

**ACHIEVING EQUIVALENT EFFECT IN THE ARMENIAN AND RUSSIAN
TRANSLATIONS OF THE RIDDLES IN THE DARK
FROM “THE HOBBIT” BY J. R. R. TOLKIEN**

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Abstract. This research aims to illuminate the challenges of translating J. R. R. Tolkien’s riddles from the fifth chapter of *The Hobbit*. We extend prior work on the literary analysis of Tolkien’s riddles by shifting the focus on the study of their translations. To date, no systematic analysis has studied the translation procedures applied in the Armenian and Russian translations of Tolkien’s riddles. This study is motivated by two research questions: (1) What are the translation techniques used by the two translators to convey the meaning of the ST in TTs? (2) How these techniques helped the two translators achieve equivalent effect which would make the reader arrive at the ST answers? To examine these questions, the present research made an attempt to investigate three separate semiotic systems, namely English, Armenian and Russian, actualized in Tolkien’s riddles and their two translations. Synthesizing the several taxonomies of translation techniques, this research concludes that in the translation of riddles oblique translation techniques are the most common. The findings support the prediction that oblique translation techniques, such as transposition and modulation, were given preference over literal translation and offer insights into the importance of creative choices made by these two translators.

Keywords: Riddles, Oblique translation technique, ST, TT, Armenian, Russian.

Introduction

In this analysis the Armenian and Russian translations of *The Hobbit* are vying with each other for the reader’s attention. Tolkien’s riddles from the fifth chapter of *The Hobbit* named “Riddles in the Dark” are interpreted slightly differently in each translation. This article aims to highlight those differences. In the light of the Vinay and Darbelnet classic taxonomy of linguistic changes in translation (Munday, 2016, p. 88), Berman’s “negative and positive analytics” (p. 230) and the translation techniques discussed by Newmark (1988), we have studied the level of equivalence in the Armenian and Russian translations by Torosyan and Rakhmanova, respectively. This study examines some of these difficulties and the ways in which Torosyan and Rakhmanova overcame them, as well as highlights the importance of viewing the text “as a coherent whole” (Eco, 1992, p. 181). Thus, the two translators approached the sign system of the ST in its entirety in order to a) identify the key linguistic signs in the general context of the story, i.e. words that play the part of hints in the solution of the riddle, b) achieve equivalent effect in the TT to make the reader arrive at the correct answer which corresponds to the answer in the ST.

Discussion

The answers of Tolkien’s riddles, i.e. “a mountain”; “teeth”; “wind”; “the sun on the daisies”; “dark”; “an egg”; “fish”; “fish on a table, man on a stool, cat gets the scraps”, “time”, tell a lot about the background of Gollum and Bilbo in the context of *The Hobbit*. Not only did Torosyan and Rakhmanova take that into consideration, but also, standing in the position between the author and the reader or in words of Ricoeur, “between two masters” (as stated in Kearney, 2007, p. 150), managed to reflect their knowledge of two heroes’ backgrounds in their translations. There are nine riddles in this chapter where five are posed by Gollum and four by Bilbo. Consider the first question Gollum hisses to Bilbo:

- 1) *What has roots as nobody sees,
Is taller than trees,*

*Up, up it goes,
And yet never grows? (p. 73)*

This is an example of a paradox riddle where the description of the “thing” Gollum has in mind (something that resembles a tree), is succeeded by a surprise element at the end (but is not a tree). Here lies the self-contradictory essence of the riddle, “Thus, through paradox, the riddles combine two mundane entities that at first perhaps seem entirely unrelated” (Inkenhaag, 2019, p. 17). Torosyan provided the following translation:

*Ի նչն է, արմատ ունի, բայց ոչ ոք չի տեսնում,
Հսկա ծառերից բարձր է խոյանում,
Բարձրանում է, բարձրանում
Ու չի մեծանում (էջ 87):*

The first change the Armenian translator made concerns the word “roots” which was rendered in Armenian in singular form, i.e. «արմատ», instead of the literal «արմատներ». This is an example of transposition, and more specifically, an optional transposition, in the words of Vinay and Darbelnet. Transposition entails a change in the grammar during the translation process (Newmark, 1988, p. 55). In this case the plural form of ST was translated with the help of a singular form in the TT. The second change is an example of obligatory transposition which is manifested in the substitution of the single negation in English “as nobody sees” with a double negation in Armenian «ոչ ոք չի տեսնում» as double negation is the norm in standardized Eastern Armenian. The third change made by Torosyan is the addition of the word «հսկա» (“giant”, “huge”) which Vinay and Darbelnet call “amplification”, or “expansion” in the words of Berman. The comparative adjective “taller” is translated as a verb in Armenian, i.e. «խոյանում» in the expression «բարձր խոյանալ» (“to uprise”, “to ascend”), and this is an optional transposition as well, as the translator had the option of providing a literal translation, i.e. «ավելի բարձր է, քան ծառերը», however the latter would break the rhyme of the riddle. The translation of the third line is another example of optional transposition where “up, up it goes” is translated into Armenian with the help of the verb «բարձրանալ» (“to rise”, “to ascend”), instead of the literal translation «վեր, վեր է գնում». In the last line, the word “yet” (in this context - «սակայն», «բայց և այնպես») and the adverb “never” («երբեք») were omitted, while the phrase “never grows” was translated as «չի մեծանում». The latter, on the one hand, could be considered a literal translation, as one of the dictionary equivalents of the verb “to grow” is «մեծանալ». On the other hand, this could be an example of generalization in the specific context of this riddle where the narrator is comparing the mountain with trees. In Armenian “trees grow” would be translated through the verb «աճել», i.e. «ծառերն աճում են», rather than «մեծանում», and this nuance would add a whole new change of perspective for the listener or the reader as the something-that-resembles-a-tree line of thought would come to its logical conclusion, however it was somewhat neutralized.

*Не увидеть ее корней,
Вершина выше тополей,
Все вверх и вверх она идет,
Но не растет (стр. 54).*

In the Russian translation Rakhmanova employed obligatory transposition as in the first line of the riddle we notice a change of grammatical structure. This happens when “a SL grammatical structure does not exist in the TL” (Newmark, 1988, p. 55). It is worth noting that the verb “to see” is translated as “увидать”, which is synonymous to the verb “увидеть” however, the former indicates uncertainty or accidentality, generality; while the latter shows certainty, accuracy in time, circumstances or subject. In the second line, the translator added the word “вершина” (“vertex”, “peak”, “top”) which is an example of amplification and explicitation or clarification. The plural noun “trees” was conveyed into Russian as “тополя” (“poplars”) and is an example of general>particular

optional modulation. On the one hand, the reason behind this choice lies in the content, i.e. the meaning of the word “тополь”, that is a tall tree, and on the other, the form of the word, i.e. the genitive case “тополей” (“of poplars”) which rhymes with the word “корней” (“of roots”). Another example of explicitation is presented in the translation of the pronoun “it” as nominative singular feminine pronoun “она” as English does not have grammatical gender, while Russian is a highly gendered language. Hence, as the answer “mountain” is “гора” in Russian, which is a feminine noun, the translator made the aforementioned choice. In the third line Rakhmanova made use of amplification adding the word “все” where “все вверх и вверх она идет” would be metaphrased as “All up and up it goes”. This technique intensifies the pragmatic effect of the line. In the last line Rakhmanova omitted translating the adverb “never” similarly to Torosyan. The same goes with the conjunction “and”, however the rest of the sentence is an example of literal translation.

The second riddle is posed by Bilbo to Gollum and sounds thus:

- 2) *Thirty white horses on a red hill,
First they champ,
Then they stamp,
Then they stand still* (p. 74).

This is one of the traditional riddles which is not Tolkien’s creation, rather reproduction. According to Anderson, “Bilbo’s “teeth” riddle, is a “touched up” version of a riddle that appears as Riddle 229 in Iona and Peter Opie’s Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes (121-22)” (as cited in Nelson, 2008, p. 67). This riddle is not a paradox and is based on comparison between the sounds the horses and teeth make:

They “champ,” and if we have something like “crush and chew by vigorous and noisy action of the jaws” attached to the word in our mental dictionaries (or turn to the Oxford English Dictionary for help) this would seem to be an automatic give-away. But they also “stamp,” and “bring their feet down heavily,” and this, if the subject is really horses, would seem to be the word-meaning connection here. But “stamp” can also mean imply “crush or press,” and Gollum quickly solves Bilbo’s riddle with the words “Teeth! teeth! my precious; but we has only six!” (81) (Nelson, 2008, p. 70).

Torosyan’s translation can be read below:

*Երեսուն ձերսակ ձի՝ կարսիք բլրին կանգնած,
Չխկխկացնում են,
Կրճտացնում են
Ու անշարժանում հոգնած* (էջ 87):

The first change is in the addition of the word «կանգնած» which is the resultative participle of the verb «կանգնել» (“stand”). This is an example of optional transposition as the literal translation of line would be «կարսիք բլրի վրա», however this construction would break the rhyme. The second example of obligatory transposition is expressed in the change of the noun “horses” in plural to the noun «ձի» in singular which is in accordance with the singularity/plurality rules of Armenian grammar. The translation of the second line in TT is the third line while the third line took the place of the second. The adverbs “first” and “then” were omitted, as well as the pronoun “they”, as in Armenian the auxiliary verb «են» indicates the person and the number of the subject. The last line in TT is another example of transposition as the phrasal verb “to stand still” was rendered as «անշարժանալ» (“to freeze”, “to stand still”). However, the word «հոգնած» (“tired”) was added and this is an example of expansion and explicitation as with the addition of this word the translator might be giving more hints to the reader. It is also worth mentioning that Torosyan retained the rhyme scheme of the original, both ST and TT have ABBA rhyme scheme.

*На красных холмах
Тридцать белых коней
Друг другу навстречу
Помчатся скорей,
Ряды их сойдутся,
Потом разойдутся, —
И смирными станут
До новых затей* (стр. 54).

The first ST-TT difference that strikes the eye of the reader is the form, i.e. the length of the riddle in Russian, it is twice as long as the original. The first line was rendered in plural “На красных холмах”, i.e. “on a red hill” which is in singular in ST. The second change is in the word order; in English “horses” come first then “a hill”, meanwhile in Russian it is the opposite. And this is an example of optional inversion. The adverb “first” was omitted in the third line where we also have a case of amplification, i.e. «Друг другу навстречу/ Помчатся скорей» (“Towards each other/ They rush”). The literal translation of the verb “champ” is “хрупать” while “stamp” is “топтать”, “бить копытами”, however Rakhmanova translated the following lines implementing the technique of expansion and ennoblement, in the words of Berman, as in TT the horses rush towards each other and “Their ranks converge/Then diverge”, i.e. “Ряды их сойдутся, / Потом разойдутся”. The translation of the last two lines is also an example of ennoblement, i.e. “И смирными станут /До новых затей” (“And will go quiet/Until new ideas”). All in all, the Russian translator deconstructed and reconstructed the ST and mainly by amplifying and ennobling the verse came up with the Russian translation.

3) *Voiceless it cries,
Wingless flutters,
Toothless bites,
Mouthless mutters* (p. 74).

The third riddle contains a paradox in every line. Except for the first line the following three lines consist of two-word paradoxes. This is a tool Tolkien used to create ambiguity for the reader. The Armenian translation is the following:

*Չի խոսում, բայց կանչում է,
Առանց թևի թռչում է,
Ատամ չունի՝ կծում է,
Բերան չունի՝ սուլում է* (էջ 87):

The adjectives “voiceless” was translated through optional transposition as this adjective was substituted with a verb in Armenian, i.e. «չի խոսում» (“doesn’t speak”). The translator amplified the sentence by adding the conjunction «բայց» (“but”). The second case of optional transposition is presented in the translation of the adjective “wingless” («անթև») is translated as a prepositional phrase «առանց թևի» (“without wing”). The translation of the verb “flutter” as «թռչել» (“to fly”) in TT is an example of generalization and qualitative impoverishment as “to flutter” isn’t simply “to fly”, but “to flap the wings rapidly” (Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/flutter>) and could be translated into TT as «ճախրել» which is the equivalent or the formal correspondent of the English verb “to flutter”. The third case of optional transposition is the translation of the adjective “toothless” as a phrase «ատամ չունի» (“doesn’t have teeth”). And we observe a similar case regarding the adjective “mouthless” («անբերան»), which was translated as a phrase «բերան չունի» (“doesn’t have mouth”) and this is another example of optional transposition. The verb “mutter” which means “to utter sounds or words indistinctly or with a low voice and with the lips partly closed; to murmur” (Merriam-Webster) was translated as «սուլել» (“to whistle”) as in Armenian «քամին

սուլում է» (“the wind whistles”, the English equivalent would be “the wind howls”). I conjecture that the translator made this choice based on the answer “wind” and also to make «სუլუმ է» rhyme with the rest of the poem as one mutters and whistles with one’s mouth, and that is what these two actions have in common. Thus, even though these two verbs mean different things, the choice to translate the English “mutter” as «სულელ» in Armenian doesn’t change the overall pragmatic effect of the riddle but only enhances it and this could be considered an example of clarification or explicitation as the final line in Armenian helps the Armenian reader to guess that the answer is “wind”. If taken as a whole «քամին սուլում է» where «քամի» is the word in absentia then this could be an example of adaptation.

*Без голоса кричит,
Без зубов кусает,
Без крыльев летит,
Без горла завывает (стр. 54).*

In the Russian translation the first change is an optional transposition in the translation of the adjective “voiceless” (“безголосый”) which was rendered in the TT as the prepositional phrase “Без голоса” (“without voice”). Similar to this in the following two lines examples of optional transposition occurred, i.e. “toothless” (“беззубый”) was translated as “Без зубов” and “wingless” (“бескрылый”) as “Без крыльев” whereas the verbs “bites” and “flies” were conveyed in the TT with the help of literal translation, i.e. “кусает” and “летит”, respectively. However, the second line was translated as the third line and the other way round. The translator, supposedly, made that choice to recreate the English ABAB rhyme.

In the final line of the riddle the adjective “mouthless” (“безротый”) was translated as “Без горла” (“without throat”) which is an example of part<another part modulation. The verb “to mutter” (“бормотать”) was rendered in the TT as “завывать” which means “to howl” in English. Rakhmanova based this translation on the expression “Ветер завывает” (“the wind howls”) which is, similar to the Armenian translation, an example of clarification as it would possibly help the Russian reader to guess the answer.

*4) An eye in a blue face
Saw an eye in a green face.
“That eye is like to this eye”
Said the first eye
“But in low place
Not in high place” (pp. 74-75).*

The fourth riddle is posed by Bilbo who made it on the spot to “puzzle the nasty little underground creature” (p. 74). The key feature of this riddle is personification where thing A saw thing B and noticed their resemblance. Bilbo thinks that with this riddle he will confuse Gollum as the latter seems to dwell in the dark and is indeed an underground creature, however he recalls “memories of ages and ages before, when he lived with his grandmother in a hole in a bank by a river” (p. 75) and hisses the answer “sun on the daisies”.

*Կապույտ երեսին մի աչք,
Կանաչ երեսին մի ուրիշ աչք տեսավ:
-Էս աչքն էլ ինձ պես աչք է,- աչքն ասաց,-
Բայց ցածում,
Այլ ոչ ինձ պես վերևում (էջ 87):*

In the first line of the TT a change of an optional word order occurred «Կապույտ երեսին մի աչք» (“on a blue face an eye”) and the same concerns the second line «Կանաչ երեսին մի ուրիշ աչք տեսավ» (“in a green face saw an eye”) where the word «ուրիշ» (“another”) was added and this is an example of amplification. The third and fourth lines were translated as one line in TT, i.e. the third line, where the first change concerns the reversal of terms which is a type of modulation: “That eye is like to this eye/ Said the first eye” was translated as «-Էս աչքն էլ ինձ պես աչք է,- աչքն սուսաց,-» (“This eye is just like me an eye”). The determiner “that” («այն», «այդ») was translated as a pronoun «էս» (the colloquial variant of «այս», i.e. “this”) which is a change of register. The phrase “Said the first eye” was translated as «աչքն սուսաց» (“the eye said”) and this is an example of implicitation through omission of the determiner “first” («առաջին»).

In the last two lines “in low place” was translated as «ցածում» while “in high place” as «վերևում» and both are examples of generalization. In the beginning of the last line the translator amplified the sentence by adding «ինձ պես» (“like me”) and this is an example of clarification.

*Огромный глаз сияет
В небесной синеве,
А маленький глазок —
Сидит в густой траве.
Большой глядит — и рад:
«Внизу мой младший брат!» (стр. 55).*

The first change in the Russian translation that stands out is the addition of the word “Огромный” (“huge”) and this is an example of clarification. The first two lines of the TT are an example of ennoblement as in Russian “in a blue face” is «В небесной синеве» (“in the blue of the sky” or “in the sky blue”), yet another explicitation. “Saw an eye in a green face” was translated as «А маленький глазок —/Сидит в густой траве» (“And the little eyelet/ Is sitting in thick grass”) where there the translator made several additions as well as clarifications or explicitations. A reversal of terms (modulation) is another change which can be observed in the TT as in English “an eye saw an eye” meanwhile in Russian «маленький глазок сидит» where “глазок” is the diminutive of “глаз”.

In the fifth line another addition occurred “Большой глядит — и рад” (“The big one looks —/ And is glad”) whereas the English statement “That eye is like to this eye [...] / But in low place / Not in high place” was translated as «Внизу мой младший брат! » (“Below is my little brother!”). Here we observe another example of ennoblement and reinforcement of personification as a new concept was introduced, that is one of “brotherhood”.

It is worth mentioning that the answer in Russian is “одуванчик” (“dandelion”) whereas in the SL the answer is “sun on the daisies” (“солнце на маргаритках”) where the concept of “sun” was omitted. However, the Armenian translation is «արևն ու մարգարտածաղիկն են» (“the sun and the daisy”) where the concept of the “sun shining on daisies” was rendered counting of the two “things” in absentia and the conjunction «ու» (“and”) which connects them.

*5) It cannot be seen, cannot be felt,
Cannot be heard, cannot be smelt.
It lies behind stars and under hills,
And empty holes it fills.
It comes first and follows after,
Ends life, kills laughter (p. 75).*

And it is Gollum’s turn again. The fifth riddle speaks volumes of Gollum’s current state and life as “The memory of a happier time that enabled him to answer Bilbo’s riddle has intensified Gollum’s

exasperation with his current loneliness and hunger” (Nelson, 2008, p. 72). Thus, Gollum hisses his “dark” riddle and its Armenian translation can be read below:

*Ոչ ոք չի տեսնում ու չի շոշափում,
Ոչ ոք չի լսում, հոտը չի առնում:
Երկնքից երկիր աշխարհը բոլոր
Ծածկում է, լցնում անտառ, սար ու ձոր:
Մեկ տեսար՝ եկավ, հետո հաջորդեց,
Խիհնդ ու ծիծաղին, կյանքին վերջ դրեց (Էջ 89):*

In the TT the passive structure of the ST has been replaced with the active one «Ոչ ոք չի տեսնում ու չի շոշափում/ Ոչ ոք չի լսում, հոտը չի առնում» (“No one sees it and feel it/No one hears it, smells it”) and this is an example of modulation where the pronoun «ոչ ոք» (“no one”) was added. The auxiliary verb “can” was omitted in the TT. The third and fourth lines were translated with the help of generalization, i.e. «Երկնքից երկիր աշխարհը բոլոր» (“From the sky till the earth the world entire”) and explicitation, i.e. «Ծածկում է, լցնում անտառ, սար ու ձոր» (“It covers, fills a forest, mount and gorge”) where several words were added «անտառ», «սար», «ձոր» to convey the meaning of “empty holes”. In the beginning of the fifth line the translator added the phrase «Մեկ տեսար» (“One saw it came, then it followed”) which was supposedly done to rhyme with the poem and in the final line the ST word order was inversed «Խիհնդ ու ծիծաղին, կյանքին վերջ դրեց» (“To mirth and laughter/ To life it put an end”) where the word «խիհնդ» (“mirth”, “joy”) was added as just like the word combinations «սար ու ձոր» (“mount and gorge”), the pair «խիհնդ ու ծիծաղ» commonly appear together in Armenian. Hence, these two cases are an example of reinforcement. And last but not least, in the final line the verbs “end” and “kill” were translated into TT with the help of the idiom «վերջ դնել» (“put an end to”) and this is an example of optional transposition.

*Ее не видеть
И в руки не брать,
Царит над всем,
Не пахнет ничем.
Встает во весь рост
На небе меж звезд.
Все начинается —
И все кончает (стр. 55).*

In the first two lines the passive structure of ST was translated as active in TT and this is an example of modulation. The verb “видать” is a colloquialism which means the same as “видеть”, i.e. “to see”. In the second line there is an example of particularization “в руки не брать” (“one cannot take it in hands”) and optional abstract>concrete modulation “feel” was translated with the help of the phraseologism “брать в руки” (“to take in hands”). The third line is an example of amplification and ennoblement “Царит над всем” (“Reigns over all”) whereas the fourth line of the TT is another example of passive>active modulation as “Cannot be smelt” was translated as “Не пахнет ничем” (“Doesn’t smell of anything”), with the distinctive of Russian double negation which can be paraphrased as “doesn’t smell of nothing”. As the TT has more lines than the ST here the fifth line is another addition made by Rakhmanova, i.e. “Встает во весь рост” (“Will get up to its full height”), and this solution reinforces the personification of the word in absentia. A similar choice was made for the following line “На небе меж звезд” (“In the sky among the stars”). The last two lines were translated as “Все начинается —/И все кончает” (“It begins all—/ And ends all”). The latter is the translation of the last two lines of the ST, however with the help of generalization.

6) *A box without hinges, key, or lid.
Yet golden treasure inside is hid* (p. 75).

The sixth riddle is posed by Bilbo to Gollum. This egg-riddle, as Tolkien writes in his letters, "...is a reduction to a couplet (my own) of a longer literary riddle which appears in some 'Nursery Rhyme' books, notably American ones" (Carpenter, 1981, p. 143). The Armenian translation of the riddle sounds thus:

*Փոքրիկ տուփ է անկափարիչ, անկողպեք,
Թե բացեցիք՝ միջից ոսկի կհանեք* (էջ 89):

In the first line the first change concerns the addition of the word «փոքրիկ» ("small") which is an example of amplification and explicitation. In the same line "without hinges, key, or lid" prepositional phrase was translated with the help of two adjectives, i.e. «անկափարիչ, անկողպեք» ("lidless", "lockless") and this is an example of optional transposition and quantitative impoverishment as the word "hinge" wasn't conveyed in the TT and instead was translated with the help of the word «անկողպեք».

In the second line "inside is hid" was translated by adding the phrase «Թե բացեցիք» ("If/once you open") which is an example of clarification and reversal of terms. In the same line the translation «Միջից ոսկի կհանեք» ("You'll take gold out of it") is another example of reversal of terms. "Golden treasure" was translated as «ოსკი» ("gold") which is an example of generalization.

*Без замков, без засовов дом,
Слиток золота спрятан в нем, — (стр. 55).*

Rakhmanova changed the word "box" into a "дом" ("house") which is an example of part>whole modulation. The word order in the first line is inversed however "without hinges, key, or lid" was translated as "Без замков, без засовов" ("without lock", "without bolt") and this is an example of quantitative impoverishment as the three terms of ST were rendered as two in TT. The translation "Слиток золота" is an example of particularization, more specifically whole>part modulation. In the translation "Спрятан в нем" ("is hidden inside of him") is an example of explicitation as in Russian the "thing" in absentia has gender, in this case masculine.

7) *Alive without breath,
As cold as death;
Never thirsty, ever drinking,
All in mail never clinking* (p. 76).

The seventh riddle is another paradox where the first, third and fourth lines are separate paradoxes. Bilbo's struggle here is longer than before however out of the blue a fish jumps out of water, "...a *deus ex machina* solution!" (Nelson, 2008, p. 74) and the answer made itself ostensibly clear:

*Առանց օդի է շնչում,
Մառք տեղում չի մրսում,
Խմում է, բայց ծարավ չի,
Զրահ ունի՝ զինվոր չի* (էջ 90):

Torosyan changed the perspective in the first line of TT, i.e. «Առանց օդի է շնչում» (“Without air it breathes”), which is an example of whole>part modulation where the meaning of being “alive” is translated through the meaning of the verb «շնչել» (“to breathe”), whereas “without breath” is rendered as «առանց օդի» (“without air”), i.e. part>whole modulation. The word order of the first line in ST is inversed in TT. The meaning of the second line «Մառը տեղում չի մրսում» (“In a cold place it doesn’t feel cold”) has nothing in common with the second line of the ST. I conjecture that it was made up by the translator to keep rhyme it with the first line of the riddle, i.e. «շնչում/մրսում». In the third line a change of word order occurred and the adverbs “never” and “ever” were omitted whereas the final line begins with transposition «Զրահ ունի» (“It has mail”) and continues with a change of meaning «զինվոր չի» (“isn’t a soldier”) in the place of “clinking”. This choice was made by Torosyan to rhyme the last two lines with each other as the poem has the AABB scheme. Even though certain meaning-related changes were made the riddle overall speaks of something that breathes without air which hints at a “thing” that does not need air to be alive; isn’t threatened by cold; drink but is never thirsty; and has armor but isn’t a soldier.

*Без воздуха живет она
И, как могила, холодна,
Не пьет, хотя в воде сидит,
В броне, хотя и не звенит (стр. 56).*

In the Russian translation the first change is part>whole modulation where “without breath” is translated as “Без воздуха” (“without air”). “Alive” is translated with the help of a phrase “живет она” (“lives she”) where the first element is an example of adjective>verb transposition and the second element is an example of explicitation as the word in absentia “it” is translated via feminine personal pronoun «она». The latter hints at the word “fish” in Russian which also has feminine gender, i.e. «рыба». In the second line Rakhmanova added the conjunction «И» and translated the rest as «как могила, холодна» (“As grave, cold”) with the help of whole>part modulation. The third line starts with a transposition where the adjective in “never thirsty” was translated as a verb “Не пьет” (“doesn’t drink”) whereas “ever drinking” was translated as “хотя в воде сидит” (“Although sits in water”) which is a change of meaning as the action ST was substituted with a place where the “thing” in absentia dwells. And in the fourth line the translator omitted the word “All” and compensated with the addition of “хотя” (“though”). “Never clinking” was translated as “не звенит” where the meaning of “never” was neutralized.

8) *No-legs lay on one-leg, two-legs sat near on three-legs, four-legs got some (p. 77).*

The eighth riddle immediately after his answer to the previous riddle pops in Bilbo’s mind. As this riddle is connected to the previous one Gollum soon gives the answer, “Fish on a little table, man at table sitting on a stool, the cat has the bones” (p. 77). Torosyan’s translation of the riddle is the following:

*Անտըր մի ոտանուն, երկոտանին եռոտանուն նստած, ինչ-որ բան էլ չորքոտանուն հասավ
(էջ 91):*

In Armenian the riddle the different leg-nouns are translated with the help of adjectival nouns, «Անտըր» (“the legless”), «մի ոտանուն» (“[on] the one-legged”) are examples of transpositions. In «երկոտանին եռոտանուն նստած» (“two-legged on the three-legged seated”) the verb in past participle “sat” is translated in TT as resultative participle «նստած» (“seated”) which is an example of optional transposition whereas the adverb “near” was omitted. «Ինչ-որ բան էլ չորքոտանուն հասավ» (“Something also four-legged got”) where we notice a change in word order.

*Две ноги
На трех ногах,
А безногая в зубах.
Вдруг четыре прибежали
И с безногой убежали (стр. 56).*

The first change in the TT that stands out is the difference of form, i.e. in Russian the riddle was translated as a poem. The latter begins with the two-legs, that is “*Две ноги*” (lit. two legs), and this is an example of word order change and this applies to the rest of the riddle as well. “No-legs” is translated as an adjectival noun “*безногая*” (“legless”) in feminine gender and this is an example of transposition and explicitation. “*В зубах*” (“in teeth”) is another example of explicitation or clarification by amplification. The last two lines «*Вдруг четыре прибежали/И с безногой убежали*» (“Suddenly four-legged came running/ And with the legless ran away”) are another example of amplification or expansion as the translator added several new details to the story and possibly providing more hints to the reader.

*9) This thing all things devours:
Birds, beasts, trees, flowers;
Gnaws iron, bites steel:
Grinds hard stones to meal;
Slays king, ruins town,
And beats high mountain down (p. 77).*

And the time has come for the final riddle which Gollum asks Bilbo. It is a dark riddle, perhaps the most difficult one and is written in the form of description of the “thing” in absentia, which is “time”. The Armenian translation of the final riddle can be read below:

*Կուլ է տալիս ամեն բան՝
Ծաղիկ ու ծառ, հավք, գազան,
Ամուր պողպատը կրծում,
Քարեր փշրում, մարդ սպանում,
Կործանում է քաղաքներ,
Փռչի դարձնում ծառ ու լեռ (էջ 91):*

In the first line of the TT the word order was changed, i.e. «*Կուլ է տալիս ամեն բան*» (“Devours everything”) and “this thing” was omitted. In the second line the order of the words being counted is also different in the TT. It is worth mentioning that even though in modern Eastern Armenian the word «*հավք*» means “bird” in singular, Torosyan translated the plural word “birds” as «*հավք*» in plural as in Grabar («*հավք*») it has a plural form, i.e. “birds” and this is an example of ennoblement. The noun “beasts” was rendered in singular «*գազան*» (“beast”) which is an example of plural>singular transposition. The same can be said about the translation of the words “trees” and “flowers”, however here Torosyan connected them with the conjunction «*ու*» (“and”). It should be noted that in Armenian these words used in singular do indicate plurality as that feature is stylistically distinctive of Armenian language. The line “Gnaws iron, bites steel” was translated as «*Ամուր պողպատը կրծում*» where the words “iron” and “bites” were lost however compensated with the word «*ամուր*» (“hard”) that appears in ST in relation to “stones” in the following line of ST. In the same line the expression “grinds hard stones to meal” was rendered as «*քարեր փշրում*» (“Grinds stones”) which is an example of qualitative impoverishment as “to meal” wasn’t rendered in the TT. In the fourth line the translation «*Քարեր փշրում, մարդ սպանում*» (“Grinds stones, kills man”) is an example of generalization as the word “slays” and “king” were neutralized as «*սպանում*» (“kills”) and «*մարդ*» (“man”). In the last two lines “Ruins town” was translated as «*Կործանում է*

քաղաքներ» (“Destroys towns”) where the verb “ruin” is generalized and the noun “town” is pluralized which is an example of singular>plural optional transposition. In the final “And beats high mountain down” the conjunction “and” was omitted whereas the phrasal verb “beats down” was translated with the help of the phrase «*փռչի դարձնում*» (“turns to dust”) and this is another example of ennoblement. In the same line Torosyan implemented amplification by adding the word «*ծառ*» (“tree”) in the word combination «*ծառ ու լեռ*» (“tree and mountain”) supposedly to keep the rhyming of the riddle intact.

*Уничтожает все кругом:
Цветы, зверей, высокий дом, —
Сжует железо, сталь сожрет
И скалы в порошок сотрет,
Мощь городов, власть королей
Его могущества слабей* (стр. 56).

The Russian translation begins with the change in word order “Уничтожает все кругом” (“Destroys all things around”) where the verb “Уничтожает” (“destroys”) is an example of generalization. In the TT there was an omission made concerning the word combination “this thing”. In the third line “bites steel” was translated as “сталь сожрет” (“steel will devour”) which is an example of generalization. In the fourth line “Grinds hard stones to meal” was translated as “И скалы в порошок сотрет” (“And the cliffs it will turn to dust”) which is an example of adaptation and ennoblement, whereas the noun “stones” was translated as “скалы” and this is an example of part>whole optional modulation. Ennoblement is expressed in the translation of the final two lines as well, i.e. “Мощь городов, власть королей/ Его могущества слабей” (“Strength of cities, power of kings/ Are weaker than his might”) where the ST words “town” and “king” in singular were translated in plural and that is an example of optional transposition, whereas the sentence as a whole is a reversal of terms, i.e. modulation. The last line of the TT is an example of amplification and, on the other hand, the final line of the ST, particularly the part about the mountain (which is one of the central concepts of the story) wasn’t translated at all. And nonetheless, the overall horror of the power of time was retained in the TT.

CONCLUSION

The aim of the present research was to scrutinize the translation techniques applied by Torosyan and Rakhmanova in the Armenian and Russian translations of Tolkien’s riddles from the fifth chapter of *The Hobbit*. This research set out to gain a better understanding of the equivalent effect the two translators aimed to achieve in their translations of the nine riddles Gollum and Bilbo ask each other, and to determine whether the translations of the riddles under our microscope would lead to the same answers in the two TTs as in the ST.

On the basis of the Vinay and Darbelnet model, Berman’s “negative and positive analytics” and the translation procedures discussed and revisited by Newmark, we have shown that the main techniques implemented by Torosyan and Rakhmanova were transposition, modulation, amplification, explicitation, generalization, word order change and ennoblement. We have demonstrated that least of all the translators made use of literal translation technique as there were two main challenges Torosyan and Rakhmanova faced: to convey the implication encoded in the ST and decode it in the TT in a way that would make the listener or the reader arrive at the ST answer; to retain the poetic form of the riddle either by preserving the ST rhyme scheme in TT or by creating a new rhyme in TT. It must be noted that particularly, in the translation of the “leg” riddle Rakhmanova rendered the prose style of ST in a form of a poem in TT creating a brand-new rhyme in Russian.

Importantly, our results provide evidence to support the assumption that the translation of riddles, despite the requirement of laborious effort and creativity, cannot do without certain deviations from the ST and the use of oblique translation techniques as the differences in grammar, word order and, in general, linguistic characteristics of the SL and TL make it almost impossible to merely rely on

literal translation. Our findings provide a potential mechanism for the analysis and assessment of the equivalent effect in the translations of riddles. Future research should consider the potential effects of the use of oblique translations and oftentimes, deviations, from the ST more carefully, as the final goal of the riddle translation is the equivalence of ST-TT answers. Future studies could fruitfully delve deeper into this issue by incorporating other methods of text analysis which with the help of hermeneutics would explore further the intertextual chains present in the ST that could be crucial when it comes to the translation of riddles.

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