# RussiAnglicized<sup>©</sup> Slang and Translation: A Clockwork Orange Tick-Tock

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Abstract—Slang argot plays a fundamental role in Burgess' teenage special sociolect in his novel A Clockwork Orange, offered a wide variety of instances to be analyzed. Consequently, translation of the notions and keeping the effect would be of great importance. Burgess named his interesting RussiAnglicized<sup>©</sup>-slang word as Nadsat, stands for −teen, mostly derived from Russian and Cockney rhyming. The paper discusses the lexical origin and Persian translation of his weird slang words illustrating a teenage-gang argot. The product depicts creativity but mistranslation that leads to the loss of slang meaning load and atmosphere in the target text.

Keywords—Argot, mistranslation, slang, sociolect.

## I. INTRODUCTION

THE creation of neologisms is one of the various ways to keep linguistics up to date. Some new words have their origin in a language other than the source language such as the neologisms in Burgess' A Clockwork Orange. He created Nadsat as a teenage language that consisted of Anglicized Russian-based new words. Nadsat [-надцать] comes from the Russian suffix which means "-teen", between 11-19 years old. Burgess invented a language for a teenage gang in his novel based on the Russian language and some French, German and Malay words. In addition, Cockney rhyming, gypsy talks and English slangs were used. Burgess coined most Nadsat words from Russian; however, there are some evidences from French, German and Malay. He also took advantage of a mixture of Standard English with several Cockney rhyming slangs, old English and Gypsy words. For instance [1], shive, a Nadsat word, consists of an English verb to shave and a gypsy word shiv meaning knife. Creating such mysterious and new terms is one of the characteristics of Burgess' writing style. Clipping out of familiar words is another method used in making Nadsat. Old English expressions can be found in Nadsat too, e.g. *cutter* stands for *money* which originates from the 19th century slang as cut money. "Pretty polly" as a cockney rhyming slang is used for "money". A Clockwork Orange as the novel title is a Cockney slang expression too. These Nadsat terms are part of the jargon Alex, the protagonist of the novel, and his friends use. To form such a strange teenage - dialect, Burgess applied Standard English grammar on newly created terms, such as attaching English plural "s" to make the Russian word "droog", which means "friend", plural, while the plural form in Russian is "droogi" instead of Anglicized "droogs".

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There was an important and influential motive in the creation of Nadsat by Burgess. He declared that he would like to invent an argot compounded of Anglo-American and Russian, as the language of the two most powerful political states in the world [2]. The language is somewhat euphemistic because Nadsat makes the atmosphere tolerable and softened. Nadsat is a new sociolect because the author did not wish to use slang that was already being used by street gangs and teenage groups. His creation included a sort of Anglo-Russo-American language based on slang words transliterated from Russian, mixed with Cockney rhyming slang, French, German, Malay, and even invented words. Nadsat has been called many things, such as a constructed language, slang, register, and sociolect. Nadsat also is a register, because Alex (the protagonist) is able to speak Standard English.

Nadsat can be defined as a sociolect since this term stands for any language spoken by a particular social group and is based on social, cultural and economic criteria. In addition, Nadsat can be viewed as slang because its vocabularies and expressions seem to be of inferior value in comparison with Standard English. There are other slang words, invented terms, as well as the influence of Shakespeare and the Bible that is a unique rhythm of language itself. For instance, there are repetitions of words and sounds which are indicative of Shakespeare like "creech creech creeching" away or "hi, hi, hi, there" [1].

People may invent some new words that they would never apply again. The primary purpose for creating these neologisms is to communicate a context-specific concept. In this novel, Nadsat is a form of slang. The book is divided into three sections of seven chapters each. The number 21 is not arbitrary. It is the symbol of human maturity, or used to be, since according to [2] at 21 one can have the right to vote and assumes adult responsibility. The 21st is an important chapter because it includes Alex's mature assessment of his own adolescence and shows the importance of maturity to moral freedom which is Burgess' main point.

# II. TITLE OF THE NOVEL

A Clockwork Orange has been understood and explained in many different ways, its most probable meaning, and purpose to be used as a title. As in [2], he admitted that the book was given this title for various reasons. Principally, he always loved the Cockney rhyming slang expression "as queer as a clockwork orange", while the word "queer" meant "mad". He believed that this title would be appropriate for a story about the application of Puvlovian or mechanical laws to an organism which had color and sweetness like a fruit.

Secondly, Burgess noticed the similarity in sound and spelling between the English word "orange" and Malay word "orang", which is also interesting because of its meaning. "Orang" is a Malay word for human being. Although this specific clockwork orange is human on the surface, it is artificial and unnatural from within. Not only did Burgess carefully work out the title, but also the name of the antihero, Alex, was chosen intentionally. A quick study of name symbolism suggests that Alex is short for "Alexander", which means "defender of men". Alex has other connotations- "a lex": a law (unto himself); "- a lex (is)": vocabulary of his own; "a" (in Greek) lex: without a law [3].

## III. THE CREATION OF NADSAT

Some Nadsat terms have a reasonable connection with the original notion, e.g. "cancer" for cigarette (the result of smoking must be cancer). Some other examples will be mentioned as follows:

- 1. Derived from slangs:
- "cancer" used for "cigarette" is short for English slang "cancer stick" from the disease which is the result of heavy smoking.
- "ptitsa" [птица] is a Russian word for "bird"; it is used to refer to "girl" in the novel. "Bird" is a common slang in Britain for a (young) woman, but is not used in Russian in this sense.
- "sinny" refers to cinema and film. It comes from "cine" a French slang or possibly from "sin".
- "snoutie" used as "tobacco" comes from "snout" which is an English prison slang for "tobacco" or "cigarette".
- "soomka" [сумка], used for an old woman, is a Russian word for "bag", while the English slang refers to an old woman.
- "tick-tocker" refers to "heart" that comes from the sound of a heartbeat, and the English slang "ticker".
- "vellocet" used as "drug", probably a fabricated word or one can say '-cet' is a common suffix of pain reliever (e.g. Percocet, ultracet), possibly, from speed (velocity), which is a slang for the drug amphetamine or maybe suggested by the British motorcycle manufacturers Vellocett.
- 2. Derived from Cockney rhyming slangs:
- "cutter" refers to "money" from Cockney rhyming slang derived from "bread-and-butter".
- "golly" used instead of "unit of money", from rhyming slang "lolly" or "polly" possibly from "gold".
- "hound-and-horney" is another rhyming slang used for "corny".
- "luscious glory" used as "hair" comes from a Cockney rhyming slang, possibly "upper storey" or more likely a reference to "crowning glory".
- "polly" refers to "money" from a rhyming slang "pretty polly" for "lolly".
- "rozz" used as "policeman" comes from a Cockney slang "rozzer" for "policeman".
- 3. Derived from onomatopoeia:
- "boohoo, boohoohoo" refers to "cry" from the sound that one makes while crying.

- "guff" used for "laugh" comes from "guffaw".
- 4. Derived from portmanteau:
- "chumble" refers to "mumble" that comes from a mixture of "chatter" and "mumble".
- "crark" used for "howl" which is derived from "crow" and "bark".
- "creech" refers to "shout" and "scream", possibly derived from the Russian word "krichat" [кричать] or maybe a portmanteau of "cry" and "creech".
- "worldcast" used for "satellite TV or short wave radio broadcast" comes from "world" and "broadcast".
- "skriking" used instead of "scratching" comes from "strike" and "scratch".
- 5. Derived from children talk form:
- "baddiwad" refers to "bad".
- "eggiweg" is a juvenile mutation of "egg".
- "pee and em"/"pa and ma"/"pater and mater" used for "father and mother". The initial of "papa and mama" [папа & мама] in Russian.
- "jammiwam" is another juvenile mutation of the word "jam".
- "munchy-wunching" refers to "munching".
- "punchipunching" used for "punching".
- "skolliwoll" is used instead of the word "school"
- "steaky wake" used for "beef steak" is a childish pronunciation of the word "steak".
- "guttiwats" refers to "guts" that is another children speech.
- 6. Derived from the appearance and meaning of objects:
- "barry place" for "prison" comes from bars on windows and doors in prisons.
- "cable" used for "blood vessels", their shapes are just like cables.
- "clockwork" refers to someone that is "mechanically responsive" who works scrupulously such as a clock.
- "stripey hole" used for "prison" comes from the appearance of bars in a prison which is like a hole.
- 7. Derived from Russian words with English language rules:
- "domless" refers to someone who is "homeless". "Dom" [дом] is a Russian word for "home".
- "rookerful" is used for "handful"; The Russian word "rooka" [рука] is "hand" in English.
- "this nochy" for "tonight" comes from the Russian word "noch" [ночь] that means "night" with the English determiner "this" to show "tonight".
- "stoolies" refers to "chairs" from "stool" [стуль] meaning "chair" with English plural –s.
- "droogs" for "friends" comes from the Russian word "droog" [друг] with English plural –s.

## IV. TRANSLATING AND LOCALIZING NADSAT

As Nadsat can be categorized in neologism group words, it is a good idea to mention translation strategies for neologisms in relation to Nadsats. Picone [4] proposes three translation strategies for English neologisms: integral, semantic, and structural borrowing. Similarly, the English element is accompanied by a new object or notion in Greek; an existing

Greek element shifts, spreads, or becomes limited in meaning and the Greek element imitates the English structure by creating inventive forms. In this case, [5] strategies include applying a close correspondent (a more general or more specific term) in the target language. In summary, the methods to deal with neologisms are —near equivalents; explanation; loan translation and standard/recognized translation. Nonetheless, Newmark [6] subdivides the above by including categories such as translation through functional term, descriptive term, and target language neologism. Baker [7] establishes the following strategies for translation of neologisms:

- Using an item of similar meaning and form: it takes approximately the same meaning as that of the source language and consists of correspondent lexical items, e.g. superordinates, hyponyms, more neutral/less expressive words.
- 2. Using an item of similar meaning but dissimilar form but the item includes different lexical items.
- 3. Translation by paraphrase: defining the meaning of an item in other words, because no match can be found in the target language or because of differences in stylistic preferences of the source language and target language, e.g. using a loan word or loan word plus explanation.
- 4. Translation by omission, which is a process in which a component of the word could be omitted in the target language perhaps for stylistic reasons.
- 5. Translation by illustration.

As Larson expressed, a loanword refers to a word that is from another language and is not popular to most of the target language speakers [8]. Loan words are usually applied for proper names of persons, places, and geographical spots. These words would be clarified if the word belongs to a person, town, country, river, or else, e.g. John could be translated as a man named John. In this case, the name might be applied without the classifier if the language structure showed this as the best way to handle reference to participants. There are other ways in which loan words can be applied in translation, besides being adjusted with a classifier. They might be adjusted by modification that specifies the form or function or both of them. There are two kinds of foreign words: borrowed words which have been conformed to the target language prior to the translation process, and those loan words which are completely new to the target language speakers. Languages are continuously borrowing words from other languages. Many of these words become a part of the language so that the speakers do not recognize them as foreign words. They are part of every language. A borrowed word is known to most of the speakers of the language, even those who speak no other languages. Loan words, however, are not part of the target language vocabularies. They are words of another language which offer no meaning to speakers of the target language unless they have learned the language from which the loan word comes. A loan word will have no meaning except it is modified in some way to build the meaning into the context and so into the world.

Approaches to translation of neologisms also include the section of an appropriate equivalent in a target language; transcription and transliteration; loan translation and calque; explanatory translation, and descriptive translation.

Based on Vinay and Darbelnet [9], there are two general translation strategies: "direct translation" and "oblique translation". In the scope of neologisms, direct translation is more suitable. It covers three subcategories of translation methods:

- Borrowing: The source language term is transferred directly into the target language. Borrowing is used to fill the semantic gap in the target language and sometimes it is employed to add local color.
- 2. Calque: This strategy is a specific kind of borrowing when the source language expression or structure is transferred in literal translation. Both borrowings and calques often become fully integrated into the target language, although sometimes with some semantic change, which can turn them into false friends.
- 3. Literal translation: It is a word-for-word translation and the most common among languages of the same family and culture. They believed that literalness should only be sacrificed because of structural and metalinguistic requirements and only after checking that the meaning is fully kept. On the other hand, the translator may judge literal translation to be acceptable because it gives a different meaning or has no meaning; it is impossible for structural reasons; it does not have an analogous expression within the metalinguistic experience of the target language and it corresponds to something at a different level of language. In the case that literal translation is not possible, oblique translation must be applied.

Niska proposes three translation strategies for neologisms [5]:

- 1. Loan translation: literal translation of source language term
- 2. Direct loans / transfer: source language term is used as what it is or with some modifications to make it fit into the target language phonology and morphology.
- 3. Coining of new words

Thus, translators have to discover the meaning of neologisms according to the context.

Newmark suggests a comprehensive model for the translation of neologisms which would be feasible for the present study as the framework [6]. He posits that the translation of neologisms may be the most challenging issue in the scope of non-literary works for professional translators. Since neologisms are created to meet a specific need, most of them have a single meaning and can be translated in isolation, but some of these new terms gain other meanings in the target language and lose their old concept very soon. Neologisms are usually welcomed by everyone, except those which are vague and may have strange pronunciations. They even attract purists especially Graeco-Latin conventions. Many companies try to convert their brand names into eponyms.

#### V.METHODOLOGY

Translation in the scope of neologism could be somewhat a confusing process, because there are many translation approaches for neologisms. Nevertheless, only some of them are feasible and useful for translation from the source language text into the target language one. It is noteworthy to mention that only few researches have been done in this area, thus it seems necessary to investigate how one can translate neologisms into another language.

To achieve the purpose, Newmark's model was adopted as the framework, because it was the most feasible and practical for the translation of neologisms, especially Nadsat language [6]. He classified translation strategies for neologisms into various types, they included; —Functional Equivalent, Expansion, Transference, Compensation, Literal Translation, and Deletion".

#### A. Material

The data for the present study consisted of approximately 243 neologisms, which Burgess called Nadsat, with their Persian counterparts. The new words and their Persian counterparts were gathered from the following sources:

- a) The original version of A Clockwork Orange in English written by Anthony Burgess was republished in 1986 [1]. It was published by W. W. Norton in UK in 213 pages in paperback in 1995. In this version, which the full novel was published, there are 21 chapters, whereas in the New York version, the 21st chapter was deleted and it was published in 20 chapters.
- b) The only translation into Persian was carried out by Parirokh Hashemi in 1990 [10], but it was not published until 2002. She translated the book title as Porteghal-e Kouki [A Clockwork Orange]. It is published by Tamandar publication in 210 pages in paperback. She based her translation on the US version, which does not contain the 21<sup>st</sup> chapter. Consequently, the translation of some neologisms was overlooked.
- c) Nadsat terms are not available in common dictionaries, but their meanings were accessible in the Oxford Dictionary of New Words: A Popular Guide to Words in the News that was published by Oxford University Press. It was the first edition compiled by Sara Tulloch in 336 pages, 1991 [11]. Some of the English versions contain a glossary, a list of neologisms with their origins and the meanings in English, because most of the neologisms, called Nadsat, had Russian origins. Some others came from the inverted or rhyming slangs in modern or old English, and also in French, German, and Malay. By gathering and comparing the original English version with the translated equivalents, the current research concentrated on the most frequently used translation strategies.

There are many works on neologisms; however, the researcher preferred to select A Clockwork Orange by Anthony Burgess, a dystopian novel full of newly created words. The motivation for choosing this novel and studying the existing neologisms called Nadsats as the case study was

Burgess' own unique and queer creativity in inventing new words. The book is full of a strange language spoken by Alex and his droogs (friends). Another reason was the author's exceptional approach for applying these culture-bound words which are hard to translate.

#### B. Procedure

To accomplish the purpose, the following procedure was adopted:

- a) Initially, almost 243 Nadsat words were extracted from the novel A Clockwork Orange by Anthony Burgess. The UK version of the novel was studied in English with 21 chapters, and the extracted neologisms were gathered from all 21 chapters but as the Persian translated version was published in 20 chapters, the researcher had no choice but to delete the neologisms related to the 21st chapter.
- b) Next, the Persian translated book was read and studied carefully to identify and gather the Persian counterparts for these neologisms. The translator deleted some parts of the novel and obviously some Nadsat words were deleted. There were different reasons for this including political, social, and religious limitations, sometimes lack of time or the translator's insufficiency of knowledge or attention. The translator did not use a single meaning for a Nadsat throughout the whole text; she changed the translation from sentence to sentence. Therefore, in some new words there was more than one Persian equivalent. Occasionally, using dictionaries such as Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, International Student's Edition can be applied to find the exact meaning of the new word.
- c) The researcher worked on the translation strategies that could be used for neologisms. As previously mentioned, the framework for the current study was Newmark's [6] strategies for translation of neologisms, for example Functional Equivalent, Expansion, Transference, Compensation, Literal Translation, and Deletion. Consequently, the results depicted which translation strategy was adopted in each neologism.
- d) Thereafter, calculation was made to identify the frequencies and percentages of each of the translation strategies proposed by Newmark [6]. Throughout this stage, the most frequently used translation procedure was identified. The frequencies were drawn out of 243 and the percentages out of 100. It is noteworthy that the percentages were approximately corresponded to the frequencies.
- e) Finally, the results of data analysis were illustrated via tables and charts in which the frequency of each translation strategy was correlated with others to display the dominant ones. The results of the research were then interpreted and discussed.

## C. Design

Descriptive and qualitative research was done in order to find the translated Nadsat words of *A Clockwork Orange* and diverse translation strategies related to the case under

question. A table consisting of the Nadsat terms, the meanings in English, and the translations in Persian was designed. Subsequently, an attempt was made to highlight the strategies included in the translation of neologisms.

The researcher conducted a qualitative descriptive case study on a novel by Anthony Burgess entitled A Clockwork Orange taking into account Newmark's translation strategies for neologisms [6]. Therefore, the method of the present research was utilized to process the data that was gathered by the researcher through observation via text analysis.

All English Nadsat elements and their Persian translated equivalents were compared and analyzed carefully based on the framework. Consequently, the main approach for data analysis would be discourse analysis, equivalent, and comparative analysis. Discourse analysis was done to recognize Nadsat elements; equivalent analysis was introduced in order to determine the links between the neologisms and other parts of the sentence, and comparative analysis was necessary for comparing the English neologisms with their Persian counterparts.

#### VI. RESULTS OF THE STUDY BY STRATEGY

Comparing and examining 243 English neologisms with their corresponding equivalents in Persian, and application of some strategies related to translation of neologisms proposed by Newmark, the following results were obtained [6]:

#### A. Transference

## B. Functional Equivalent

Results of the statistics showed that the frequency of the functional equivalent was 38 with the percentage of 16. This translation strategy is one of the most common ones. For instance, Pretty Polly means Money, and the translator translated it according to functional equivalent, so some cultural factors interfered with the translation of this part and led to الماية عباد [ma:jeti:le]and الماية [ma:jeti:le]and [ma:jeti:le]and الماية [ma:jeti:le]and [ma:jeti:

Burgess used school-boy speak for *Apology* as *AppypollyLoggy* which was translated into معذرت بعذرت (mæzerætpæzeræt). These two words in English have been exactly translated into two Persian words which are rhythmic

as well; nonetheless, as far as some cultural aspects play a role in the translated version, the translation strategy is preferably functional equivalent.

#### C. Literal Translation

This translation strategy was the translator's favorite one, because she rendered A Clockwork Orange mainly by the usage of literal translation. Based on the results, the frequency of this method was 145 with the percentage of 60. Referring to the translated text, it is the most common strategy used in translation of the neologisms into Persian. These instances are the evidences of this strategy: Biblio means Library which is translated to کانابخانه [keta:bxu:ne]. Another example is Carman which means Pocket in English and جيب [d3i:b] in Persian.

It is noteworthy to mention that in some cases there are some mistranslations in neologisms. Concentrating on translation of the title, A Clockwork Orange as پرتقال کوکی [portegha:leku:ki:], one can understand that it is a literal translation. However, according to Burgess, Orange refers to the Malay word Orang/Man (c.f. the Orang Utan ape), but the translator overlooked the fact and conducted a literal translation. There is another reason that might be true about translation of the title in this way. Perhaps the translator intended to attract the audiences' attention with such a strange phrase, as there is no clockwork orange in the whole world.

### D. Compensation

According to the findings, the frequency of compensation is 36 with the percentage of 15. This translation strategy is one of the most common procedures in Persian translation. For example, Cancer refers to Cigarette in the glossary of A Clockwork Orange and it is a kind of pun, because smoking leads to cancer, so the Persian translator translated it as سيگار [si:ga:r]. Cancer is an example of compensation which was translated into another concept. In medicine, it has been proved that one of the Cancer risk factors is smoking, especially Cigarettes. Burgess made use of this characteristic and applied Cancer as a pun for Cigarette. The translator also understood Burgess' intention and translated it through compensation strategy. Another instance is Charles/Charlie which is a rhyming slang for Charlie Chaplin that refers to Priest as the translated version is کشیش [keʃi:ʃ]. Dobby is a good example to show the trait of this translation strategy. It means Good in Burgess' word, but the translator considered the context and the special language of Alex and his droogs and then translated Dobby into خوش خوشان [xoʃxoʃa:n], which is more suitable to the novel atmosphere.

#### E. Expansion

Results of the statistics showed that the frequency of expansion was 15 with the percentage of six. There is a major difference between this translation strategy and compensation. Some extra information is added to the word in expansion to show the real meaning, but in compensation, the word is exchanged completely with another one to illustrate the notion better than the main word.

According to Burgess' glossary, *Skazat* means *Speak/Say*. In the Persian translated version, the translator translated it into A Li Liam ta: ka:mhærfnæzæd]based on the context. That is to say, the translator expanded and added some parts to the main word in order to make the meaning crystal clear and put the audiences into the original atmosphere of Nadsat which is the language of Alex and his droogs (friends).

Another example is Hen-korm which is an inverted slang Hen-corn. As it is obvious, it refers to the notion of feeding animals and especially hens which are scattered on the ground. Therefore, the translator applied this meaning and translated it خيابون وسط کرد پلا پخش و [pæxʃopæla: kærdvæsætexija:bu:n], to show the exact image of Burgess' intention of using such inverted slang. Ookadeet is one more instance which is noteworthy to mention. It means leave in English, but the translator tried to illustrate the level of detestation in Alex of the man he was speaking about and færefra:kændoræft/ with شرش رو کند و رفت færefra:kændoræft/ some expansion to the main notion.

#### F. Deletion

This is not a translation strategy, but there are some Nadsats or neologisms in *A Clockwork Orange* that have no counterparts in the Persian translated book. The frequency of these new words was seven with the percentage of three in total.

Through the translation process, deletion may occur for the sake of political, social, or religious limitations and exigencies, and sometimes a word is deleted as a result of lack of time or translator's inadequate knowledge.

#### VII. SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS

In summary, five translation strategies were applied as the framework in the present study, which were *Functional Equivalent*, *Expansion*, *Transference*, *Compensation*, and *Literal Translation*. The results illustrated that for translation of 243 neologisms into Persian, some strategies were employed more frequently than the rest. In other words, the most commonly used approach was *Literal Translation* with the total number of 145 and the percentage of 60. Whereas the least frequent strategy proposed by Newmark [6] was *Transference* with the total number of two and percentage of one

The above results uncovered the fact that since there was not an exact equivalence in the two languages, the translator intuitively resorted to *Literal translation*. According to [6], such strategy is possible in those cases where two languages use different alphabetical writing systems.

## VIII.CONCLUSION

In accordance with the analysis of data and the findings of this study, some strategies occurred more frequently than the rest in translation of 243 English neologisms into Persian. Based on the results, the first two most frequently applied translation strategies, which could be used for Nadsat words, were *Literal Translation* which included 145 instances and 60% of the cases; the second one was *Functional Equivalent* 

with the frequency of 38 and the percentage of 16. This strategy had a trivial difference with *Compensation* strategy with 36 instances and 15% of the cases. The least common translation strategy was *Transference*, with a frequency of two (1%).

It can be suggested to research on neologisms which are invented by Burgess in all of his novels are full of newly created words. There is a movie version of *A Clockwork Orange* by the unforgettable Stanley Kubrick; it is a good idea to study the faithfulness of the screenplay to the novel and the dubbing or subtitling of the film.

The further topic worth investigating could be the examination of the quality and quantity of strategies using different target languages like Italian, Spanish, French, German, and even Russian, and then the comparison of the translation of two different target languages with each other.

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