

**Agnieszka Muszyńska-Andrejczyk**

The Fryderyk Chopin University of Music

**TRANSLATING AN OPERATIC LIBRETTO:  
THE STATUS AND ROLE OF AN INTERPRETER.  
COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS IN THE INTERPRETATION  
AND TRANSLATION OF STAGE DIRECTIONS -  
A CASE STUDY**

Let us begin with perhaps an obvious statement that opera is a very complex genre. Only the fact of its being a union between music and text makes opera very susceptible to multiple interpretations. Ideas that emerge from a multilateral analysis, encompassing the musical, linguistic and cultural analysis, find their result in the staging of a piece. An element that plays a very important role in this process of analysis is a text of a libretto which often becomes a starting point for visualizing a situation in the drama, perceiving a net of relations and connections between characters, consequently leading to building an overall interpretation. In this article, I would like to pose some questions as to the status of an interpreter who prepares a translation of a libretto and the role of such a person in the opera production process. Taking into consideration the complexity of the opera phenomenon, a potential influence that the work of an interpreter could have on the final shape of the performance seems to be something worthy of reflection. Another question I would like to ask regards methods that can be helpful for an interpreter who makes a translation of an operatic libretto. Linguistic competences were never (and they are still not) enough to be a good interpreter. Translation, being an interdisciplinary operation, needs a certain arsenal of knowledge and resources, especially when it comes to the text intended for specific purposes. Therefore, a person who undertakes the translation of a libretto should have at least some basic information of

how opera functions, i.e. musical/ musicological knowledge. But it is not the only resource an interpreter can make use of. Today translation studies offer different perspectives and possibilities for both interpreters, theorists and translation critics. Already in 1995 Elżbieta Tabakowska, inspired by works of Ronald Langacker and George Lakoff,<sup>1</sup> wrote that cognitive linguistics could help to build bridges between linguistics, literature and translation studies.<sup>2</sup> In her works, Tabakowska, who is considered one of the best Polish specialists in the two of above-mentioned disciplines (that is, cognitive linguistics and translation studies), convincingly argues that cognitive linguistics is not only a helpful instrument in understanding the translation process, but it also provides a handy and effective method of working with the text to be translated. Following in Tabakowska's footsteps, I will refer to the key term *imagery*, present in cognitive linguistics, and its aspects, such as *prominence*, *elaboration*, and *focusing*, which I will apply to a short analysis of the stage directions from the libretto of Giacomo Puccini's one-act opera *Suor Angelica*. One might ask about the reason why this particular kind of text has been chosen. The answer is that stage directions represent an element of libretto which contains a portion of information that could be of great importance for a stage interpretation of the piece, both by the singer and the movement director. Therefore, much may depend on the manner this information is presented in translation. Moreover, the example selected for the present analysis contains probably the longest stage directions in the history of opera librettos which, in addition, are located at a key moment in action. A degree and a manner of implementing their contents in staging is where the functions of a director, dramaturge and interpreter meet.

## DIRECTOR, DRAMATURGE, INTERPRETER

Interdisciplinary knowledge can be of particular importance in the case of an interpreter who works in direct contact with other opera producers, like a director or a dramaturge. The final result on stage, whether satisfying or poor, is determined largely by their capabilities. The quality of the opera director's work depends on their competence and

---

<sup>1</sup> Ronald W. Langacker, *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar, Volume I, Theoretical Prerequisites*, Stanford, California 1987; George Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind*, Chicago 1987.

<sup>2</sup> Elżbieta Tabakowska, *Językoznawstwo kognitywne w teorii i praktyce przekładu: oleodruk i symfonia na dwa fortepiany* [in:] „Między oryginałem a przekładem”, vol. I, ed. Jadwiga Konieczna-Twardzikowa, Urszula Kropiwić, Kraków 1995, p. 32.

knowledge about different cultural contexts, as well as on their professional skills. A director who is also a musician or a singer understands far better technical difficulties concerning simultaneous singing and moving on stage, and therefore sees the impossibility or inconvenience of certain staging solutions. In Germany, many opera theatres employ dramaturges who collaborate closely with directors. The dramaturge's function can be construed in various ways: in Poland, it is said that the dramaturge is only a new name, adopted from our Western neighbours, for an old and well-known function in the Polish theatre, that of a literary or artistic director.<sup>3</sup> There are more and more opera directors who have decided to work with dramaturges since the early 2000s. One of them is Mariusz Trelński, who employs a dramaturge for almost every opera premiere he prepares.<sup>4</sup> Also, Krzysztof Warlikowski, directing operas in Poland and abroad, constantly cooperates with Miron Hakenbeck.<sup>5</sup> A dramaturge takes care of the intellectual, philosophical and intercultural meanings of the piece and helps the director, who is engaged mostly in direct work with actors or singers, to develop an overall vision and organize the text (often by shortening it or interpolating other pieces). Although I am aware that this definition is probably too simplifying (surely dramaturges would have a lot to add here), but in the case of opera a definition of this kind seems to be appro-

<sup>3</sup> About the dramaturge's functions see an interesting interview with different dramaturges working in Poland (Iga Gańczarczyk, Dorota Sajewska, Magda Stojowska, Bartosz Frąckowiak, Miron Hakenbeck, Symon Wróblewski) made by Joanna Targoń, entitled *Wirus, strażnik, negocjator, partner*, "Didaskalia - Gazeta Teatralna", No. 2, 30<sup>th</sup> June 2007, [Online] Available from: [http://www.e-teatr.pl/pl/artykuly/128524\\_druk.html](http://www.e-teatr.pl/pl/artykuly/128524_druk.html). [Accessed 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023].

<sup>4</sup> See, for instance: Zdzisław Jaskuła – Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (2002); Tomasz Cyz – Giacomo Puccini's *La Bohème* (2006); Piotr Gruszczyński – Giuseppe Verdi's *Traviata* (2010), Giacomo Puccini's *Turandot* (2010) and *Manon Lescaut* (2012), Pyotr Tschaikovsky's/ Bela Bartók's *Jolanta/ Zamek Sinobrodego* (2015), Richard Strauss's *Salome* (2016), Richard Wagner's *Tristan i Izolda* (2016), Stanisław Moniuszko's *Halka* (2020); Krystian Lada – Thomas Adès' *Powder her face* (2015); Małgorzata Sikorska-Miszczuk – Sergei Prokofiev's *Ognisty anioł* (2018); Marcin Cecko – Paul Hindemith's *Cardillac* (2021), Pyotr Tschaikovsky's *Borys Godunow* (2022), Giuseppe Verdi's *Moc przeznaczenia* (2023), Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes* (2023). All these premieres took place in the Grand Theatre-National Opera in Warsaw.

<sup>5</sup> See: Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* (2006, the Grand Theatre-National Opera, Warsaw), Luigi Cherubini's *Médée* (2011, La Monnaie, Brussels), Claude Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* (2017, Ruhrtriennale, Bochum). From 2008 to 2018, Miron Hakenbeck was a dramaturge in the *Bayerische Staatsoper Munich*, where he also worked with Krzysztof Warlikowski, preparing Pyotr Tschaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, Richard Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and *Salomé* and Richard Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*.

priate because of the limited possibility of making structural changes which are definitely more feasible in the spoken theatre. In opera, the content is created by both word and music. Changes in the libretto's structure have a very strong impact on the musical form and it is often impossible to introduce them, as such modifications discontinue the musical logic of the piece. Defining the function of a dramaturge in the opera theatre, Miron Hakenbeck writes:

Many directors working in opera have no knowledge of music, although they have a good hearing and a sense of rhythm, which is crucial. Opera needs dramaturges who are musicologists by profession and can analyze the score and the form. Opera has a very hard structure (...). We can shorten the scene, but we cannot change the structure of the piece, as it carries meaning (...). I think that the most important thing is to get to know the score, just like a director in the theatre must get to know the text (...). In opera, the content is created not only by words but also by music. I listen to earlier recordings, I pay attention to the dramatic gestures in music, and I read the score, analyzing the structure, themes, motifs, the entire arsenal of musical forms.<sup>6</sup>

It may happen that a dramaturge and an interpreter who translated the libretto is one and the same person. A good example is the late Zdzisław Jaskuła, who assumed this double function in several opera productions.<sup>7</sup> The linguistic side of the text and its translation become a starting point for a multiaspect, interdisciplinary reflection. Moreover, a well-prepared, critical edition of a libretto that accompanies its translation can be very useful for the director in creating an overall vision of the opera.<sup>8</sup>

To point out further possible interdisciplinary aspects of working on the opera's linguistic side, I would like to refer to my personal experiences in that matter, making some remarks about the *modus operandi* I usually employ. The first stage of work is usually a philological translation, which is a type of translation with maximum equivalence, so that the director or singers can analyze individual meanings that result from the combination of music and word. Thereon depends the adequate vocal and acting interpretation, in particular in the recitatives in which words basically dominate over music, while in the arias the meaning of individual words is sometimes pushed to the background. The second stage is working with singers on lyric diction. If there is no vocal coach who could undertake the

---

<sup>6</sup> Joanna Targoń, *Wirus, strażnik...*, op.cit.

<sup>7</sup> See, for instance: Umberto Giordano's *Andrea Cheniér*, Teatr Wielki, Poznań, 2004.

<sup>8</sup> For many years I have prepared several editions and translations of that kind. The most recent is Giacomo Puccini's *Suor Angelica* and *Gianni Schicchi*. These operas were presented in the Grand Theatre-National Opera in April 2022 and in November 2023 (conducted by Rafał Janiak, directed by Ewa Rucińska).

task, an interpreter as a language consultant might be of service, although this particular activity lies beyond the scope of a standard interpreter's competence. The third stage is preparing the text for surtitles, sometimes also from the technical side. If such a situation occurs, an interpreter should be aware of the general principles of audiovisual translation, in which due to the viewer's limited perception it is necessary to condense the source text and eliminate redundant elements.<sup>9</sup> The final stage is a literary translation destined, for instance, for publication in a program book, which, depending on the interpreter's decision, might be of a poetic or philological nature.<sup>10</sup> In conclusion, it should also be said that musical or musicological competence is very useful (or in some cases maybe even indispensable) in making various types of libretto translation. The ability of reading the score is essential when translating surtitles, especially when they are to be constructed from the audiovisual point of view. Also, the knowledge of the history of music (especially opera music) broadens the perspective and allows to read clichés and cultural contexts. In such a case, an interpreter's work becomes somewhat similar to the tasks of the dramaturge.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, when translating an opera libretto, it is worth, and sometimes even necessary, taking a path reserved for another discipline.

### LIBRETTO'S TEXT, STAGE DIRECTIONS, AND COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS (*IMAGERY AND ITS ASPECTS*)

As mentioned before, the opera theatre, which is a complex scenic reality, requires translating solutions that should help the director or singer to understand the author's original intention and to create their own interpretative vision. Stage directions are one of these libretto elements that could be very helpful in accomplishing this task. They are not merely notes

<sup>9</sup> Teresa Tomaszekiewicz, *Przekład audiowizualny*, Warszawa 2008, p. 112-116.

<sup>10</sup> A program book is often the only source of such translations for someone who wants to use them either for analytic or practical purposes. In this place, it is worth adding that the custom of publishing full translations in opera programs is a matter of the last twenty/ twenty five years. The Grand Theatre-National Opera has been doing it more or less since 1999. Previously, a similar practice was incidental.

<sup>11</sup> In the above-mentioned interview by Joanna Targoń, *Wirus, strażnik, negocjator*, there is a description of the dramaturge's functions, which seems to be close to my idea of the interpreter's role in the opera theatre: "Dramaturges have various functions. For instance, Janusz Margański, who has not had much to do with the theatre so far, is a translator, writer, literary theorist, providing a purely intellectual background", op.cit.

in the text of a play, telling actors when to come up on or leave the stage, or what actions to perform, as the dictionary definition says, or at least they do not have to be limited to such simple messages. Sometimes stage directions describe an onstage situation referring in great detail to the appearance and movement of individual characters, relationship between them, emotions, light and sounds on stage, etc. The example selected for the present analysis represents an exceptional level of detail, and what is more, contains probably the longest stage directions in the history of opera librettos. Moreover, they are located at the turning point of the action where the heroine's personal tragedy begins. My aim here is to examine some of the features of this text fragment from the point of view of cognitive linguistics, using basic terms related to this discipline. In my opinion, cognitive optics can be useful for an interpreter, giving them a valuable tool for analyzing the source text, which should have a satisfying effect in the target text. It is a thought that was expressed already in the early 1990s by Elżbieta Tabakowska, a thought which has become an inspiration for the present article. Tabakowska writes:

Cognitive linguistics, poetics and translation studies (...) use the same key metaphor, that is, the concept of "image" (...). According to Langacker, "imagery" is an ability to construct the presented situation in various ways by using linguistic means and various images for the purpose of thinking and expressing thoughts. Every language user has this ability, and the process of "constructing," which is both the basis for theoretical assumptions of the cognitive model and the justification for its practical application, finds clear parallels in the subsequent stages of creating a painting by an artist.<sup>12</sup>

What kind of picture did the librettist want to paint with his words? Before passing to the above-mentioned stage directions and their short analysis I would like to say a few words about Puccini's one-act opera in order to provide information that is useful for a better understanding of the context.

### GIACOMO PUCCINI'S *SUOR ANGELICA*: PLOT, STRUCTURE, AND STAGE DIRECTIONS

*Suor Angelica*, the second part of *The Triptych*, was written by Puccini between 1916 and 1917. The action takes place in a convent at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Angelica is a young woman who was sent there by her rich aristocratic family after giving birth to an illegitimate child. She

---

<sup>12</sup> Elżbieta Tabakowska, *Językoznawstwo kognitywne...*, op.cit., p. 32. On the term *imagery* see also: Ronald Langacker, *Gramatyka kognitywna. Wprowadzenie*, Kraków 2009, p. 85-130.

waits for seven long years for a visit from her family. When Angelica's aunt, the Princess (*La Zia Principessa*), finally comes, it is only to inform that Angelica's sister is getting married and that she has to sign documents regarding the division of the family property. When Angelica, full of anxiety, asks about her child, the Princess replies coldly that he was ill and died two years ago. After hearing the terrible news, Angelica decides to commit suicide drinking a poisonous flower extract she has prepared herself. However, after drinking the poison, she realizes that she has committed a deadly sin and she begs the Mother of God to save her soul. Dying, Angelica sees a miracle: the Madonna holding the hand of her son.

The librettist, Giovacchino Forzano, divided the text into seven pictures.<sup>13</sup> Angelica's conversation with the Princess is in the fifth one (*La Zia Principessa*), which is the centre of the opera and also represents the action's turning point. It is a dramatic moment in which two women of different personalities meet. A very extensive description in the stage directions, quoted below, describes a long pantomime-like scene:

The Abbess moves away towards left of stage and disappears. Sister Angelica walks towards the reception arcade and anxiously looks in the direction of the little door. A noise of keys. The door is opened outwardly by the sister portress who remains standing alongside the door in the shadow of the room. Then appears the Abbess who stops next to the sister portress. The two sisters stand one on each side of the door, and, between the two white figures, bending in a deferential attitude, passes a dark figure severely composed in a deportment of aristocratic dignity. Enter the Princess, who walks rather slowly, leaning on a thin ebony stick. She stops and throws a glance at her niece, coldly and without a trace of emotion. Sister Angelica, at sight of her aunt, is very much moved, but controls herself because the figures of the Abbess and the sister port-

La Badessa si avvia e scompare a sinistra. Suor Angelica si avvia verso gli archi del parlatorio. Guarda ansiosamente verso la porticina. Si ode un rumore di chiavi. La porta viene aperta in dentro dalla Suora clavaria che rimarrà a fianco della porta aperta, nella penombra della stanza. Quindi si vedrà la Badessa che si sofferma davanti alla Suora clavaria. Le due Suore fanno ala e fra le due figure bianche che si curvano lievemente in atto di ossequio, passa una figura nera severamente composta in un naturale atteggiamento di grande dignità aristocratica: la Zia Principessa. Entra. Cammina lentamente appoggiandosi a un bastoncino d'ebano. Si sofferma: getta per un attimo lo sguardo sulla nipote, freddamente e senza tradire nessuna emozione; Suor Angelica invece alla vista della zia è presa da grande emozione, ma si frena, perché le figure della Clavaria e

<sup>13</sup> The Prayer (*La Preghiera*), The Penance (*Le Punizioni*), The Recreation (*La Ricreazione*), The Return from the Quest (*Il Ritorno dalla Cerca*), The Princess (*La Zia Principessa*), The Grace (*Grazia*) and The Miracle (*Il Miracolo*).

ress are seen at the door. The little door is closed again. Sister Angelica, full of emotion, and almost staggering, moves toward her aunt, but the old lady merely stretches out her left hand as if to indicate that she will only consent to Sister Angelica kissing it. Sister Angelica seizes the outstretched hand, raises it to her lips, and while the Princess sits down, she falls upon her knees, unable to utter a single word. A moment of silence. Sister Angelica, with tears streaming down her cheeks, imploringly keeps her eyes upon her aunt's face. But the old lady ostentatiously stares straight ahead.<sup>14</sup>

della Badessa si profilano ancora nell'ombra. La porticina si richiude sulle due suore. Suor Angelica, commossa, quasi vacillante va incontro alla zia, ma la vecchia protende la sinistra come per consentire soltanto all'atto sottomesso del baciamento. Suor Angelica prende la mano che le viene tesa, la porta alle labbra e, mentre la zia siede, ella cade in ginocchio, senza poter parlare. Un attimo di silenzio. Suor Angelica, con gli occhi pieni di lacrime, non ha mai tolto lo sguardo dal volto della zia, uno sguardo pietoso, implorante. La vecchia invece ostentatamente guarda avanti a sé<sup>15</sup>.

These stage directions, a picture painted by the librettist, represent a fragment of reality which cognitive theory simply calls the "scene". There is also a certain "setting" (the convent's reception room) and the "participants" (Angelica and other nuns). The "level of specificity" in describing the Princess's appearance and behaviour is high, which might indicate the importance of this character in the entire scene. Among other "participants" she seems to be the most prominent one. That is why, a short analysis, presented below, focuses on the expressions regarding her presence on stage.

### PROMINENCE (COGNITIVE SALIENCE): TRAJECTOR/ LANDMARK<sup>16</sup>

The phrase: "The door is open inwardly by the sister portress" ("La porta viene aperta in dentro dalla Suora Clavaria") is the first signal that announces the Princess's arrival on stage. The word "door" appears first, so attention is drawn not to the person that opens it (the sister portress), but to the object that is an important point of the scene. In this way, the word "door" becomes a primary focus of the relation, a *trajector*. The secondary focus is "the sister portress," a *landmark*. Naturally, the librettist might have presented this situation in a different manner (for instance, "the sister portress opens the door inwardly"), but then the attention would be drawn to a person and not to

<sup>14</sup> English version after: *Suor Angelica (Sister Angelica). Opera in One Act. Music by G. Puccini. Italian Libretto by Gioacchino Forzano. English version by Edoardo Petri, New York 1918.*

<sup>15</sup> Original Italian version after: Giacomo Puccini, *Il Trittico. Il tabarro, Suor Angelica, Gianni Schicchi. Libretti*, ed. Edoardo Rescigno, Milano 2004, p.82.

<sup>16</sup> Ronald Langacker, *Gramatyka kognitywna*, op.cit., p. 105-108.



a point on the stage where the protagonist, the Princess, will soon appear. In the same phrase, there is yet another important expression: “inwardly” (“in dentro”). If we adopt the view from the auditorium/ the public as a vantage point, the expression “inwardly” focuses our attention on the reception room, which in the same phrase is described as being “in the shadow” (“penombra”). The reception room is the *trajector*, whereas the rest of the stage is the *landmark*. To conclude, the way in which the librettist describes the scene, makes that particular point on the stage (“the door”) more prominent, and in some way, also makes a person who should appear at the door, the Princess, more prominent.

### ELABORATION (SPECIFICITY): GRANULARITY/ RESOLUTION<sup>17</sup>

A few phrases later the stage directions describe the Princess’s appearance: “a dark figure severely composed in a deportment of aristocratic dignity. Enter the Princess” (“una figura nera, severamente composta in un naturale atteggiamento di grande dignità aristocratica: la Zia Principessa”). One of the dimensions of *imagery* is the level of precision and detail in describing the situation, which is called *elaboration* or *specificity*. In the expression that is quoted above, the level of precision in the Princess’s description gradually grows: first, we see a dark figure; secondly, we get to know that she is severely composed; thirdly, that the figure possesses a natural dignity of a noble person. Finally, we find out who that person is: the Princess. With every part of the phrase the resolution grows and the granularity becomes finer. Again, the librettist might have written: “Enters the Princess, a dark figure, etc.” However, it seems that he has chosen deliberately the description model, or in other words, the type of *imagery* that gives the effect of emerging or looming. The Princess does not appear suddenly: she is progressively introduced on the stage. By this kind of linguistic means the librettist created a picture full of dramatic tension and a ready stage solution for the director.

### FOCUSING: FOREGROUND/ BACKGROUND<sup>18</sup>

Unto this point the number of information about the Princess is limited to the statements that (i) she is probably dressed in black, (ii) she is

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem, p. 85-88.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem, p. 88-90.

a severe person, (iii) she is an aristocrat. Next, the librettist makes a further presentation of this character: "She walks slowly leaning on a thin ebony stick" ("Cammina lentamente appoggiandosi ad un bastoncino d'ebano"). This phrase contains a conceptual content which is specifically chosen to focus our attention on the particular feature of a person being described. The expressions "she walks slowly" and "leaning on a stick" recall the knowledge from the background, that is, some previous cognitive experiences which allow us to imagine the Princess as an old person who walks slowly and needs a stick to lean on (as old people often do). In the background, there is a categorizing structure which constitutes the basis for the cognitive judgement, while the target of categorization (the Princess) is situated in the foreground of consciousness as an object that is being observed and evaluated by the cognitive judgement.

## CONCLUSIONS

The usefulness of the mechanisms elaborated by cognitive linguistics for analytic purposes has already been proven in numerous works, especially those by Elżbieta Tabakowska,<sup>19</sup> but also by other authors, such as Olga and Wojciech Kubiński,<sup>20</sup> Bożena Tokarz,<sup>21</sup> or Dorota Korwin-Piotrowska,<sup>22</sup> strongly inspired by Tabakowska's linguistic and translation studies. As has already been said, cognitive linguistics offers some helpful instruments in understanding the translation process and is an effective method of working with the text. In my opinion, it may also be very useful in the translation of a libretto's text, giving an interpreter an in-depth insight into different dimensions of the stage reality, painted with words by a librettist, which could subsequently be used for more fruitful work with the director or singer.

It is worth adding here that the libretto of *Suor Angelica* is not an adaptation, as it often happens, of any novel or drama, but an original text. Forzano, the librettist, worked hand in hand with Puccini, the composer, creating an overall vision to achieve a harmonious integration of the musical, linguistic, theatrical and psychological elements of the drama, an

---

<sup>19</sup> See, for instance: Elżbieta Tabakowska, *Myśl językoznawcza z myślą o przekładzie. Wybór prac*, ed. Piotr de Bończa Bukowski, Magda Heydel, Kraków 2015.

<sup>20</sup> Editors of the series *Przekładając nieprzekładalne*, Gdańsk (10 volumes published between 2000 and 2021).

<sup>21</sup> See, for instance: *Kognitywne możliwości przekładu artystycznego*, [in:] *Przekład artystyczny a współczesne teorie translologiczne*, ed. Piotr Fast, Katowice 1998, p. 73-81.

<sup>22</sup> *Powiedzieć świat. Kognitywna analiza tekstów literackich na przykładach*, Kraków 2006.

integration that should be discovered and rethought by the director, dramaturge, singer, and also the interpreter. Bartosz Frąckowiak once wrote: "The theatrical message is becoming more and more transdisciplinary and transmedial. One must find the principle of translation and the way to wisely connect different layers that often appear alien to each other."<sup>23</sup> By the term "translation" Frąckowiak understands the essence of the dramaturge's work in theatre, for instance, the "translation" of an interpretative theory into the stage context. These words might as well be used to describe the interpreter's function as an intercultural mediator,<sup>24</sup> especially if we take into consideration a complex nature of this special genre, which is opera.

## REFERENCES

- Korwin-Piotrowska Dorota, *Powiedzieć świat. Kognitywna analiza tekstów literackich na przykładach*, Kraków 2006.
- Lakoff George, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind*, Chicago 1987.
- Langacker Ronald, *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar, Volume I, Theoretical Prerequisites*, Stanford, California 1987.
- Langacker Ronald, *Gramatyka kognitywna. Wprowadzenie*, Kraków 2009.
- Puccini Giacomo, *Il Trittico. Il tabarro, Suor Angelica, Gianni Schicchi. Libretti*, ed. Eduardo Rescigno, Milano 2004.
- Suor Angelica (Sister Angelica). Opera in One act. Music by G. Puccini. Italian libretto by Giovacchino Forzano. English version by Edoardo Petri*, New York 1918.
- Tabakowska Elżbieta, *Językoznawstwo kognitywne w teorii i praktyce przekładu: oleodruk i symfonia na dwa fortepiany* [in:] „Między oryginałem a przekładem”, t. I, ed. J. Koniczna-Twardzikowa, U. Kropiwić, Kraków 1995, p. 31-42.
- Tabakowska Elżbieta, *Mysł językoznawcza z myślą o przekładzie. Wybór prac*, ed. P. de Bończa Bukowski, M. Heydel, Kraków 2015.
- Targoń Joanna, *Wirus, strażnik, negocjator, partner*, „Didaskalia - Gazeta Teatralna”, nr 2, 30. 06. 2007, [Online] Available from: [http://www.e-teatr.pl/pl/artykuly/128524\\_druk.html](http://www.e-teatr.pl/pl/artykuly/128524_druk.html). [Accessed: 13th November 2023].
- Tokarz Bożena, *Kognitywne możliwości przekładu artystycznego*, [in:] *Przekład artystyczny a współczesne teorie translologiczne*, ed. P. Fast, Katowice 1998, p. 73-81.
- Tokarz Bożena, *Przekład w dialogu międzykulturowym* [in:] *Dialog czy nieporozumienie*, eds. Piotr Fast, Przemysław Janikowski, Katowice 2006, p. 7-19.
- Tomaszkiewicz Teresa, *Przekład audiowizualny*, Warszawa 2008

<sup>23</sup> Joanna Targoń, op.cit.

<sup>24</sup> Bożena Tokarz, *Przekład w dialogu międzykulturowym* [in:] *Dialog czy nieporozumienie*, eds. Piotr Fast, Przemysław Janikowski, Katowice 2006, p. 7-19.

**Translating an Operatic Libretto: The Status and Role of an Interpreter.  
Cognitive Linguistics in the Interpretation and Translation  
of Stage Directions – a Case Study**

Abstract

The paper addresses the question of the translation of an operatic libretto and examines the status and role of a libretto's interpreter in the creative process of opera production. The author also mentions the role of a dramaturge in the opera theatre and indicates certain similarities between the functions of the dramaturge and that of the interpreter. The paper refers to cognitive linguistics as a useful method in the examination of a translated text. The author, inspired by works of the Polish linguist and interpreter Elżbieta Tabakowska, draws on the key term present in cognitive linguistics (imagery) and its aspects, such as prominence (trajector/ landmark), elaboration (granularity/ resolution), and focusing (foreground/ background), applying them to a short analysis of the stage directions from the libretto of Giacomo Puccini's one-act opera *Suor Angelica*.

**Keywords:** libretto, stage directions, translation, cognitive linguistics, imagery

**Przekład libretta operowego: status i rola tłumacza.  
Kognitywna myśl językoznawcza w interpretacji i przekładzie  
didaskaliów – studium przypadku**

Streszczenie

Artykuł dotyczy przekładu libretta operowego oraz omawia status i rolę tłumacza libretta w procesie tworzenia całościowej wizji przedstawienia operowego. Autorka wspomina także o roli, jaką w teatrze operowym pełni dramaturg oraz wskazuje na pewne zbieżności zachodzące między funkcją dramaturga i tłumacza. W artykule pojawia się odniesienie do językoznawstwa kognitywnego jako metody użytecznej w badaniu tekstu przeznaczonego do przekładu. Autorka, zainspirowana pracami polskiej językoznawczynie i tłumaczki Elżbiety Tabakowskiej, odwołała się do kluczowego dla kognitywnej myśli językoznawczej terminu „obrazowanie” (*imagery*) oraz jego aspektów takich jak: wyróżnienie (trajektor/ landmark), uszczegółowienie (ziarnistość/ rozdzielczość) oraz ogniskowanie (plan pierwszy/ tło), biorąc za obiekt krótkiej analizy didaskalia z jednoaktowej opery *Suor Angelica* Giacoma Pucciniego.

**Słowa kluczowe:** libretto, didaskalia, przekład, językoznawstwo kognitywne, obrazowanie