LEM’S PLAYFUL NEOLOGISMS AS CARRIERS OF ERUDITE ALLUSIONS AND THEIR TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH

One of the roles of a literary translator is that of an intermediary in a dialogue between the author and the target audience (Liddicoat, 2016: 347). While fulfilling this role the translator, whose primary goal is to recreate the source text in the possibly most faithful way, has to face and overcome numerous linguistic and non-linguistic obstacles and be aware of certain rules according to which the original was created. A set of such obstacles may be posed by neologisms coined by the author of a literary work. According to translation studies scholars, rendering authorial creations is problematic because they exist outside dictionaries and hence have no equivalents (Hejwowski 2009: 113; Pleciński, 2010: 147–148). As a result, translators have to invent and use various translation techniques in a creative way in order not only to skillfully communicate the original meaning to the target culture audience (cf. Hejwowski, 2009: 113; cf. Blumczyński, 2010: 82) but also to recreate the effects intended by the author (Newmark, 1988: 143). It seems that the task of translating authorial neologisms becomes even more challenging if these creations come into being through transformations other than those resulting from typical word-formation processes and constitute erudite allusions, understood broadly as “the knowledge assumed in the reader” (Hejwowski, 2012: 111; my own translation).

The presentation will discuss a specific kind of neologisms, which form literary proper names expressed through various types of play on authentic names, or more precisely “proper name allusions” (cf. Leppihalme, 1997), from which they were created. As such, the authorial inventions taken from Stanislaw Lem’s Dzienniki gwiazdowe (2008) surprise not only with their unusual structure and contextual meaning, but also with their allusive character which, depending on the analyzed neologism, is noticeable to the reader to a greater or lesser degree. The basic goal of
analyzing these neologisms and their equivalents is to determine the techniques applied by the literary translators, to explain the possible reasons for their choices, and to evaluate these solutions. Hence, the presentation will also describe the transformations through which these names came into being as well as their relations with the context and reality.

References