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Tańcowała igła z nitką [*The Needle Danced with the Thread*] and *Kaczka Dziwaczka* [*Dotty Duck*] in the Past and the Present.
On the Process of These Works Permeating the Polish Culture and Language

*Utwory dla dzieci Jana Brzechwy z tomów „Tańcowała igła z nitką” i „Kaczka Dziwaczka” dawniej i współcześnie.
O procesie wrastania utworów w polską kulturę i język*

Abstract: The article tackles Jan Brzechwa's first works addressed to children. The author presents the moment the collections *Tańcowała igła z nitką* and *Kaczka Dziwaczka* were created. The primary aim of the article is to show how Brzechwa's first works of children's literature collected in the above-mentioned books were received by educators and literary critics. Another objective of the study is to depict how these books became a part of the national literary culture, using selected examples. The author achieved this goal by examining selected poems and showing how they gained popularity through reeditions issued by popular publishing houses, publication in anthologies of children's literature, audiobooks read by popular actors, songs, on the Internet. The final aim of the article is to show to what extent quotes from Brzechwa's selected works permeated the Polish language and became an essential part of the linguistic experience of contemporary Poles.

Keywords: children's literature; history of children's literature; preschool children; literature as an element of culture; literature as an element of linguistic heritage

Abstrakt: W artykule przybliżono pierwsze utwory adresowane do dzieci autorstwa Jana Brzechwy. Autorka pokazuje moment powstania zbiorów *Tańcowała igła z nitką* i *Kaczka Dziwaczka*. Pierwszym celem opracowania jest pokazanie, jak pierwsze utwory dla dzieci zebrane w zbiorach *Tańcowała igła z nitką* i *Kaczka Dziwaczka* zostały przyjęte przez środowisko pedagogów i krytyków literatury. Kolejnym celem jest opisanie na wybranych

przykładach procesu stawania się tych utworów elementami rodzimej kultury literackiej. Autorka osiągnęła ten cel podążając śladami wybranych utworów i pokazując proces ich popularyzowania: w formie kolejnych wznowień w popularnych wydawnictwach, wybranych publikacji w antologiach literatury dla dzieci, publikacji w formie audiobooków czytanych przez popularnych aktorów, w formie piosenek, w przestrzeni Internetu. Ostatnim celem jaki został podjęty w opracowaniu, jest próba pokazania, na ile sformułowania pochodzące z wybranych utworów wrosły w język polski i stały się ważną częścią doświadczenia językowego współczesnych Polaków.

Słowa kluczowe: literatura dla dzieci; historia literatury dla dzieci; dzieci przedszkolne; literatura jako element kultury; literatura jako element dziedzictwa językowego

INTRODUCTION

Jan Brzechwa, beside Julian Tuwim, is recognized as the founder of a modern school of poetry for children. From the moment the first works of these authors addressed to the youngest appeared on the publishing market, their linguistic innovation was noticed and placed in opposition to a trend based on folklore and poetic stylization with a singing and lyrical character prevailing in the 1930s. The advantages of the works of both authors include: the facility for using words, a joke, playing with language, meanings and associations. Jan Brzechwa's path to literature for children was neither planned, easy, nor obvious. He was raised in a home where he had access to the rich literature gathered in his father's library. Contact with classical and modern literature awakened his poetic imagination and directed him towards his own literary work. However, his dream was not to write for children, he wanted his talent and fame to equal his older cousin's – Jan Leśmian, who was popular at the time. He made his debut as a lyrical poet in the magazine "Kłosy Ukraińskie" ["Ukrainian Ears"] in 1915. Hoping for approval, he showed the pieces to his cousin, but heard that "they are worth nothing". "I will show you something interesting", said Leśmian – a volume of a completely unknown poet entitled *Czyhanie na Boga* [*Lurking for God*]. "After reading it, I destroyed my works and started from the beginning" (Nastulanka 1984, pp. 114–115). However, he did not stop trying to create for mature audiences, with passion and success he created light pieces commissioned by Warsaw cabarets. Jan Brzechwa became a poet for children by accident. The rainy summer inspired him to fill his free time with writing light in form and content, humorous pieces. At the time, it seemed to him that they were addressed to adults. Years later, he recalled in an interview with Krystyna Nastulanka, "(...) I was surprised because Mortkowiczowa offered me to publish them as children's books – *Tańcowała igła z nitką* [*The Needle Danced with the Thread*]. I was even more surprised when Leśmian told me that only just those of my poems are quite good and original" (*ibid.*, p. 115). Thus, began the process of Brzechwa becoming a writer who wrote with various audiences in mind, including the youngest. Later in this article, I will focus my attention on the first two volumes of pieces for children (published before the war): *Tańcowała igła z nitką* and

Kaczka Dziwaczka [*Dotty Duck*]. My aim is: firstly, to present how the works included in these volumes were received by educators and writers immediately after their publication. To illustrate this, I will cite selected reviews that appeared in the Polish press. Then, on selected examples, I will try to show how the first works have reached and continue to reach the next generations of recipients to this day, becoming important elements of the culture and language of contemporary Poles. In the final part of the study, I will pay attention to sayings, phrases and sentences that come from selected works from the first two volumes of Jan Brzechwa's poetry addressed to children. On selected examples taken, among others, from websites, I will show their functioning in today's everyday Polish language. I would like to point out that the first pre-war pieces for children are an inspiration for contemporary Poles.

TAŃCOWAŁA IGŁA Z NITKĄ, KACZKA DZIWACZKA AND THEIR RECEPTION IN THE ENVIRONMENT OF EDUCATORS AND WRITERS

Jakub and Zofia Mortkowicz, famous booksellers and publishers of the interwar period, took care of the high literary quality of works addressed to both mature and younger readers. Their publications for children were guided by the slogan: "we will give children what we have the best" (Mlekicka 1974, p. 133). Brzechwa's poems written to fill the holiday time during bad weather were noticed by Zofia Mortkowiczowa. She decided to publish them in the family publishing house. However, the works waited almost two years to be published in the form of the first booklet, because Mortkowiczowa asked several artists to make illustrations that would reflect their content well. Finally, she opted for drawings by Franciszka Themerson. The volume titled *Tańcowała igła z nitką* appeared before the 1937 Christmas. It was an edition postdated for 1938 and contained twenty-one works starting with: *Nie pieprz Piotrze* [*Peter, Don't Pepper*]. In addition to the title piece, it also included: *Stonoga* [*Centipede*], *Katar* [*Catherine Caught a Cold*], *Indyk* [*Turkey*], *Żuraw i czapla* [*The Crane and the Heron*], *Śledź* [*Herring*], *Globus* [*Globe*], *Żuk* [*Beetle*], *Kłótnia rzek* [*Rivers' Dispute*], *Rak* [*Crayfish*], *Żółwie i krokodyle* [*Tortoises and Crocodiles*], *Pomidor* [*Tomato*], *Na straganie* [*At the Vegetable Stall*], *Krasnoludki* [*The Dwarfs*], *Jeż* [*Hedgehog*], *Tydzień* [*Mr Week*], *W Zoo* [*At the Zoo*], *Rzepa i miód* [*Turnip and Honey*], *Sum* [*Catfish*], and *Sroka* [*Magpie*]. Half a year earlier, before the aforementioned volume reached the public, Brzechwa published one of his works – *Sum* in the May magazine for the youngest – "Płomyczek" ["Little Flame"] (No. 36/1937, pp. 241–242). This moment is recalled by Elżbieta Burakowska:

It was 1937. Timidly, small poems began to appear on the last pages of "Płomyczek", completely different from what had been written for children so far. The distinguishing factors were of two kinds. First, the denial of the so-called common sense, a certain element of absurdity that

goes beyond the convention of fairy-tale fantasy, and secondly, the role of a verbal joke at the forefront. (Burakowska 1971, p. 71)

Shortly after the publication of *Sum* in the children's magazine, Brzechwa published a volume that paved him the way to the world of the youngest. The then popular writer, author of novels for children and young people, journalist, literary critic, educator – Janina Broniewska in “Wiadomości Literackie” [“Literary News”] was extremely positive about this collection. She wrote:

The cover itself is an announcement that strange and unexpected things will happen in this book. An ostrich on spring legs, a cute lady with a bun, a whiskered catfish and a tortoise playing the trumpet (...). The cover is by no means exaggerated advertising. Well, it's even more fun inside. And it would seem that a child's sense of humour is so different from that of an adult gentleman who invented all these stories: about a needle and a thread, a centipede, a cold, a turkey, etc. (Broniewska 1938, p. 4)

Before Brzechwa published his second volume of poetry for children, entitled *Kaczka Dziwaczka*, also illustrated by Franciszka Themerson (postdated edition – 1939 published by the publishing house of Mortkowicz), its announcement appeared in “Płomyczek” – the piece *Żaba* [Frog] (“Płomyczek”, No. 8/1938). The second volume contained fourteen poems: the title *Kaczka Dziwaczka*, also the aforementioned *Żaba*, and: *Kokoszka smakoszka*, *Konik polny i bożakrówka* [Grasshopper and Ladybug], *Dwie krawcowe* [Two Tailoresses], *Koziółeczek* [Goat], *Sójka* [Jay Bird], *Stryjek* [Uncle], *Mops* [Pug], *Dwie gaduły* [Two Chatterboxes], *Znaki przestankowe* [Punctuation Marks], *Pytalski*, *Chrzan* [Horseradish] as well as *Wrona i ser* [The Crow and the Cheese]. Janina Broniewska in another review published in “Wiadomości Literackie” (No. 13/1939) recommended a collection with genuine delight. She emphasized the inventiveness and linguistic creativity of the artist in the following way:

In Brzechwa's book there are very funny animals, not only funny, but also audacious. The duck mocks a very human hypochondriac, a grasshopper and an ant, they are quite a couple of megalomaniacs, and the whole thing is clearly “an easier life”. Because doesn't healthy laughter make life easier? I think this kind of humour is very convincing to children. Funny poems are accompanied by great as usual drawings by Franciszka Themerson. (Broniewska 1939, p. 4)

Zofia Klingerowa emphasized that the poems contained in the volume are “(...) witty, striking with the succinctness of certain unexpected and funny situations. The book is very successful as an entertainment for the reader or a small listener, stimulating thinking with a skilful play on words” (Klengerowa 1938, p. 229). A year later, the Mortkowicz Publishing House published the second edition of the collection of poems titled *Tańcowała igła z nitką* (Mortkowicz-Olczakowa 1962, p. 437). Referring to it, Bar-

bara Stefania Kossuthówna in the magazine “Wychowanie Przedszkolne” [“Pre-School Education”] noticed that the very external appearance of the book is encouraging for children. Nevertheless, Kossuthówna’s opinion was not only flattering. There is a clear critical element in it. The reviewer shared the following doubt with the readers of the magazine: “Will this book with a cheerful title and nice appearance fulfil our hopes and will it be useful for children?” (Kossuthówna 1938, p. 131). She noted: “Although the heroes of the works are living creatures: animals and plants, the range of topics exceeds the area of interests of children from kindergarten” (*ibid.*). She was critical of individual pieces. In her opinion, the piece *Globus* is overloaded with geographical terms, and “(...) beetle and ladybug’s or heron and crane’s matrimonial matters – do not seem particularly interesting to children. It is an unpleasant idea to make an elegant lady out of a centipede: a centipede living in damp, messy houses is a form of disorder and is by no means a desirable guest” (*ibid.*). According to the reviewer, Brzechwa uses too difficult language and introduces sarcasm and irony that are incomprehensible to children. She reacted positively to only three works: the poem about a hedgehog, the works: *Pomidor* and *Rzepa i miód*, seeing in them the potential corresponding to the literary needs of a preschool child. On the other hand, Irena Skowronkówna, referring to both volumes of poems, expressed her doubts as to whether all the works contained in them should be dedicated to the youngest. While assessing them, she noticed that “(...) his poems are great entertainment for adults, but they usually do not take into account the child’s psyche, and above all, their way of thinking. They require the child to think abstractly, which they are not yet capable of” (Skowronkówna 1946, p. 31). This critic’s reflection is entirely correct, taking into account the fact that Brzechwa did not write poems designed for children. The fact that the reviewer noticed that the child may have difficulty understanding difficult, unfamiliar words contained in the poems of a verbal joke is a justified fear in this perspective. Skowronkówna also questioned the subject matter of the poems: “Let us add that a large part of Brzechwa’s works and themes are not adapted to the child’s interests (frequent matrimonial motives)” (*ibid.*). Also, according to Klingerowa, contact with the verses may be “(...) an experience inadequate to young age” for a child. The reviewer shared the following opinion with the readers of the “Rocznik Literacki” [“Literary Yearbook”]: “playfulness in some poems is well suited to the level of the reader – a student struggling with spelling and calculating and acquiring the first elements of »science about things«, at other times it becomes a bit macabre in the style of a Russian grotesque (poem about turkey), or it becomes a verbal-conceptual play beyond the reader’s age” (Klingerowa 1937, p. 233). In her opinion, the subject matter of the poems is not always “fortunate”. Probably, similarly to Skowronkówna, she meant “matrimonial topics” or those “evoking ambiguous associations”. Stefania Podhorska-Okołów expressed a completely different opinion. She noticed that Jan Brzechwa has a great sense of humour in personifying inanimate objects, animals and even the days of the week. “At the same time, he has a truly poetic invention that allows him to construct a visual image by playing on words” (Podhorska-Okołów 1938, p. 11).

Quoting the first lines of the title poem from her debut volume, *Tańcowała igła z nitką*, she searched for similarities between Brzechwa's work and the writings for children by the distinguished Maria Konopnicka. She noted: "Doesn't it resemble the best poems for children by Konopnicka" (*ibid.*). Thus, Podhorska-Okołów, stood on the poet's side and exposed the value of his works in opposition to numerous criticisms that were an expression of misunderstanding of the linguistic joke contained in them, distance to the world, etc. Years later, these poems causing the greatest controversy will be considered "refreshing traditional poetic conventions" (Skrobiszewska 1971, p. 49). During World War II, the verses from the first two volumes were copied by hand, passed on orally, and learned by heart. In Wanda Chotomska's memoirs, a picture of secret meetings during which she learned a few poems of Jan Brzechwa performed by her teacher Janina Słonimska – sister-in-law of Antoni Słonimski – can be found. "I've heard Brzechwa's *Kaczka Dziwaczka* for the first time from her", recalls Chotomska. "Mrs. Słonimska recited a poem excellently" (Gawryluk 2016, p. 29). In the 1960s, Chotomska, among others, assessed the collection issued this time by the Czytelnik publishing house. Her opinion was positive. The reviewer noticed the potential of the poems for developing children's sense of humour. She drew attention to words that enrich the child's knowledge of language and familiarize them with metaphors. She wrote: "Verbal humour develops in them cleverness and perceptiveness, and capturing the point, comprehending a joke stimulates mental work" (Gumplowiczowa 1962a, p. 55, also 1962b).

JAN BRZECZWA'S WORKS FROM THE COLLECTIONS *TANĆCOWAŁA IGŁA Z NITKĄ* AND *KACZKA DZIWACZKA* AS ELEMENTS OF LITERARY AND POPULAR CULTURE

In the post-war period, as well as at the end of the 20th century and in the first decade of the 21st century, the process of popularizing the poems contained in the volumes *Tańcowała igła z nitką* and *Kaczka Dziwaczka* was carried out thanks to well-known publishing houses such as Nasza Księgarnia or Czytelnik. It was these publishing houses that reissued the first works of Jan Brzechwa. The process of growing such works as *Pomidor*, *Na straganie*, *Żuraw i czapla* into the native culture became particularly intense and visible at the same time at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries. Pieces from the debut volumes for children by Jan Brzechwa are still reaching young audiences in various forms, not only as independent reading literature or explored with the participation of an adult, but also in other forms: intended for listening, watching, singing together, as board games, etc. which I will try to present in further considerations.

PIECES FROM COLLECTIONS: TAŃCOWAŁA IGŁA Z NITKĄ
AND KACZKA DZIWACZKA IN BOOK EDITIONS AND
ANTHOLOGIES OF LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN

The pieces included in the volumes entitled *Tańcowała igła z nitką* and *Kaczka Dziwaczka* in the second half of the 20th century were published as separate works. Initially, they were published by state-owned, respected publishers Czytelnik and Nasza Księgarnia, which certainly contributed to their popularity. In 1953, the publishing house Nasza Księgarnia published selected poems by Jan Brzechwa in a collection entitled *Brzechwa Dzieciom* [*Brzechwa for Children*]. The volume contains the author's first and later poems. The first pre-war volumes include, among others, *Koziółczek*, *Pytalski*, *Kaczka Dziwaczka*, *Pomidor*, *Tańcowała igła z nitką*, *Sójka* and others (Brzechwa 1953). The verse *W Zoo* from the pre-war collection *Kaczka Dziwaczka* was published in it as well. When comparing these two editions, Elżbieta Burakowska noted: "When there (in the pre-war edition) the whole is a short, humorous poem about a boy visiting the Zoo, here it is only an introduction to a large collection of epigrams about animals" (Burakowska 1971, p. 88).

In 1958, in turn, the publishing house Czytelnik published a large volume of Brzechwa's works entitled *100 bajek* [*100 Fairy Tales*] (Brzechwa 1958a), which included the author's new works as well as the ones from the first two volumes. It is worth mentioning that Brzechwa was known for accepting invitations, going to schools and attending book fairs where he promoted his works. He recalled this period of his life:

During the beautiful campaign conducted by the Publishing Cooperative Czytelnik, I had the opportunity to hold hundreds of meetings with children in kindergartens, schools, hospitals, preventoriums, orphanages, I visited countless cities, towns and villages in the Warsaw, Katowice, Kraków, Poznań provinces and the Recovered Territories, I came into contact with thousands of children of various social backgrounds, and I gained a new load of faith in my own rightness from each meeting. (Brzechwa 1958b, p. 8)

Both editions of Jan Brzechwa's collected works were reprinted repeatedly, similar to individual works published continuously even after the poet's death, such as *Na straganie* (in the series *Poczytaj mi mamo* [*Mum, Read for Me*], the first edition: 1973 with illustrations by Bohdan Butenko), *Kaczka Dziwaczka* (in the series *Poczytaj mi mamo*, the first edition: 1977). I will mention only one example: the ninth edition of this book published in the series *Poczytaj mi mamo* with illustrations by Olga Siemaszko was published in 1984. After 1989, many private publishing houses and publishing companies were established, which were publishing the collections of Jan Brzechwa's works willingly and frequently. They comprised works from the first two volumes. I will only point out that the poet's works were published in the series *Klasyka dla smyka* [*Classics for Kids*] by the publishing house Papilon and as hardback books for

the youngest readers by the publishing house Sara. The publishing house Wilga has published and is still publishing the collections of Jan Brzechwa's works containing poems from the first and later editions, for instance, *Jan Brzechwa. Wiersze dla dzieci* [*Jan Brzechwa's Poems for Children*]. A great publishing and popularization success is undoubtedly a four-volume collection of all the author's works published in 2016–2017 by Nasza Księgarnia.

The works from Brzechwa's first two volumes were equally often included in multi-author collections of works addressed to children, for instance, in the first post-war volume entitled *Antologia polskiej literatury dziecięcej* [*Anthology of Polish Children's Literature*] (1946) by Irena Skowronkówna. It included six works from the poet's first two volumes: *Koziołeczek*, *Tańcowała igłą z nitką*, *Pomidor*, *Stonoga*, *Katar*, *Na straganie*. In turn, the collection entitled *Literatura dla dzieci. Antologia* [*Literature for Children. Anthology*] (1955) by Janina Michałowska and Irena Porowska included *Tańcowała igła z nitką* and *Tydzień*. In the collection entitled *Kolorowy świat. Wiersze i proza dla dzieci* [*Colourful World. Poems and Prose for Children*] (1955), Celina Żmihorska included *Kaczka-dziwaczka*, *Tańcowała igła z nitką*. In *Wybór Literatury do zabaw i zajęć w przedszkolu* [*Selection of Literature for Plays and Activities in Kindergartens*] (1985), Helena Kruk involved two poems: *Tańcowała igła z nitką* and *Pomidor* among works by other authors. Wiesław Kot included *Kaczka Dziwaczka*, *Tańcowała igła z nitką* and *Tydzień* in the collection of poetry for children entitled *Szedł czarodziej* [*A Wizard Was Walking*] (1986). In a volume *Poezja dla dzieci. Antologia form i tematów* [*Poetry for Children. Anthology of Forms and Themes*] published in 1987, Ryszard Waksmund involved *Katar*, *Pytalski*, *Sroka*, *Tańcowała igła z nitką* and *W Zoo*, in addition to the later works of Jan Brzechwa. Kazimierz Surowiec included around twenty of Brzechwa's later poems: *Kaczka Dziwaczka*, *Tańcowała igła z nitką*, *Rzepa i miód* in the collection *Wiersze dla dzieci. Antologia i opracowanie* [*Poems for Children. Anthology and Elaboration*] published in 1990. In *Antologia poezji dziecięcej* [*Anthology of Children's Poetry*] (1991), Jerzy Cieślowski involved: *Kaczka Dziwaczka*, *Tańcowała igła z nitką*. A collection entitled *Lektury bliskie i odległe* [*Close and Distant Readings*] (1991) published in the same year by Stanisław Frycie, included: *Pomidor*, *Na straganie* and *Wrona i ser*. Józef Marek Śnieciński published the work *Żuraw i czapla* in the volume entitled *Kochać świat. Wiersze okolicznościowe dla przedszkoli* [*To Love the World. Occasional Poems for Kindergartens*] (1994). This choice indicates that the works from the first two collections were eagerly included in poetry anthologies aimed at young readers in the 20th century. This process of popularization continues. In recent years, the publishing house Wilga, as an example, has published a collection entitled *Jan Brzechwa i inni. Wiersze na cztery pory roku* [*Jan Brzechwa and Others. Poems for Four Seasons*] (2020), *Poeci dla dzieci* [*Poets for Children*] (2020), in which the works of Brzechwa are represented by *Kaczka Dziwaczka*. The publishing house Zielona Sowa has published a collection entitled *Polscy poeci dla dzieci. Jan Brzechwa i inni* [*Polish Poets to Children. Jan Brzechwa and Others*] (2017). The same publishing

house issued a collection entitled *Polscy poeci. Najpiękniejsze wiersze dla dzieci* [*Polish Poets. The Most Beautiful Poems for Children*] (2018). The aforementioned examples prove that the works from the volumes *Tańcowała igła z nitką* and *Kaczka Dziwaczka* not only do not lose their popularity, but they also become more and more popular, which I will try to comment on in the next part of the article.

WORKS FROM THE COLLECTIONS *TAŃCOWAŁA IGŁA Z NITKĄ* AND *KACZKA DZIWACZKA* IN THE AUDIOBOOK FORM

Complementing the description of the popularization process of Jan Brzechwa's poems from his first two collections addressed to children, it is impossible not to notice that they reach contemporary children also through modern technologies, e.g. in the format of audiobooks. Published in the form "for listening", the poems are read by well-known and recognised actors, e.g. *Kaczka Dziwaczka i inne wiersze* [*Dotty Duck and Other Poems*] (publishing house Agoy.pl) are read by Piotr Fronczewski, *Tańcowała igła z nitką i inne wiersze* [*The Needle Danced with the Thread and Other Poems*] (publishing house Agoy.pl) is recited by Olga Bończyk, the collection entitled *Na wyspach Bergamutach* [*On the Bergamuty Islands*] (publishing house Agoy.pl) contains poems *Rzepa i miód, Na straganie, Nie pieprz Pietrze, Kłótnia rzek, Dwie krawcowe, Pytalski, Pomidor, Znaki przestankowe* read by Piotr Fronczewski. The collection of Jan Brzechwa's works entitled *Ciotka Danuta robi swetry na drutach i inne wiersze* [*Aunt Danuta Knits Jumpers and Other Poems*] (containing the author's first works: *Na straganie, Pomidor, Tańcowała igła z nitką, Kaczka Dziwaczka, Sroka, Katar, Sójka, Żuraw i czapla, Stonoga, Rzepa i miód, Kłótnia rzek, Dwie krawcowe, Chrzan*) of the same publishing house is read by Danuta Stenka. A phonographic release *Kaczka Dziwaczka, samochwała i inne wiersze* [*Dotty Duck, Braggart and Other Poems*] (publishing house Agoy.pl) introduced the following poems to young listeners: *Kaczka Dziwaczka, Żuraw i czapla, Na straganie, Tańcowała igłą z nitką, Nie pieprz Pietrze, Staś Pytalski*,¹ *Katar, Stryjek, Pomidor, Stonoga, Sum, Sójka, Koziółeczek* in Maciej Damięcki's interpretation. In the series *Polskie wiersze* [*Polish Poems*] (publishing house Agoy.pl) were issued, among others, *Pomidor, Żuraw i czapla, Katar, Pytalski* read by Maciej Damięcki. The publishing house Świat Książki (2016) released songs, fairy tales and poems by Jan Brzechwa in the form of a two-disc "digipack" edition entitled *Jan Brzechwa dzieciom* [*Jan Brzechwa for Children*], among which there were: *Kaczka Dziwaczka* performed by Ewa Konstancja Bułhak, *Jeż* – interpreted by Michał Bajor, *Pomidor* – performed by the band Kilersi, *Koziółeczek* is interpreted by a group of actors consisting of: Magdalena Zawadzka, Bronisław Pawlik, Wiktor Zborowski. The same group of actors performs the poems *Stonoga, Pytalski* and *Chrzan* – Włodzimierz

¹ The original title of the poem has been changed.

Nowakowski, the poems: *Żuraw i czapla* and *Żuk* can be heard in a daring performance by Jolanta Zykun, Piotr Fronczewski, Krzysztof Kolberger, Marian Kociniak, Krzysztof Kowalewski, Maciej Damięcki, Joanna Żółkowska. Biblioteka Akustyczna Lektury released, among others, *Żuk* performed by Krzysztof Tyniec. The publishing house MTJ Agencja Artystyczna released a five-CD set of Jan Brzechwa's works titled *Bajki Jana Brzechwy [Fairy Tales by Jan Brzechwa]* (2009), which included such works from the poet's first two volumes as *Mops*, *Dwie krawcowe*, *Kokoszka smakoszka*, *Stonoga*, *Sójka*. The incomplete list of selected publishing houses presented above is only an example of the rich and systematically enriched offer popularizing the first poems for children by Jan Brzechwa.

POEMS FROM THE COLLECTIONS *TAŃCOWAŁA IGŁA* *Z NITKĄ* AND *KACZKA DZIWACZKA* ON THE INTERNET

Complementing this description, one should note that it is the Internet which constitutes the contemporary space for popularizing Jan Brzechwa's works. All of the poet's works can be found in this space. On YouTube, Brzechwa's poems are read by parents, grandparents, teachers and interpreted by children of various ages. Among the animations addressed to the youngest there are the works: *Na straganie*, *Żuraw i czapla*, *Katar*, *Pomidor*, *Sum*. The authors of blogs for parents and teachers publish the texts, comment on them and read them. As an example, I would like to point out that the poem *Mops* is read by the author of the blog For Parents (www12), *Kaczka Dziwaczka*, *Tańcowała igłą z nitką* and *Na straganie* have their recommendations on the website <https://polskatimes.pl> (www13). Many works by Jan Brzechwa have been supplemented with music. They function as songs performed, for example, by children's ensembles. The best-known example is certainly the poem *Kaczka Dziwaczka*, which was popularized with music by Andrzej Korzyński thanks to the film version about the adventures of Ambroży Kleks entitled *Akademia Pana Kleksa [Mr. Kleks' Academy]* (1983) with Piotr Fronczewski in the leading role. The poem was performed in the film by the children's vocal and dance group Fasolki, popular since the 1980s. The music to the words of another poem *Tańcowała igłą z nitką* was composed by Piotr Rubik and performed by Michał Bajor. Among animated songs for the youngest, *Pomidor* (Babadu TV) stands out. The quality of the performance and the presentation of poems available on the Internet varies. It is easy to find high quality films and presentations, inspiring adults and children to undertake creative activities, for example, the animated film *Koziołeczek*, which was created during summer workshops of stop motion animation and stage design at the Community Cultural Centre in Cyców under the supervision of the instructors Maryla Giszczak and Kamil Rak. It is also possible to find materials of very low quality: prepared carelessly, recited with incorrect articulation, containing mistakes, etc. While describing the process of distribution of Jan

Brzechwa's first poems, it is worth noting that both *Kaczka Dziwaczka* and *Tańcowała igła z nitką* have become the names of games for children:

– *Tańcowała igła z nitką* – it is a board game which develops hands' motor skills using boards with holes, strings and buttons (www17),

– *Kaczka Dziwaczka* – a memory puzzle enriched with a storyline and illustrations (publishing house GRAiMY). Advertisements and recommendations of both these games can be found on the Internet.

The incomplete selection presented above shows that Jan Brzechwa's works, first published before World War II, are not only invariably reprinted, but they also reach the youngest in various forms that are attractive to them. These works not only do not lose their popularity, but they are becoming more and more a part of the Polish culture and language.

PHRASES AND SENTENCES FROM THE WORKS INCLUDED IN THE VOLUMES: *TANĆCOWAŁA IGŁA Z NITKĄ*, *KACZKA DZIWACZKA* BY JAN BRZECHWA IN THE POLISH LANGUAGE

Sentences, sayings and phrasemes from the first pieces for children by Jan Brzechwa are systematically entering the Polish language thanks to various forms of their popularization. They are becoming a part of everyday Polish, which I understand, like it was described by Antoni Furdal, as "(...) the language that we use every day as a means of communicating on subjects common to all of us" (Furdal 1977, p. 151). As Kwiryna Handke points out, the users of everyday Polish are the participants of everyday live social communication (spoken and written or printed), largely of public character (Handke 2009, p. 273). Sentences, sayings and phrasemes from Brzechwa's works are recognised, the joke they contain and the distance to the world expressed in them are identified by the audience. They somehow connect people who understand the meanings hidden in the works. The recognition by Poles of the meanings hidden in poems is referred to by Jerzy Bralczyk in his study entitled *500 zdań polskich* [*500 Polish Sentences*] (Bralczyk 2015, p. 294). Referring to the saying perpetuated by the poet in the work *Nie pieprz Pietrze* he writes "(...) it seems that Brzechwa used an old saying (...) He also described this Peter for us in detail, equipped him with a wife and a mother-in-law, and expanded the whole anecdote" (*ibid.*). He goes on to reflect: "Peter's peppering, yes, somewhere allusively can evoke a sexual connotation, but really it evokes the thought of speaking without sense, even more so because this sense is somewhat hidden here, although not too deeply" (*ibid.*). Other terms taken from Brzechwa's first works have also taken root in contemporary language, such as: "a to feler, westchnął seler" ["what a failure, sighed the celery"], "na straganie w dzień targowy" ["at the vegetable stall on a market day"] derived from the poem *Na straganie*, the phraseme "tańcowała igła z nitką" ["the needle danced with the thread"], the phrase

“jak pan może, panie Pomidorze!” [“how dare you, Mr. Tomato!”] from the poem *Pomidor*. I will try then to show the presence of the above-mentioned expressions in the Polish language using selected examples from the Internet.

The phraseme “tańcowała igła z nitką” is being used as a slogan advertising various types of tailoring activities, e.g. tailoring workshops (www19), a workshop on sewing buttons for children (www18), a fabric warehouse (www2), creative sewing and drumming workshops during Lublin’s fair (www10), a scientific seminar organized by the Magdalena Abakanowicz University of Arts in Poznań (www15).

A sentence from the poem *Na straganie* “a to feler, westchnął seler” is eagerly used by the authors of culinary blogs and blogs promoting healthy lifestyle which encourage the consumption of this vegetable (www6; www3; www4; www1). Similarly, the phrase “jak pan może, panie Pomidorze!” is used to promote the nutritional value of tomatoes (www11; www9), the value of sun-dried tomatoes (www16), tomato soups (www5), tomato soup recipes (www7).

The sentence “na straganie w dzień targowy takie słyszy się rozmowy” [“at the vegetable stall on market day such conversations are heard”] comes from the work *Na straganie*. It is often used by journalists who want to draw attention to the content of an article by referring to the sentence recognized by readers: e.g. “Na straganie w dzień targowy... Nowalijki słono kosztują w tym sezonie” [“At the vegetable stall on a market day... This season, spring vegetables are highly expensive”] (www8), “Na straganie w dzień targowy... Piątek na ryneczku GRH przy Jerzego mamy więc dzień targowy. Już czuć tam atmosferę zbliżających się świąt” [“At the vegetable stall on a market day... It is Friday, so we have a market day at the Gorzów Wholesale Market at Jerzy Street. One can already feel the atmosphere of upcoming Christmas there”] (www20), “Koronawirus. Na straganie w dzień targowy wieje pustką. Ludzie robią zakupy w galeriach. Ryneczki umierają po cichu” [“Coronavirus. At the vegetable stall on a market day it is empty. People shop in the malls. Markets are dying quietly”] (www14).

The examples above allow us to see that the sentences, sayings, and phrasemes from Jan Brzechwa’s first works are generally considered to be well recognizable, liked by Poles, and the wordplay that they contain evokes positive associations, smile, and childhood memories. It is, therefore, impossible not to agree with Bralczyk that a slogan, a sentence, a phraseme works well when it is original “(...) but it also works when it evokes a sense of familiarity” (Bralczyk 2004, p. 82). The authors of the above-cited texts more or less consciously use the phenomenon of redundancy, understanding that “(...) what is redundant actually contains countless connotative possibilities of the text, already realized by the readers themselves” [audience – K.K.] (Smid 2016, p. 181). Thanks to this possibility “(...) a text, a piece, a work of art, etc. remains socially alive”. Professional advertisers and people advertising their own products and achievements are aware of this fact, reaching for Jan Brzechwa’s works as specific filters, cultural frameworks that facilitate the process of communication with other

people. They place well-known sayings, phrases and sentences in new contexts and give them new meanings. In this way, they contribute to their popularization, and, thus, to the popularization of the works from which they are taken.

CONCLUSIONS

To summarize, it is worth noting that the development of modern technologies helps Brzechwa's already classic works published in the late 1930s to reach various groups of readers, and contributes to their popularization. They are made available in new versions attractive for the audience and the readers. They permeate into the culture and language of Poles of various ages. This is then how the author considered his work, recognizing that his works do not have a single, specific type of audience, do not have an audience of a specific age. They can interest, entertain and stimulate the young, adults and the elderly.

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