

## CULTURAL ADAPTATION AS A MEANS OF TRANSLATING ANTONOMASIA

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**Abstract.** The aim of the given paper is by means of case study to illustrate specific examples of token names or antonomasia translated via cultural adaptation. The study reveals that in L. Carroll's "Alice Through the Looking Glass" token names occupy a great place. The article will discuss especially such cases of token names which are given to the insects. The study revealed that the choice of the insects in the ST is culturally-based. They are the most frequently encountered species in the UK, and quite naturally the translator S. Seferyan transmitted them into Armenian not directly by their corresponding equivalence but by the name of insects known and recognizable for the target readers, specifically because the target readers are children. Moreover, the translator managed to apply cultural adaptation while translating new, imaginary characters.

**Keywords:** cultural adaptation, antonomasia, translation, secondary nomination

### Introduction

Considering translation as a cross-cultural means of communication the technique of cultural adaptation can become of paramount importance. In this context House's definition referring to translation is just to the point: "Translation is a replacement of a text in the source language by a semantically and pragmatically equivalent text in the target language" (House, 2015:23). House also touches upon the issues of overt translation and covert translation. In this respect he argues that an overt translation is required whenever the source text is linked to the source language and its culture. A covert translation is closely linked to the target language. It enjoys the status of an original source text in the target language. In covert translation, functional equivalence is essential because it involves subtle cultural presuppositions which necessitate the application of a "cultural filter".

The issue of adaptation has been discussed by different linguists. Vinay and Darbelnet defined adaptation as changing the cultural reference when a situation in source culture does not exist in the target culture (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995: 39-40). So, adaptation can be defined as the process of adapting any type of content to the culture of the target language.

M. Baker believes that cultural substitution can be basic strategy for replacing a culture specific item or expression with a target-language item which does not have the same propositional meaning but is likely to have a similar impact on the target reader by evoking a similar context in the target culture (Baker, 1992:29).

In the framework of this article cultural adaptation will be the object of investigation. It should be noted that the same phenomenon has multiple variations: cultural adaptation, cultural equivalent (Newmark, 1988), 'cultural substitution' (Baker, 2011), and 'cultural equalization' (Hoed, 2006).

Speaking about cultural adaptation as a translation technique which aims at keeping cultural identity it is also worth discussing the notion of antonomasia being the source of secondary nomination and cultural identification. A. Yuldashev fairly refers to the secondary nomination as a subjective unit. "The values of secondary nomination units are subjective. They are based on the human ability to compare and associate different categories in accordance with all thesaurus knowledge and ideas, which makes it legitimate to conclude that they are nationally colored. Thus, verbally represented concepts through secondary nomination serve as a valuable source of information about the reflection in the language of cognitive structures that categorize the national-

cultural knowledge of representatives of a separate linguo-cultural community, which allows us to consider this way of conceptualizing knowledge not only as a linguistic, but also as a cognitive phenomenon”.( Yuldashev, 2022). Thus, antonomasia or a token name can serve as a linguo-cultural means conceptualizing the source language’s national-cultural knowledge.

### Methods

This is a case study based on a specific study of cultural adaption as a translation technique. Other methods implemented in this article are: comparative and contrastive analysis as well as method of descriptive analysis.

### Discussion

#### Cultural Adaptation of Antonomasia in Armenian Rendering of L. Carroll’s ‘Alice Through the Looking Glass’

A stylistic device of ‘antonomasia or a token name’ is vividly expressed in L. Carroll’s ‘Alice Through the Looking Glass’. Equivalent translation of stylistic devices is both a challenge to tackle for literary translators and at the same time quite an interesting phenomenon. Very often antonomasia is translated by means of borrowing: either by transliteration or transcription. However, cultural adaptation can also become a strong tool for it. A brilliant example of cultural adaptation can be seen in the Armenian rendering of L. Carroll’s ‘Alice Through the Looking Glass’ done by S. Seferyan. In the following examples the names of insects are token names. It is worth mentioning that the writer used such types of insects which are better known among English readers and are widely spread in the UK. Let us observe the following examples.

- ‘All right,’ said the Gnat: ‘half way up that bush, you’ll see a **Rocking-horse-fly**, if you look. **It’s made entirely of wood, and gets about by swinging itself from branch to branch.**’

‘What does it live on?’ Alice asked, with great curiosity.

‘*Sap and sawdust,*’ said the Gnat. ‘Go on with the list.’

Alice looked up at the **Rocking-horse-fly** with great interest, and made up her mind that it must have been just repainted, it looked so bright and sticky; and then she went on.(Ch. 3)

- Շատ լավ, - ասաց Մոծակը, - եթե ուշադիր նայես թփին, կտեսնես **Մոծաքլորին**:

**Սուր կնճիթ ունի, ամբողջ օրը ծուլորուղու է կանչում:**

- Իսկ ինչո՞վ է սնվում, - հետաքրքրվեց Ալիսը:

- **Արյունով ու կորեկով:** Շարունակիր, - ոգևորվեց Մոծակը:

Ալիսը նայեց Մոծաքլորին և որոշեց, որ նա կոպարար մոծաքլոր է. կնճիթը ցցած՝ գլուխն անդադար ցնցում էր:

First of all, it should be noted that the insect “horse-fly” is one of the frequently encountered species in the UK. The insect “horse-fly” has corresponding Armenian equivalent “ձիապիծակ”. However, the translator did not apply the Armenian equivalent, most likely because this type of insect is not a type of insect that can be recognized immediately by Armenian readers. He replaced it by **moth** “Մոծակ”, which is more perceivable. In the ST the writer added a new characteristic, namely, “rocking” and a created a new character - a **Rocking-horse-fly**, which is swinging and is made of wood. The image of a Rocking horse is well-known in the UK as a famous wooden toy, moreover it is in a way connected with the English queen, namely Queen Victoria.

The description the insect fully corresponds to its token name. It is a rocking horse-fly that is why it is swinging. Now let’s observe the implemented cultural adaptation in Armenian translation.

The translator created a new image of an insect ‘**Մոծաքլոր**’. It is a compound, a blending of two animals, rather *an insect and rooster*, a kind of insect which resembles a rooster. This imaginary personage is more understandable for Armenian readers, especially children. Adaptation is applied in its description. If in the ST a **Rocking-horse-fly** is swinging creature and is made of wood, it has an

antenna like an insect and all day long crows with Cock-a-doodle-do like a rooster. So, TT character also corresponds to its name. Another adaptation connected with this personage refers to the part where it is discussed what that insect feeds on. In the ST it lives on *Sap and sawdust* which can be associated with wood. In the TT they are adapted to ‘blood and millet’, as insects eat blood, roosters – millet. So, the adaptation is carried out in correspondence with the TT imaginary character. The same technique the translator has also applied with other characters.

- ‘And there's **the Dragon-fly.**’

‘Look on the branch above your head,’ said the Gnat, ‘and there you'll find a **Snap-dragon-fly. Its body is made of plum-pudding, its wings of holly-leaves, and its head is a raisin burning in brandy.**’  
‘And what does it live on?’

‘*Frumenty and mince pie,*’ the Gnat replied; ‘and it makes its nest in a Christmas box.’ (Ch.3)

- ზետნ 'Բզեզ:

- Գլխավերსիդ ճյուղին նստած է Բըզեզը: Թողնես ամբողջ օրը թները թափահարի ու քառայի:

- Բսկ ի նչ է ուտում:

- Զանազան այլ միջատներ, բայց ավելի շատ խտտ:

The insect ‘‘dragon-fly’’ like horse-fly is not a random insect used by the author. It has cultural roots connected with the Celts considering it as something sacred. Some stories even imply that the Dragonfly is actually a fairy in disguise that only can be seen from the right angle. When dragonfly larvae hatch, they’re called ‘‘nymphs.’’ (Dragonfly Symbolism in Celtic Lore, 2023). On the basis of dragon-fly the author creates another image **Snap-dragon-fly** which is described as a creature made of plum pudding with the wings of holly leaves. Here it should be stated that ‘‘holly’’ is an evergreen plant, which means it does not shed its leaves in winter. (How to identify Holly, 2023). So this quality conveys green color to that personage. Another quality of it is that its head is a raisin burning in brandy. We can guess that this character consists of two .. holly- leaf and sweet dragon-fly. No wonder this creature lives on mince pie and frumenty - a popular dish in Western European medieval cuisine. It is a porridge, a thick boiled grain dish.

In the TT the translator employed cultural adaptation in a quite unique way. The equivalent translation of ‘‘dragon-fly’’ is << ճպոռ >>, however, she preferred to translate it by another insect ‘‘**Բզեզ**’’ - beetle. The choice of the insect becomes clear for reader a little later, when by some skillful modification it is changed into an imaginary character ‘‘Բըզեզը’’. Actually, within the word ‘‘Բզեզ’’ the last two letters stand for another animal name in Armenian ‘‘**Եզ**’’ - ox. So, by capitalizing the first letter in the word ‘‘Բըզեզը’’ the translator created a so-called blended character: beetle and ox. The other part of text is adapted accordingly. The creature is described as something that *bellows like an ox and flutters like a butterfly*. Adaptation is applied also when it answers the question what it lives on. The it feeds on *Frumenty and mince pie* is adapted into 'It feeds on different insects and mostly grass which completely suit the created character of a beetle and ox.

- And then there's **the Butterfly,** Alice went on, after she had taken a good look at the insect with its head on fire, and had thought to herself, ‘I wonder if that's the reason insects are so fond of flying into candles -- because they want to turn into **Snap-dragon-flies!** ‘Crawling at your feet,’ said the Gnat (Alice drew her feet back in some alarm), ‘you may observe a **Bread-and-Butterfly. Its wings are thin slices of Bread-and-butter, its body is a crust, and its head is a lump of sugar.**’  
‘And what does it live on?’  
‘*Weak tea with cream in it.*’ (Ch.3)

- Ապա **Զատիկը**, - շարունակեց Ալիսը Բըզեզին լավ նայելուց հետո և մտածեց. «Ահա թե ուր են անհետանում զանազան փոքր միջատները, նրանք կեր են դառնում Բըզեզին»:

- Եթե սողաս ոտքերիդ վրա, - ասաց Մոծակը (Ալիսը տազնապահար էտ քաշեց ոտքերը), - շատ **Հովազատիկներ** կտեսնես: **Նրանք գոլավոր են և պիսակավոր:**

- *Ինչո՞վ են սնվում:*

- *Շղջերակոր անասուններով:*

The choice of the insect in the ST becomes understandable when the author gives a token name to the Butterfly and it turns into Bread-and-Butterfly. Bread-and-Butter (Butterbrot) with tea are an inseparable part of the English culture, tea even is dealt with as a symbol of it. The Armenian equivalent of "Butterfly" is "թիթեռ", however the translator preferred to translate it by another insect "Զատիկ" which corresponds to English "ladybug". The latter is considered as a sacred insect in the Armenian mindset. Even the Christian festival "Easter" has the same name "Զատիկ". Moreover, during Easter many Armenians make cookies in the form of a ladybug. Obviously, there is another reason as well why the translator chose particularly that insect. Actually, the translator had to choose a kind of insect on the basis of which she would be able to adapt it into a new character which is "Հովազատիկ". It is a blended creature of a *leopard* and *ladybug*. In the ST Bread-and-Butterfly is depicted as a creature the wings of which are slices of bread and butter, its body is crust and its head is a lump of sugar. As it can be seen the description fully fits the token name. In the same way the translator managed to adapt the description to the TT token name "Հովազատիկ". It is striped and spotted like the leopards and ladybugs. Adaptation is employed also in the next part of the text when Alice asks what it lives on. Naturally, in the ST it lives on tea with cream on it and in the TT it feeds on the cattle.

It is worth mentioning that chosen token names in the ST and TT occupy a specific place in the cultural mindset of both languages.

Another case of antonomasia being translated by means of cultural adaptation we can come across in Chapter 6. Here it is not a name of an insect but a famous English character well-known especially among children, namely Humpty-Dumpty.

- My name is Alice, but -'

'It's a stupid name enough!' *Humpty Dumpty* interrupted impatiently. 'What does it mean?'

'Must a name mean something?' Alice asked doubtfully.

'Of course it must,' *Humpty Dumpty* said with a short laugh: '*my name means the shape I am -- and a good handsome shape it is, too.* With a name like your, you might be any shape, almost.' (Ch.6)

- *Անունս Ալիս է, բայց..*

- *Բավական հիմար անուն է,- անհամբերությամբ ընդհատեց Պստիկ Հաստիկը,- ի՞նչ է նշանակում:*

- *Պարտադիր ը է անունն իմաստ ունենա,- կասկածանքով հարցրեց Ալիսը:*

- *Իհարկե, - փոթկացրեց Պստիկ Հաստիկը,- օրինակ, իմ անունը կշիռս է ցույց տալիս, և այն էլ ինչպիսի կշիռ: Քոնն էլ պետք է ինչոր բան ցույց տա*

*Humpty-Dumpty* is translated as *Պստիկ Հաստիկը*. The translator resorted to the accepted form of this token name, as it is not a new personage created by the author but a well-known English character has its Armenian version, i.e. *Պստիկ Հաստիկը*. This character is easily recognizable by this form and shape- fat egg. This conversation itself is about nomination, a name must mean something, as it is of distinct shape the character fairly says that his name specifies his shape. Interestingly the translator here as well manages to apply cultural adaptation translating "shape" as "կշիռ" which means weight. This is done to harmonize with the Armenian token name "Հաստիկ" "squatly".

## Conclusion

Thus, the study showed that antonomasia occupies a great place in "Alice Through the Looking Glass". The choice of the insects in the ST and TT showed that both the author and the

translator carried out thorough selection: on the one hand to use those ones which are recognizable in their cultures, on the other hand to have an opportunity to create a new character and give a token name. The study proved that cultural adaptation can be a perfect technique for translating secondary nomination.

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