

**ON THE EQUIVALENCE OF THE ARMENIAN
TRANSLATION OF CHARLES DICKENS'S
“OLIVER TWIST”**

Translation is one of the communicative instruments by means of which one can get in touch with foreign culture. It is a great art of conveying messages from one culture to another. In our globalizing world this magnificent tool gives an opportunity to peoples of many countries to be aware of different social problems, traditional customs, cultural differences and unifications. Since no two languages are identical, either in the meanings given to corresponding symbols or in the ways in which such symbols are arranged in phrases and sentences, it stands to reason that there can be no absolute correspondence between languages. Hence, there can be no fully exact translations. The total impact of a translation may be reasonably close to the original, but there can be no identity in detail /Nida, 1964/. It should be noted that, while transferring messages from one language into another, great attention should be attached to the problems related to the loss of meaning, so that the messages conveyed be literary and exact, congruent to the receptor language. In compliance with this, the competent translator should be aware of the characteristic features of the language of the translation which have to be filled with appropriate equivalent means to provide the same impression as the original language implies. But, as we know, not always can we get the perfect result, as there may be semantic and lexical changes due to structural or meta-linguistic differences.

The subject matter of the present article deals with the problem of equivalence in the Armenian translation of Charles Dickens's “Oliver Twist”. We shall trace how the translator tries to be close to the content without any loss of meaning, how he helps the Armenian readers to make the same journey as the English readers and how he transfers them to the society where social inequality and injustice dominated, to the same

world as the original one, where, in the person they can see the dreadful treatment of orphans living in that society.

Charles Dickens strictly criticized the poverty and social stratification of the Victorian society. During that period when Britain was the major economic and political power of Europe, Dickens emphasized the life of the neglected poor and deprived within the society. He often described the exploitation and suffering of the poor and denounced the public officials and rules that not only allowed such abuses to exist, but to flourish as a result. Dickens developed a strong social conscience, an ability to empathize with the victims of social and economic injustices.

Dickens believed in the ethical and political power of literature, and the novel in particular, and treated his fiction as a springboard for debates about moral and social reforms.

Although his fiction was not politically subversive, he called to relieve acute social abuses. He managed to make the Victorian public opinion more aware of the conditions of the poor.

The great critic depicted persuasively the disorder, squalor, blight, decay, and the human misery of a modern industrial city. His “*Oliver Twist*” (1839), is an important manifestation of the Victorian social conscience /Diniejkko, 2012/. It shocked readers with its images of poverty and crime: it destroyed the middle class polemics about criminals, making any pretence to ignorance about what poverty entailed impossible.

Now, on the basis of some excerpts and sentences, let us trace how translator Arta Bazaryan achieved his goal to impress the Armenian reader. The examples presented here are typical to the whole body of the translation.

It was not until he was left alone in the silence and **stillness** of the gloomy workshop of the undertaker, that Oliver gave way to the feelings which the day’s treatment may be supposed likely to have awakened in **a mere child**. He had listened to their taunts with a look of contempt; he had borne the lash without a cry; for he felt that pride swelling in his heart which would have kept down a shriek to the last, **though they had roasted him alive**. But now when there were none to see or

hear him, he fell upon his knees on the floor; and, hiding his face in his hands, wept such tears as God send for the credit of our nature, **few so young may ever have cause to pour out before him** (p.54).

Եվ ահա այստեղ, դագաղագործի մոայլ խանութի *խոր* լուռյան մեջ մեն-մենակ մնալով, Օլիվերը տեղի տվեց իր զգացումների ուժեղ հորձանքին, որ ցերեկվա այդ դաժան վարմունքից հետո կարող էին զարթնել նույնիսկ *մանկան հոգում*: Նրանց անարգանքները նա լսել էր արհամարհանքով. նրանց մտրակի հարվածներին դիմացել անտրտունջ, որովհետև նրա սիրտը այնպիսի հպարտությամբ էր համակված, որ նա իրեն թույլ չէր տվել անգամ ճիշտ արձակել: Բայց այժմ, *իր խցի զարհուրելի մենության մեջ*, երեխան ծնկի եկավ հատակին, երկու ձեռքերով երեսը ծածկեց և սկսեց դառնորեն արտասվել: Թող աստված, ի սեր մարդկության պատվի, խնայի *նման անմեղ արարածներին այդքան դառնություն ճաշակելուց* (էջ 293):

In this excerpt, the process of transfer involves **an analytical redistribution** of the components: “stillness”, which means the quality of being quiet and not moving, is replaced by another word-class – adjective խորը – (deep), just to emphasize the silence of the gloomy workhouse. Then, the expression “a mere child”, where the author wants to show how small that boy was, is reworded by երեխայի հոգում, again the adjective of the word group “mere child” is replaced by the noun հոգում, which is more impressive than the collocation in the source language. The clause “though they have roasted him alive” **is missing** in the Armenian variant, the clause “where there were none to see and hear” is transferred to – «իր խցի զարհուրելի մենության մեջ», where the translator employs the case of **an allusion** just to complete the picture of the state of the poor boy, thus making it more impressive for the Armenian reader, depicting how lonely, apart from his sufferings, that young orphan was in the whole world.

“Young” is translated as «անմեղ արարածներ», “have cause to pour out” as «խնայի այդքան դառնություն ճաշակելուց», which sound more expressive. The translator has applied these means of translation to convey the message of the original and to interest the Armenian reader.

In short, **the wily old Jew had the boy in his toils**. Having prepared his mind, by **solitude and gloom** to prefer any society to the companionship of **his own sad thoughts in such a dreary place**, he was now slowly **instilling** into his soul **the poison** which he hoped would blacken it, **and change its hue** for ever (p. 155).

Ինչ կարող էր անել **խեղճ երեխան: Մռայլ էր նրա շրջապատը, առավել ևս մռայլ էին նրան ճնշող մտքերը**: Նա սկսեց որևէ ընկերակցություն նախընտրել այդ **տանջալից ու թախծոտ մենակությանը**: **Հրեան հենց այդ էլ ցանկացել էր իր հրեշային հոգու ամբողջ սաստկությամբ**, և այժմ նրա մեջ կաթիլ առ կաթիլ **թորում էր** այն **մաղձը**, որ խաթարելու էր երեխայի **վճիտ հոգին** և նրան **կորստյան էր մատնելու** առիավետ (էջ 395):

In this extract the translator tries to be close to the text, but has done several creative changes, as the lexical units of this message do not correspond to the meaning of the original. They do not designate the presumed referents. The translator goes through a seemingly roundabout process of analysis, transfer and restructuring. When Dickens describes that young Oliver was now fully under the wily Jew's tutelage (*the wily old Jew had the boy in his toils*), the translator transfers it as «ինչ կարող էր անել խեղճ երեխան», actually he has not conveyed the exact meaning. By restructuring and rewording the context grammatically and lexically the translator describes the orphan's state.

He has replaced “his own sad thoughts in such a dreary place” by «**մռայլ էր նրա շրջապատը, առավել ևս մռայլ էին նրան ճնշող մտքերը**», by means of the repetition of the word «մռայլ» the translator tries to emphasize the message of the source language. The expression “solitude and gloom” is translated as «**տանջալից ու թախծոտ մենակություն**», the noun “gloom”, which means “a feeling of being sad and without hope; almost total darkness”, is replaced by adjectives «**տանջալից ու թախծոտ**». We witness the case of **transposition** here.

The expression «**հրեան հենց այդ էլ ցանկացել էր իր հրեշային հոգու ամբողջ սաստկությամբ**», is the presumed expression of “the wily Jew had the boy in his toils” in the analyzed version, just to make the Armenian reader feel the horrible state of the boy.

The verb “to instil”, which means “to gradually make sb feel, think or behave in a particular way over a period of time”, is conveyed by the translator as «թըրում էր», which has another meaning, and has not transferred the exact meaning of the original text, thus losing the author’s idea.

The phrase “would change its hue” is replaced by «խաթարելու էր երեխայի վճիտ հոգին և նրան կորստյան էր մատնելու», which is more impressive for the Armenian reader, as the Armenian reader would never say «փոխել հոգու նրակը/գույնը»:

Below another example of translation equivalence is presented.

But these **impertinences** were speedily checked by the evidence of **the surgeon** and the testimony of **the beadle** (p. 5).

Բոլոր այս **լրբությունները**, սակայն, իսկույն կասեցվում էին **բժշկի** ցուցմունքով և **քիղրի** վկայությամբ (էջ 242):

In this sentence we have the case of **equivalent translation**, where the translator has conveyed the exact message of the original. However, the noun “impertinences”, which sounds in English not so strong as in the translation, is expressed by the Armenian variant of «լրբություններ» – a more pejorative word, to stress the idea of the original. The noun “beadle” is translated as «քիղր», which is a case of **calque**, though in the footnotes to the text the translator gives the definition of the word as «ստորադաս պաշտոնյա ծխում», to make it understandable for the Armenian reader, while the word “surgeon” which means «վիրաբույժ» is conveyed as «բժիշկ»: here the translator has retained the old translation of this word.

About noon next day, when the Dodger and Master Bates had gone out to pursue their customary **avocations**, Mr. Fagin took the opportunity of reading Oliver a long lecture on the **crying** sin of ingratitude: of which he clearly **demonstrated** he had been guilty, to no ordinary extent, he willfully absenting himself from the society of his anxious friends; and still more, **in endeavouring to escape** from them after so much trouble and expense had been incurred in his recovery (p. 147).

Հաջորդ օրը, կեսօրվա մոտ, երբ իրենց սովորական **աշխատանքի** համար Ստահակը և Վարպետ Բեյքսը տանից դուրս էին եկել, միասոր Ֆեգինը, առիթից օգտվելով, ապե-

րախտության *անքավելի* մեղքի շուրջը երկար քարոզ կար-
դաց Օլիվերի գլխին, ասելով, թե նա *չափազանց* մեղավոր
էր իր հոգատար բարեկամների ընկերակցությունից կամա-
վոր հեռացած լինելու պատճառով, մանավանդ, երբ այդ
բարեկամները այնքան մեղություններ էին կրել և ծախսերի
տակ էին ընկել նրա ապաքինման համար (էջ 386):

In the above excerpt the translator generally tries to be close to the original, though we witness several alterations. First, the word “avocation” is transferred as «աշխատանք», which is not the exact meaning of the word of «սիրած զբաղմունք». While, “crying sin” is translated as «անքավելի մեղք», which sounds stronger than is its literal translation – «աղաղակող մեղք». Then, the idea of the verb “demonstrated” is conveyed in quite a different way – as «չափազանց», and, finally, in the translation variant the whole idea of the phrase “in endeavouring to escape” is missing, which weakens the idea of the original. Though the translator has omitted a phrase and has done several alterations in his translation, he has made the author’s intention comprehensible.

Based on the study of these and many other examples and their translations we may assume that Arta Bazaryan generally has achieved his goal. He has taken into consideration the cultural, historical, social information relating to the author and his work. The translator has applied the translation procedures of analysis, calque, transposition and restructuring. Still he has done several alterations, which would be more appealing to the Armenian mentality and psychology.

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Ռ. ՄԵԼԻԿՅԱՆ – Զ. Դիքենսի «Օլիվեր Թվիստի արկածները» վեպի թարգմանության համարժեքության շուրջ. – Սույն հոդվածը քննում է Դիքենսի «Օլիվեր Թվիստի արկածները» վեպի թարգմանության համարժեքության մի շարք հարցեր: Ուսումնասիրությունը ցույց է տալիս, որ թարգմանիչը կիրառել է թարգմանական արվեստի որոշ հմարներ, ինչպիսիք են բառապատճենումը, համարժեքները և այլն, որոնք հնարավորություն են տվել նրան հայ ընթերցողին փոխանցել վեպի բովանդակային և ոճական ամբողջությունը:

Р. МЕЛИКЯН – Об эквивалентности перевода повести Ч. Диккенса “Приключения Оливера Твиста”. – В статье рассматривается ряд вопросов эквивалентности перевода повести “Приключения Оливера Твиста”. Результаты исследования показывают, что переводчик с помощью ряда приемов, таких как калькирование, аналоги и т.п. сумел передать армянскому читателю стиль и замысел автора.