, friend, customer, etc.), the way they speak changes in a more or less significant manner in order to adapt to that situation.
\(^4\) Orig.: ある特定の言葉遣い（語彙・語法・言い回し・イントネーション等）聞くと特定的人物像（年齢、性別、職業、階層、時代、容姿・風貌、性格等）思い浮かべることができるとき、あるいはある特定の人物像を提示されると、その人物がいかにも使用しそうな言葉遣い思い浮かべることができるとき、その言葉遣いを「役割語」と呼ぶ。
language implementation is a partial analysis of a character’s image as a whole (Bun 2018: 36). However, this is not to say that such an analysis is pointless, on the contrary, it may show interesting interdependencies and/or discrepancies between a character’s actions and their speech, thus rendering a more complex character image.

Another interesting matter is whether role language is added into Japanese translations of texts written in other languages, particularly those languages which do not have a similarly functioning role language of their own, such as Polish or English. This paper compares the Polish original of Andrzej Sapkowski’s Chrzest Ognia, the fifth part of The Witcher saga, with the Japanese translation, and focuses on the dialogue parts of Maria Barring, known as Milva.

However, before the reasons for choosing this particular character and the analysis itself are presented, characteristic features of Andrzej Sapkowski’s writing style in The Witcher saga should be briefly described.

Andrzej Sapkowski’s Language in The Witcher
Andrzej Sapkowski, a Polish fantasy writer, is well-known for his peculiar use of language in his novels and short stories. This is how Tomasz Pindel (2019) describes Sapkowski’s style in his on-line article for the Przekrój magazine:

> The expression which immediately comes to my mind when I think about The Witcher prose is “juiciness”. Sapkowski uses a very rich Polish, builds original sentences, pays attention to lexical subtleties. What’s more, he shows incredible eloquence in his implementation of various registers. A perfect example is the complex scene opening the first [sic] volume of the saga, namely Blood of Elves (...) And every race, nation, [social] class, and sex speaks a different language: mages [speak] scholarly, elves courtly, dwarves are bawdy, merchants direct, and peasants speak their local jargon. These several pages perfectly show the author’s linguistic virtuosity and incredible ear[.]

Pindel also points out how impactful Sapkowski’s dialogues are:

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5 Counting Ostatnie życzenie (The Last Wish) as volume one, and Miecz Przeznaczenia (Sword of Destiny) as volume two.
Dialogues are Sapkowski’s actual secret weapon: perfectly written, dynamic, introducing the reader into the represented world in such a way that next pages simply flow by. (ibid.)

Language in dialogues is particularly interesting from the point of view of *yakuwarigo* implementation in the Japanese translation. And it is the dialogues in *The Witcher* which contain the most numerous examples of linguistic stylization. Sapkowski introduces many neologisms into his books, the most significant of which is the titular *witcher* – Pol. *wiedźmin*. Other neologisms (mainly the names of monsters) include such words as *mimik*, *mglak*, *przeraza*, etc. (cf. Dziwisz 2013). There are also borrowings from other languages, e.g. *bruxa*, *ghul*, *Kelpie* (Mucha 2015: 63). The author puts numerous jokes and humorous expressions into his characters’ mouths, as well as into the descriptive parts. Moreover, Sapkowski does not refrain from using vulgarisms. But the most significant feature of his style in *The Witcher* saga is the use of archaisms. Joanna Kaczerzewska (2016: 62) categorizes Sapkowski’s archaization as partial:

> It is intense only in the parts which imitate written sources and in dialogues of some of the characters. Usually it is mild, but it is not present in all narrated parts, or in every dialogue or monologue. The narrator often refrains from using archaisms when he wants to speed up the action. He usually does not archaize the language of educated characters or those from upper classes in society[;] there are also parts written in an altogether modern language – scientific and technical.

What is interesting is that Sapkowski uses archaization as a form of substitution – it represents what the fictional language spoken in the saga’s fictional world might be like if translated into Polish (ibid. 63). Moreover, archaization serves as an invocation of “aesthetic qualities which are

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6 *Mimik* (a creature who can copy both the physical and psychological features of people and animals) is most likely derived from the word *mim* ‘mime artist’ or *mimika* ‘facial expression’; *mglak* (a magical monster living in the swamp) is derived from *mgła* ‘fog’; *przeraza* (a magically created monster which lives in the desert) is derived from *przerażać* ‘to frighten’ (Dziwisz 2013).

7 *Bruxa* (a type of vampire) is borrowed from Hispanic legends; *ghul* (a monster feeding on dead bodies) is inspired by Muslim mythology; *Kelpie* (the name Ciri gave to her horse, based on the horse’s resemblance to a water creature called *kelpie*) is borrowed from Celtic myths (Mucha 2015: 63).
widely recognisable and appreciated – a stereotype of an old language” (ibid. 65).

**Maria Barring**

Many of Sapkowski’s stylistic features meet in the character of Maria Barring, or Milva, as she is usually called by others. Although she accompanies Geralt (the title character) on his search for Ciri (the lost princess of Cintra and Geralt’s ward), she is not a primary character. Uneducated and raised in the woods, she is very direct, one might even say blunt. Her language contains archaic and vulgar expressions, which often creates comical effects. She speaks in an easily recognisable manner, and the parts of free indirect speech focusing on her are characteristic of her voice as well.

Milva’s manner of speaking is the primary reason why this particular character had been selected for analysis. Another reason, closely connected with the first one, is the fact that she is neither one of the protagonists, who tend to use fewer role language expressions, nor one of the episodic characters, who tend to be stereotypical and therefore use appropriate yakuwarigo (if they speak at all) (Kinsui 2017 as cited in: Bun 2018: 34).

Milva can be classified as a “class 2” (クラス 2 ) character, defined by Kinsui as follows:

[They] can be described as individualistic, but their psychological depiction is less evolved than that of the class 1 characters, and they manifest themselves as “others”. (…) From the point of view of language, it often happens that [these characters] use typical yakuwarigo (including standard language), and yet on the other hand, it may also happen that their language departs from, or overlaps with the usual yakuwarigo, or they may even speak in such a unique way that there are no pre-existing examples [of that speech]. (ibid.)

Milva is, indeed, an individualistic character, and although she is as much of a companion and friend to Geralt as Regis, Jaskier and, further on, Cahir, it could be argued that she is in the position of “other”. She provides her

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8 Orig.; 個性的であるが、内面描写はクラス 1 の人物よりも少なく、「他者」として立ち現れる人物たちであると言える。（中略）言葉の面では、典型的な役割語（標準語を含む）が用いられる場合が多いが、一方で、通常の役割語からずらしたり、重ねたり、あるいはまったくそれまでに例のないユニークな話し方をさせる場合もある。
own views or pieces of advice, but the story does not focus on her experiences or her psychological development. From the point of view of yakuwarigo implementation analysis, it may be expected that – since she is a class 2 character – in the Japanese translation there will appear at least some expressions which would reinforce her image as depicted in the Polish original. This makes Milva a suitable choice for analysis (cf. Bun 2018: 34-35).

Model of Analysis
This article uses a similar approach to that presented in Bun (2018). Bun’s model is based on Nida’s concept of equivalence and Coşeriu’s concept of “meaning”9 understood as the character image (jinbutsuzō 人物像). In this model, the speech of a given character in the source language text is analysed, yielding this character’s image. Then the speech of the same character in the target language is analysed, yielding the character image in the target language. In the final stage, both character images are compared in order to see whether the transfer of information between languages (images) took place, and if so, to what extent (ibid. 33-35).

Bun’s analysis is quantitative. However, due to the lack of the yakuwarigo concept in Polish, this paper puts more emphasis on a qualitative analysis, comparing the overall image of Milva as presented in the dialogues, not the number of stylized expressions to the number of yakuwarigo. However, the number of stylized expressions does influence the intensity with which character features are presented, therefore the quantitative approach will not be altogether dismissed.

The analysis of the original Polish version focuses primarily on archaisms, vulgarisms and the comic quality of language.

Milva vs Miruva
Below there are analyses and comparisons of Milva’s character image in selected passages containing her dialogue from the Polish original, Chrzest Ognia (further abbreviated to CO), with corresponding passages from the Japanese translation, Honō-no Senrei 炎の洗礼 (further abbreviated to HS) by Yasuko Kawano.

The first passage comes from the scene where the dryad healer Aglaïs asks Milva to gather for Geralt some information concerning Ciri after the rebellion on Thanedd Island:

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9 In Bun, igi 意義 is defined as “the content which is particularly included in the text by intention” (テクストに特別に意図してこめられた内容) (2018: 29).
– Wieści ze świata? Chybaś rozum **straciła**\(^{10}\), dziwożono! Czy ty wiesz, co teraz dzieje się na świecie, za granicami twojego spokojnego lasu? W Aedirn trwa wojna! W Brugge, w Temerii i w Redanii zamęt, piekło, wielkie łowy! Za tymi, co rebelię wszczęli na Thanedd, gonią wszędby! Wszędę pełno szpiegów i an’givare, jedno słowo nieraz wystarczy **uronić**, usta **skrzywić**, gdy nie **trza**, i już kat ci w lochu czerwonym żelazem **zaświeci**! A ja na przeszpiegi mam **chodzić**, dopytywać się, wieści **zbierać**? Karku nadstawiać? I dla kogo? Dla jakiegoś półżywego wiedźmina? A co to on mi, brat albo swat? Iście **rozumu** zbyłaś, Aglaïs! (CO: 8)\(^{11}\)

All underlined expressions are examples of archaisms (cf. Kaczerzewska 2016). Moreover, there are eight examples of archaic word order, in which the verb (in bold) comes after the object (SOV), as opposed to the unmarked SVO word order. The archaic SOV word order may be considered a characteristic feature of Milva’s speech, since she uses it on numerous occasions. As mentioned above, archaization is a feature of the common, uneducated people, so from Milva’s very first conversation it is implied in her speech that she is not educated. She also seems to be very direct in expressing her views. In this particular passage Milva is agitated and angry.

Below is the corresponding passage in Japanese:

(1b): 「世界の動向？頭がどうかしたんじゃないの？いま世界で、この静かな森の向こうで何が起こってるか知ってる？エイダーンは戦のままだなかだ！ブルッゲ、テメリア、レダニアは大混乱で、人が山ほど殺されている！サーネッド島で反乱を起こした者たちがしらみつぶしに追われてる！密偵とアン＝ギヴァレ密告者—がうようよじてて、ひとことでも口をすべらせたり顔をしかめたりをしなかった時機を間違えたりしたら、死刑執行人が赤く焼けた鉄ごてを持って待ち構える地下牢に入れられるかもしれない！そんなときにあたりを嗅ぎまわって、人にたずねまわって

\(^{10}\) All underlined (also **underlined**) fragments and bolded expressions in the quoted passages are marked by the Author.

\(^{11}\) The English translation of this passage is on page 74-75.
What immediately draws attention is the lack of archaization – Milva here speaks like a modern woman. What is emphasized in the role language of Milva in Japanese translation is her gender (bolded here). She uses the first-person pronoun atashi あたし, used by women, therefore clearly an instance of onna kotoba 女ことば, and sentence-ending particles: yo よ and no の. The particles themselves seem slightly feminine/neutral, and the lack of particles after numerous instances of sentence-ending plain form give a neutral impression. The pronoun may be an expression of not only gender identity, but also the type of distance between her and Aglaïs – or, in fact, everyone, as Milva always uses it to refer to herself. Interestingly, throughout the novel she does not change her register depending on who she talks to. Even when she talks to Lady Eithné, the ruler of Brokilon, Milva speaks in plain form, shortening the distance between her and her interlocutor, which emphasizes her directness.

The underlined contracted forms, although a characteristic feature of plain, casual language, do not imply Milva’s social background, as they are not an element of speech characteristic for peasants or uneducated people in the Japanese translation of the saga. It is usually the dwarves, bawdy and direct, who tend to use contracted forms. Therefore, it may be said that, similarly to the plain form, contractions imply Milva’s directness and add some roughness to her image.

What is more, in the Polish original Milva addresses Aglaïs in the vocative case of the noun dziwożona. Sapkowski seems to put the word in his characters’ mouths as a synonym to the word driada ‘dryad’, but often with some negative connotations, because dziwożona means ‘a wild wife/woman’ and it is a name for a malicious creature from Slavic mythology (Dźwigoł 2004: 173). Therefore, Milva may sound insulting to her listener. However, there is no similar expression in the Japanese translation.

Comparing the two passages, it is clear that an important characteristic feature of Milva is missing from the Japanese translation, namely her social background. However, the Polish original does not imply her slightly bawdy side yet, and it may be said that the Japanese text does so
by means of association with other characters. In both passages Milva is
direct, rough, and sounds angry.
Another passage is a short dialogue between Milva and Geralt after she
helps him and Jaskier\textsuperscript{12} to escape from a life-threatening situation:

(2a): – Kto on zacz? (…) Druh twój, wiedźminie?
– Poeta (…) Kiedy tak, tedy pojmuję. Jeśli czego nie pojmuję, to
czemu on tu rzyga, miast gdzie w cichości rymy pisać. Nie moja
zresztą rzecz. \textit{(CO: 58)}\textsuperscript{13}

This short passage also contains archaic forms, such as \textit{tedy} ‘then’, or
\textit{miast} ‘instead’, and an instance of the SOV word order (indicated by the
position of the verb \textit{pisać}). There are two interesting places underlined.
One of them is a question about Jaskier’s identity: \textit{Kto on zacz}? It is,
indeed, archaic, but to the modern Polish reader it may also seem
“bookish”, because it sometimes appears in literary texts, often in
humorous situations. As such, this expression emphasizes the comical
quality of the first meeting between Milva and Jaskier. The other
underlined place does this, too. The humour stems from the contrast
between reality (Jaskier throwing up beside dead bodies) and Milva’s
stereotypical expectations of what a poet does or should be doing. The
comical quality is further highlighted by the use of archaisms and the
expression \textit{w cichości} ‘in silence’ – which, similarly to \textit{kto on zacz},
nowadays appears in the literary style only – and is contrasted with the
colloquial \textit{rzyga} ‘throw up’.
There appears a new feature in Milva’s character image, namely humour.
Here, however, it is not an intended joke on Milva’s side – she remains
serious, though her words may amuse the reader.
Below is the Japanese translation of this dialogue:

(2b): 「誰？ (…) あんたの連れ、ウィッチャー？」
「ああ。名前はダンディリオン。詩人だ。」
「詩人か (…) それはわかる。わからないのは、なんで詩
人がどこか静かな場所で詩を書かずにこんなところで吐
いてるかだ。ま、あたりには関係ないけど」\textit{(HS: 94)}

\textsuperscript{12} In the English translations Jaskier’s name is translated into Dandelion.
\textsuperscript{13} The English translation of this passage is on page 75.
Bolded here are two personal pronouns: *atashi* あたし, which also appears in the passage (1b), and the second-person pronoun *anata* あなた in its colloquial form *anta* あんた. Similarly to *atashi* あたし and plain forms, *anta* あんた implies the direct attitude that Milva takes towards others, as she usually uses this pronoun to address her interlocutors.

The element of humour analysed in the passage (2a) appears in the translation as well, because it is based on the contrast between reality and expectation. The use of the underlined negation *kakazu-ni* 書かずに, which is characteristic of the formal, written style (thus functioning in a similar manner as Pol. *w cichości*) adds to the comic quality of Milva’s utterance. However, it can be argued that due to the lack of archaic expressions the humour is not as strongly emphasized (therefore, may not be as amusing) as in the Polish original. Nevertheless, Milva’s character image created in the Japanese translation is also enriched by another feature, which is humour.

The third passage is a conversation between Jaskier and Milva in which the poet praises the archeress’s skills:

(3a): – O mnie gadasz, poeto? Czego się we mnie wpatrujesz, ledwie się odwrócę? Ptak mi na plecy *nasral?*
  – Wciąż nie możemy się nadziwić twemu łączniczemu kunsztowi (...) Na zawodach strzeleckich mało znalazłybyś konkurentów.
  – Baju, baju.
  – Czytałem (...) że najlepsze łączniczki spotkać można wśród Zerrikanek, w stepowych klanach. Niektóre podobno obcinają sobie lewe piersi, by nie wadziły im w napinaniu łuków. Biust, powiadamają, wchodzi w paradę cięciwie.
  – Musiał to jakiś poeta wydumać (...) Siada taki i wypisuje osielstwa, pióro w nocniku maczając, a głupie ludzie wierzą. Co to, cyckami się strzela, czy jak? Do gęby się cięciwę dociąga, bokiem stojąc, o, tak. Nic cięciwie nie zawadza. O tym obcinaniu to durnota, wymysł głowy próżniaczej, której wiecznie aby babskie cycki na myśli. *(CO: 66-67)*

As expected, this passage also contains archaisms, e.g. *dumać* ‘to think’, *osielstwa* ‘stupid things’; and the SOV word order, which are characteristic of Milva’s speech. There is also an additional humorous element when...

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14 The English translation of this passage is on page 75-76.
Milva uses the ungrammatical form *głupie ludzie* ‘stupid people’ instead of *głupi ludzie*, treating the masculine plural personal noun *ludzie* as non-masculine plural, such as *wiśnie* ‘cherries’, *grodzie* ‘bulkheads’, *łodzie* ‘boats’ etc. The grammatical error implies Milva’s uneducated background as well.

Moreover, there appear colloquial expressions (underlined): *gadać* ‘to talk’, *gęba* ‘gob, kisser’, *cycek* ‘tit’, *babski* ‘that of a woman’, all of which have more or less derogatory meaning; to some readers, *cycek* may even sound vulgar. There is also the bolded vulgarism *nasrać* ‘to shit’. All these expressions convey Milva’s rather simple nature (as opposed to Jaskier’s fancier one) and bluntness, maybe even crudeness. She may be perceived as rough and even a little masculine due to the use of derogatory colloquialisms and vulgarisms. This is not to say that Sapkowski’s female characters do not usually use such words – they do – but all in all, they come across as more feminine than Milva.

It is important to notice that Milva, although serious and slightly indignant, may be perceived as amusing in her speech, particularly due to the contrast with learned Jaskier, who uses more or less sophisticated expressions in this dialogue, and does not use archaisms or dialects unless he portrays or mimics somebody.

The Japanese translation of this dialogue is as follows:

(3b): 「あなたの話、詩人さん？あなたが背を向けたとき、じっと見てんの？鳥が糞でも落とした？」
「きみの弓の腕には驚いた (...) 弓術大会では敵なしだろうね」
「はい、はい。そんな話は前にも聞いた」
「最高の女射手はゼリカニア草原の種族にいると言っている史上最も傑出した弓術は敵なしだろうね」
「弓を引くときに邪魔にならなよ、左胸を切除する者もいるそうだ。聞くところによると胸は弦の邪魔になるとか」
「そんなのどっかの詩人の妄想だ (...) 椅子に座って、おまえに羽根ペンを浸してそんなたわごとを書いて、どこかのバカがそれ信じる。あなたが矢を射るのに胸を使うと思う？矢を射るときは、こんなふうに顔の横に当てて弦を口もとまで引くん可能性は低いだろう。弦を邪魔するものは何もない。片胸を

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15 However, Doroszewski’s online version of *Słownik języka polskiego PWN* (http://doroszewski.pwn.pl/haslo/cycek/) dictionary does not categorize it as a vulgarism.
Here are underlined and bolded the expressions which correspond to the ones marked in the Polish text. Among the underlined words there is one which might be perceived as derogatory, namely onna no hadaka ‘naked woman’. The remaining words are neutral in meaning; moreover, mune 胸 ‘breast, chest’ seems to be a somewhat “roundabout” expression in comparison with the Polish cycki. As a result, in Japanese translation of dialogues blunt Milva loses some of her roughness and crueness. Yet, she does use a vulgarism. What is more, the use of da だ and n da んだ (underlined), which are characteristic of otoko kotoba 男ことば ‘men language’, creates an image of a slightly more masculine Milva, which corresponds to her image in the Polish text. However, there is hardly any difference in this passage between her style and Jaskier’s.

The last passage analysed here comes from the later part of the book. Geralt and his companions: Milva, Jaskier, Regis and Cahir, have a lengthy – and learned – discussion about the numerous myths and superstitions surrounding vampires. After Regis, a vampire, explains the reasons why humans perceive vampires’ incredible regeneration skills as a horrifying aberration, Milva replies:

(4a): – Gówno z tego wszystkiego rozumiem (...) Wżdy pojmuję, że o bajkach gadacie, a bajki przecie i ja znam, chociażem głupia dziewczka z lasu. Wielce mnie dziwuje, że ty się wcale słońca nie lękasz, Regis. W bajkach słońce wampira na popiół pali. Mam li i to między bajki włożyć? (CO: 289-290)

In this short utterance there are numerous examples of features characteristic of Milva’s speech: a vulgarism (bolded) gówno ‘shit’; archaisms (underlined), e.g. wżdy ‘after all’, przecie ‘surely, indeed’, chociażem ‘although [I am]’, the SOV word order (not marked), etc.; colloquialisms (underlined): gadać ‘to talk’, and a derogatory dziewczka ‘girl’. Here Milva directly states that she is an uneducated girl who was brought up in the woods (głupia dziewczka z lasu, lit. ‘a stupid lass from the woods’), although this is not the first time she says so.

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16 The English translation of this passage is on page 76.
The example (4a) is a good summary of how Milva talks; one can say that it conveys a comprehensive character image of the archeress: a blunt, direct, uneducated young woman who is not afraid to say what is on her mind or admit that she does not understand something; someone who, due to the use of archaisms, can be easily contrasted with her interlocutors, which often results in humorous situations. This humour may not be a part of the plot itself (her way of speaking is not necessarily amusing to other characters, although the content of her utterances, e.g. her jokes, may be); it is often a rhetorical device used by the writer to entertain his readers rather than the characters in his novels.

Below is the corresponding passage in Japanese:

(4b): 「なんの話かてんでわかんないけど (...) あんたがおとぎ話のことを話してるのはわかる。森育ちのバカ女でもおとぎ話くらい知っててる。だから、あんたが太陽を恐れないのが不思議だ、レジス。おとぎ話では、吸血鬼は太陽に当たると灰になる。これもやっぱりただの作り話？」 (HS: 452)

Bolded here is the second-person pronoun anta あんた, which has been analysed in the previous passage (2b). Underlined are instances of contracted forms, characteristic of Milva’s speech in Japanese: wakannai ‘to not understand’, hanashiteru 話してる ‘to be talking’, shitteru 知ってる ‘to know'; there is also an instance of a plain copula da だ more typical for male speech (underlined). Similarly to the Polish passage, (4b) is a good summary example of Milva’s speaking style – she is presented as direct, open and slightly masculine, which describes her well as a character.

It is important to point out that there are fewer examples of marked elements in (4b) than in (4a). This, however, is consistent with the other Japanese examples analysed in this paper. From the quantitative point of view, the Japanese translation has fewer instances of what may function as role language in comparison with the number of stylistic and rhetorical devices implemented by Sapkowski to make his characters recognizable and memorable. It may be said that this weakens the character image of Milva in the Japanese text – she does not use as many vulgarisms or derogatory expressions – but it does not change it to such an extent that she is difficult to recognize among other speakers. Still, one can say that there are no unmistakeable markers of her background, as there are no functional equivalents to Polish archaisms in the Japanese text. This further
influences the comical quality that her speech may have from the perspective of the reader. Since there is not much of a contrast between her and other characters, Milva does not stand out as significantly, which does not produce as strong a humorous effect as in the Polish original. Since role language plays an important role in building character image, one might expect that the speech of a character as vivid as Milva would be substantially marked in the Japanese text. However, one can argue that it is the opposite – she seems to be more neutral. The reason behind Milva’s weaker character image may lay in the fact that the translator, Yasuko Kawano, specializes in translating English literature. Therefore, although it is not explicitly stated by the publisher, it is highly probable that the Japanese translation is based not on the Polish original, but on its English translation.

**English Milva**
Below is a brief analysis of the English passages corresponding to the ones discussed above. All examples come from *Baptism of Fire* (further abbreviated to *BF*) translated by David French.

The first passage is as follows:

(1c): ‘Tidings from the world? Have you lost your mind, dryad? Do you know what is happening in the world now, beyond the borders of your tranquil forest? A war is raging in Aedirn! Brugge, Temeria and Redania are reduced to havoc, hell, and much slaughter! Those who instigated the rebellion on Thanedd are being hunted high and low! There are spies and an’givare – informers – everywhere; it’s sometimes sufficient to let slip a single word, make a face at the wrong moment, and you’ll meet the hangman’s red-hot iron in the dungeon! And you want me to creep around spying, asking questions, gathering information? Risking my neck? And for whom? For some half-dead witcher? And who is he to me? My own flesh and blood? You’ve truly taken leave of your senses, Aglaïs.’ (*BF*)

Milva presented here does sound angry. She also uses an addressative expression towards Aglaïs (underlined), but calling her a dryad is not as derogatory as calling someone a “wild woman” (orig. *dziwożona*). Other than that there are no expressions which would help create a character image more complex than “angry” and “direct” (which is a feature stemming from the content of Milva’s utterance rather than
from any linguistic features, as it is the case in Japanese and, to some extent, in Polish).
The second passage is similar to (1c) in lacking any significant markers which would inform the reader about Milva’s background:

(2c): ‘Who’s that? (…) A comrade of yours, Witcher?’
‘Yes. His name’s Dandelion. He’s a poet.’
‘A poet, (…) That I can understand. But I don’t quite understand why he’s puking here, instead of writing rhymes in a quiet spot somewhere. But I suppose that’s none of my business.’ (BF)

The situational humour is present in this passage as well; it is also emphasized by the informal word *puke* (underlined). However, there is no contrast between this colloquial word and literary expressions, as it is the case in (2a) and (2b), because there are no such expressions. So far, Milva is a rather bland character who is difficult to recognize by speech alone. Below is the third passage:

(3c): ‘Are you talking about me, poet? What are you staring at as soon as my back’s turned? Has a bird *shat* on me?’
‘We are amazed by your archery skills. (…) You wouldn’t find much competition at an archery tournament.’
‘Yes, yes, I’ve heard it all before, and the rest.’
‘I’ve read (…) that the best archeresses can be found among the Zerrikanian steppe clans. I gather that some even cut off their left breast, so it won’t interfere when they draw the bow. Their breast, they say, gets in the way of the bowstring.’
‘Some poet must have dreamed that up (…) He sits down and writes twaddle like that, dipping his quill in a chamber pot, and foolish people believe it. Think I use my *tits* to shoot with, do you? You pull the bowstring back to your *kisser*, standing side on, like this. Nothing snags on the bowstring. All that talk of cutting off a *tit* is hogwash, thought up by some layabout with nothing but women’s bodies on the brain.’ (BF)

This passage shines more light on Milva’s character image. There appear vulgarisms (bolded) and an old-fashioned *kisser* (underlined). Slightly contrasted with Jaskier, Milva does sound more blunt, perhaps even crude. However, compared to the information included in the Polish or Japanese versions, Milva is still not a very vivid character in terms of speech, but
she is not as bland as in the previous examples. Humour is also included, although it stems more from the content of the dialogue itself rather than stylistic features.

Examples (4a) and (4b) included numerous expressions portraying Milva’s character image. In comparison, the corresponding English passage is not as rich, but still serves as a good summary of Milva’s features as presented in David French’s translation:

(4c): ‘I don’t understand **fuck** all (...) I hear you’re talking about fairy-tales, and even I know fairy-tales, though I’m a foolish **wench** from the forest. So it astonishes me that you aren’t afraid of the sun, Regis. In fairy-tales sunlight burns a vampire to ash. Should I lump it together with the other fairy-tales?’ *(BF)*

The bolded vulgurism **fuck** and underlined old-fashioned expression **wench** imply an all in all blunt, crude Milva with a not-very-strong tendency to use old expressions. It can be said that her character image in the English translation is the weakest of the three presented here. If the English translation was, indeed, the source text for the Japanese one, the relatively low number of stylized expressions is not surprising. On the contrary, it seems that Milva’s character image was strengthened in the Japanese version; however, both translations lack a crucial feature of Milva’s speech, namely archaisms.

**Conclusions**

It is not surprising that the most complex and accurate character image of Milva based on speech only is presented in the Polish original. Sapkowski implemented archaisms, vulgarisms, and colloquialisms in order to create a convincing character of a blunt, uneducated archeress raised in the woods, who directly expresses her opinions. Milva’s characteristic speech, particularly when contrasted with how other characters talk, may sound amusing to the reader, thus increasing comical quality in a given scene. The character image presented in the Japanese translation is not as strong as the Polish one, although it includes most of Milva’s features. However, her speech lacks a crucial piece of information, namely Milva’s background. The implementation of role language, although not as frequent as one might expect, does help create a convincing and quite accurate image of Milva.

It should also be noted that the English translation of the saga may be the source text for the Japanese translation. This might explain the relatively
low implementation of role language, because, among the three texts, David French’s version presents the weakest character image of Milva. This is not to say that the translator omitted role language elements on purpose or due to his insufficient competence; scarcity of yakuwarigo may also result from systemic differences between languages.

The analysis presented in this paper was limited to one book in the saga only; moreover, the Author chose passages which can be perceived as highly representative of Milva’s speech in Polish and then compared them with corresponding passages in Japanese and English. Therefore, the questions concerning character image accuracy and role language implementation in the Japanese translation of The Witcher saga still remain open, although with some preliminary answers concerning Milva. Much more extensive research can also be conducted on the character image of other characters, especially those who can be categorized as class 2, e.g. Regis, Jaskier, or Zoltan Chivay, as they seem to be of particular interest in terms of research on language stylization in dialogue and its translation.

**Abbreviations**

*CO – Chrzest Ognia*
*HS – Honō-no Senrei*
*BF – Baptism of Fire*

**References**


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AUTHOR’S PROFILE

Magdalena Kotlarczyk
Magdalena Kotlarczyk is a PhD candidate at Jagiellonian University, she graduated with MA degrees in English Studies and Japanese Studies. She teaches Japanese at the University of Silesia in Katowice. Her research interests cover such topics as modern dystopian literature, particularly in English and Japanese, and the phenomenon of hybrid genres. She enjoys a good book, especially fantasy and science fiction, and is a fan of The Witcher saga.