

THE EFFECT OF NEOLOGISMS AND PUNS IN “A TALE OF A TUB” AND THEIR TRANSLATION INTO ALBANIAN

Alma Karasaliu Lecturer at “Fan S. Noli” University
Faculty of Education and Philology
Department of Foreign Languages
Korçë, Albania
almakarasaliu3@gmail.com

Abstract

Words incorporate an extraordinary force of expressiveness which, whenever found on the hands of an ‘art wizard’ can challenge everyone’s intelligence. Neologisms, puns, clichés, etc are used not only to express irony towards someone, but also to reveal an author’s real ingenuity. This paper explores, in more concrete terms, the presence, structure and effect of the neologisms and the puns employed by Jonathan Swift in his “A Tale of a Tub”. In this context, the focus will be drawn on the fact that, in order to achieve satirical effect, the writer often gives words new meanings, pushes literal senses into figurative ones and figurative senses into literal, highlighting that to Swift, simple neologisms are a lot less interesting and less beneficial for the reader, compared to the more sophisticated ones. Furthermore, making use of comparative techniques, it will be conducted a detailed analysis on the way these elements are translated. The critical analysis on the translation of neologisms is carried out by taking into consideration the state of Albanian language in 1980, as it is the year when the translated version is published. In the end, constrained by an absence of equivalent words or with the view of creating semantic equivalence, it is found that the translator, Shp timMema, has literary translated a number of neologisms, has adopted some and has transmitted unchanged some others.

Key words: *neologisms, puns, irony, structure, effect*

Introduction

Jonathan Swift is a satirical writer whose use of irony, parody, neologisms and puns flares in almost all of his work. His fascination with words and their high degree of expressiveness is very evident in his first satire “A Tale of a Tub”. In this work, he makes use of all these devices and manipulates them in the highest degree possible. Even though, in the first sight this work resembles to an analogue battle between the desire to employ such kind of stylistic devices and his principles about style, it is indeed a strategy which the writer Jonathan Swift utilizes in order to freely vary the language. In this context, it is worth mentioning the fact that the discrepancy between what the writer declares and what he actually does poses one of the several paradoxes characterizing his satires, which are, in fact, really difficult to be understood.

The chief characteristic of Swift’s language is that it has little use for the recesses of language. (Donoghue, 1969) Likewise, despite author’s conservative view towards language, his use of neologisms clearly shows that he was not averse to inventing new words for new realities. The frequency with which Swift is mentioned in the “Oxford English Dictionary” is an indication of Swift’s use of words in rare, old-fashioned, new, or peculiar ways. (Smith, 1979) What is more, his preference on lexicographical issues is depicted in the Modern’s allusions, in “A Tale of a Tub”, to his use of a common place book. (Hamilton, 1967) In this work, the writer exploits the impact of various connotations of words, uses words in unconventional senses, coins words of his own and puns continually, which indeed allows him almost never to mean merely what he expresses.

1. The morphology of Swift’s neologisms and their satirical effect

The use of neologisms is somehow tricky because the ambiguity of their referents makes their meanings entirely personal and therefore, incommunicable. Analyzing his neologisms leads to the encountering of their various uses, which do not concentrate only on their parodical effect, but also on naming new realities. Swift possesses a remarkable sensitivity to the age of words and is aware when an old word feels archaic, just as when a very recent word, or a neologism, has the feel of newness about it. Also, he uses a considerable number of words of quite recent origin despite being conscious of their novelty. (Smith, 1979) Moreover, it is widely accepted the fact that neologisms can be both a way of parodying an overly inventive person and an undeniable proof of the real author’s inventiveness towards words. In this context, the fact that the author’s Modern uses a decidedly modern vocabulary in talking about a modern subject reveals Swift’s artfulness in utilizing the expressiveness of neologisms and that of every other possible device in achieving a communication in different layers in his “A Tale of a Tub”.

Uncovering the etymology of Swift’s neologisms in the previously mentioned work often leads to an uncovering of the humour and satire that extends well beyond the word itself. In this context, it is worth mentioning the fact that Swift considers simple neologisms to be less interesting to the reader and less useful to himself than more complex types. His neologisms in “A Tale of a Tub” fall under five different types which clearly delineate Swift’s fascination with etymology:

- 1.1 Neologisms borrowed from nonliterary vocabularies
- 1.2 Neologisms borrowed from foreign languages
- 1.3 Neologisms formed by combining two or more extant words
- 1.4 Old words used in new senses
- 1.5 Neologisms formed by the addition of a prefix or a suffix to an existing root

1.1 Neologisms borrowed from nonliterary vocabularies

This type of neologisms relates to the words which have been borrowed from a non literary context and used in a literary one with the view of the author to create, most commonly, a situation more concrete or to make what he intends to say more evident. Despite being not very frequent, neologisms borrowed from nonliterary vocabularies are part of Swift's forum of neologisms. The legal term "**separateMaintenance**" (p.121) and "**goodfornothing**" (p.173) are two examples of this type of neologism formation. They are considered to be terms which have been imported from nonliterary sources by the author (Crowne, 1874), even though, they have been registered in the "Oxford English Dictionary" to be firstly used by Swift.

1.2 Neologisms borrowed from foreign languages

"A Tale of a Tub" swarms of neologisms borrowed from foreign languages, especially from Latin origin. Examples of such kind of foreign words that Swift first brought into English are "**Opusmagnum**" (p. 127, 187), "**bonaenotae**" (p. 68), and "**Amorphy**" (p. 124). In a couple of these cases he cannot resist the irony of using the term outside its usual context. The author employs the term "**separateMaintenance**" in reference to the "**Divorce**" of the three brothers, and "**Opusmagnum**," an alchemical term meaning "the conversion of baser metals into gold," in reference to the best way to read his satire "A Tale of a Tub".

1.3 Neologisms formed by combining two or more extant words

This type of neologism formation is quite frequent in "A Tale of a Tub". Swift has combined two words being based on an existing model. Such example is the word "**Monster-mongers**" (p. 131) where the author has apparently taken a fading sense of "monster" (a marvel) and has combined it with the word of "monger", which is an old word for merchant. This kind of combination is similar to many other word combinations of his time like "fly-monger", "water-monger", etc. according to the "Oxford English Dictionary" this kind of compounds had discreditable connotations from the middle of the sixteenth century. Another example illustrating this type of neologisms is the word "**Physico-logical**" (p.61). It is based on a similar model, very popular during the seventeenth century for scientific terminology such as: "**Physico-mathematical**". In this context, it is worth noting that the author's creation and use of such neologisms derived from his interest in etymology leads to his parodizing these word formations, and, also, to his utilizing them to deflate Modern's overblown logical arguments.

"**Micro-coat**" is another, probably the most prominent example belonging to this group of word-formation. This neologism stands for "microcosm". Here, the author changes the Renaissance "microcosm" to the Restoration "Micro-coat", making, likewise, the difference

between man as little world and man as clothes. If we take into consideration the constituent elements of this compound, it is clearly noticed that they are playful and serious at the same time. Also, the term "Physico" seems to ironically clash with "logical" (Smith, 1979) and the term "coat" seems to clash with "cosm".

1.4 Old words used in new senses

The following group of neologisms is formed by employing old words in a new way. This is often achieved by its using in a figurative sense or by reviving its dead metaphor. "Abortion" (p.206) was previously used as a medical word and later, it was used by the author with the figurative meaning of a "failure of an aim or a "promise". It is worth highlighting the fact that this term expresses both meanings simultaneously. A good example of Swift's reviving the dead metaphor of an old word is the term "Protrusions" (p.202) which is used in a more concrete sense than it had been used before. It has been used to mean the element that protrudes. Previously used to denote 'zeal' (Smith, 1979), this word in "A Tale of a Tub" is used to mean the element that protrudes, which, as a matter of fact, is 'zeal' again, making fun likewise, of his usage. It is important to be mentioned the fact that Swift often gives words new meanings for satirical effect. He also, seems to push literal senses into figurative, and figurative into literal, exploiting the richness of the language.

1.5 Neologisms formed by the addition of a prefix or a suffix to an existing root

This type of neologisms is formed by adding a suffix to an extant word often with the view of creating a word which expresses the doer of the action. The noun "Claimant" (p.21) defining the person, which derives from the verb "claim" or the adjective "Pederasticks" derived from the noun "pederasty" are some examples of this kind of neologisms. Mere over, by transforming the word "Modern" into that "Modenusto" (p.169), Swift personifies someone who practices modernism, which he condemns throughout his work. Another example is even the term "Fastidioszity" (p.124), which derives from the adjective "fastidious" accompanied by the suffix used to convert an adjective into a noun indicating state or condition "-ity".

The author uses these neologisms not only with the view of mocking a widespread practice of multiplying words by the addition of suffixes, but, also, to show his attitude towards root words and his dislike for the things they stand for. Swift uses a wide variety of neologisms and new words in his work, in order to achieve the feeling of modernism, with the view of presenting a pedant underlying those faddish words, while keeping that persona from compromising his own position.

2. The presence of puns in "A Tale of a Tub"

Jonathan Swift never separates himself completely from his persona and like his Modern, he shows a certain relish for neologisms and odd usages, as he does for the puns. The use of the later constitutes a very important part in the author's first satire. It enables him to express ideas which carry ambivalent messages. On the other hand, they do not incorporate the same degree of complexity like that of neologisms even though this does not imply that they lack any importance. It can be highlighted that some of them undercut the Modern, Modernism and other relevant issues. Also, there are a considerable number of puns, used by the author, which does

not have a clear purpose and which is used by Jonathan Swift simply to make the reader groan. (Kenner, 1974)

In analyzing the usage and the effect of puns in “A Tale of a Tub”, attention is drawn on their effect. Taking into account the fact that context is very important to the effect a pun has and to the impact it is intended to create they can be presented in four different groups:

2.1 Puns based on a confusion between a name and the thing itself

2.2 Puns based on the inherent double meaning of a word

2.3 Puns based on the etymology of a word

2.4 Puns based on the special connotations derived from certain contexts

2.1 Puns based on a confusion between a name and the thing itself

Puns based on the confusion between a name and the thing, itself, are not very frequent in this satire although this sort of confusion is not being closely related to Swift’s usual literalization of metaphor. (Quinlan, 1967) The most prominent example is the ironic sentence: “**ButtoreturntoMadness**” (p.174) (Sydenham, 1848) Being based on the context this sentence is put by the author the reader gets not only the message that the Modern is returning to the topic of madness, but also that he is returning to the state of being mad again.

2.2 Puns based on the inherent double meaning of a word

This type of pun is the most common in “A Tale of a Tub”. Instances like “**Dark**” (p. 128) meaning profound and dim, “**Revolutions**” (p.189) meaning complete changes and spinning, “**Gravity**” (p. 60) meaning seriousness and heaviness, “**vessel**” (p. 156) meaning human body and a barrel and “**Bulls**” (p. 110) meaning papal documents and a large animal with hooves are prominent examples of such type of puns. In each of the above cases the first meaning is Modern’s. This meaning is usually more appropriate with the intellectual context while the second one, which is considered to represent Swift’s words, almost always holds the literal meaning. This kind of relationship between the two different meanings of the same word has its own function. Modern uses the first meaning to adjust the intellectual background and context while the second meaning is utilized by Swift to drag his extensive intellectualism back to earth. The author brings back the dead metaphor of these words in order to force the reader to take their physical sense much more than their new one. Moreover, while the Modern says that happiness is the state of being continually deceived, the author, on the other side, implies that being deceived means being possessed and possession is madness. (Willis, 1948)

2.3 Puns based on the etymology of a word

Being very passionate about the etymology of the word and its force of expressiveness Jonathan Swift utilizes it to make puns like “**Topography**” (p. 35) which alludes to the shapes of the clouds in the sky or “**Ragousts**” (p. 143) referring to modern food. In this type of puns the author uses a syllable based on the etymology of the word to create a second meaning. “**Flotation**” (p. 40), which refers to a political club founded to advocate rotations in government offices is

another pun, formed by utilizing such kind of device. Some of these puns mock the thing the word names and some others simply test the reader's awareness.

2.4 Puns based on the special connotations derived from certain contexts

"A Tale of a Tub" abounds with puns depending on sexually charged contexts. The author turns ordinarily innocent words into obscene insinuations. (Empson, 1953) such prominent instances are "ear" (p. 200, 203) "nose" (p.201) "Sprout" (p. 202). The reader is led to give a clean word a dirty meaning, enabling the author to turn him into a guilty reader. Some other puns do not have a clear satiric purpose. The author plays with the double meaning of a word by using the word "ladder" (p. 58) relating to an old superstition. It is worth mentioning that while Modern almost always moves towards an expansive direction, Swift, himself, moves in the opposite direction, achieving an explosive compression of ideas in few words. (Smith, 1979)

3. Translation phenomena in conveying neologisms and puns

Translation process evolves a wide variety of difficulties. It is translator's duty to achieve a translation which is the closest possible to the one in the source language and which has an effect in the target language readership very close to the one in the source language readership. In order to achieve this, a translator utilizes various translation procedures, paying special attention to cultural features of both languages and their incongruities. Neologisms and puns are perhaps the non-literary and the professional translator's biggest problem. New ideas and variations on feelings come from the media, from the social sciences, slang and dialect coming into the mainstream of language and transferred words. Taking into consideration their formation and their contextual factors it can be stated that there are twelve types of different neologisms. (Newmark, 1988) Even though neologisms are often utilized by several writers to achieve a greater impact with their readership, their translation is often difficult and confusing. In translating neologisms the translator should pay attention to the role it plays in a given context and to the cultural effect it incorporates, carrying out, likewise, a full, detailed analysis in order to achieve an effect similar to that in the source language readership. In a literary text, it is the translator's duty to re-create any neologism he meets on the basis of the neologism in the source language. (Newmark, 1988) He can transfer a cultural word from the source language, if he considers it to be important. In each case he should assure himself that no other translation already exists, that both the referent and the neologism are not trivial, and that they are likely to interest the source language readership. (Newmark, 1988)

Based on a comparative analysis between the text in the source language and that in the target one, it can be highlighted that the translator has translated a certain number of neologisms, using their equivalent elements in Albanian language, has conveyed unchanged some of them and has transferred some others. Also, it is worth mentioning that in order to preserve the effect some Latinisms carry within the text, the translator has transmitted them as they are in the source language readership and has provided the reader, in the target language readership, with explanations put into parenthesis or with footnotes. Moreover, a considerable number of neologisms have not been translated, depriving, thus, the reader from perceiving the original message.

3.1 Translated neologisms

Examples of neologisms that have been translated utilizing their Albanian equivalents are terms like **“Contrivance”** (p. 61) which has been translated as **“sajimi”** (p. 262), **“Boxes”** (p. 61) which has been conveyed as **“lozhat”** (p. 262), **“scene”** (p.61) transmitted as **“sken ”** (p. 262), **“Wit”** (p.61) translated as **“dituri”** (p.262) and **“Bombast”** (p.61) which has been translated as **“Kapadaill ku”** (p.262). Other similar terms like **“Physico-logical”** (p. 61) which has been conveyed as **“fiziko-logjike”** (p. 263), **“Sedate”** (p. 138) which has been transmitted as **“iduruar”** (p.328), **“flegmatick”** (p.138) transmitted as **“flegmatik”** (p. 328), **“spargefaction”** (p.110) given as **“mesp rkatje”** (p. 304) and **“contrived”** (p. 110) which has been given as **“shpiku”** (p. 303) are further examples of this kind of translation type.

3.2 Adapted neologisms

In translating neologisms like **“deference”** (p. 61) transmitted as **“n shenj respekti”** (p. 262), **“Levity”** (p. 61) given as **“mendjeleht si e theksuar”** (p. 262), **“passage”** (p. 61) given as **“n kalim e sip r”** (p. 262), **“Liftings”** (p.129) given as **“ndihm e pakrahasueshme”** (p. 319) and **“Intercourse”** (p. 60) transmitted as **“marr dh niet p rpikta”** (p. 261), the translator has seen as more appropriate the adaptation of them, in order to preserve their natural sense and the naturalness of the context. In addition, the same procedure is followed even with the translation of terms like: **“the school of Hobby-Horses”** (p. 41) given as **“shkolla e bufon ve”** (p. 246) and **“Sollicitation”** (p. 129) which was translated as **“pas shum e shum k rkimesht gjata”** (p. 320). The group of words **“more refined”** (p. 61) has also been translated, utilizing the method of adaptation and contextualization, as **“m t holl e m t p rsosur”** (p. 262).

3.3 Neologisms accompanied with explanations

Aiming at the naturalization and the actualization of the conveyed text, the translator has considered as adequate the transference of certain neologisms, followed by related explanations put in parenthesis. **“Arcanum”** (127) has been translated as **“arcanum”** and is immediately followed by its explanation **“(e fsheht)”**. Also, **“impar”** (p. 127) has been conveyed as **“impar (joizoti, ipaajt)”** (p. 318) and **“via humida”** (p. 68) is given as **“via humida (n p rmjetlag shtir s)”** (p. 269). Other similar examples are **“Opus magnum”** (p. 127) which has been translated as **“opus magnum (vep r e madhe)”** (p. 318) and the terms **“boenotae”** (p. 68) is given as **“bonoenotoe (imir njohur)”** (p. 269).

3.4 Othercases

There are some other instances where the translator has implemented word-for-word translation as with the translation of the expression **“Twelve penny gallery”** (p. 61), which has been conveyed as **“galeridymb dhjet pens she”** (p. 262). In another case, the translator has given two different variants of the same word, being based on what they imply within the given context as in **“bottom”** (p. 190), which has been translated as **“pas tij”** (p. 349) and **“bottom”** (p. 44) that has been given as **“tabanin”** (p. 248).

Moreover, the translator has conveyed some neologisms with terms which do not exist in Albanian language. Neither have they existed in the “Dictionary of Albanian Language” in the year 1980, when the translated book was published. The term **“Adeptus”** (p. 68) translated as

“adeptus” (p. 269) illustrates these phenomena. Terms like “**Buffonry**” (p. 61) given as “**bufan ria**” (p. 262) and “**pulpit**” (p. 61) given as “**amvon n**” (p. 262) were not part of the “Dictionary of Albanian Language” of the year 1980, which means that the translator has created neologisms by being based on the neologisms in the source language for the first two instances. As for the third neologism, it needs to be pointed out that it has not been created on the basis of the neologism in the source language, and that this neologism is found, nowadays, in the “Dictionary of Albanian Language”.

As previously mentioned, a considerable number of neologisms have been left out of the translation. Some of them have been avoided, while the others are part of paragraphs which have not been included by the translator of the book. Terms like “**Claimant**” (p.21), “**Modenusto**” (p. 169), “**salivation**” (p. 129) are prominent examples.

4. The conveyance of puns

The role of puns in “A Tale of a Tub”, as previously mentioned, means that their translation must be paid special attention to. It is worth mentioning that the translator has followed the same steps with neologisms, in translating puns from the source language to the target one. In this context, it should be pointed out that puns like “**Dark**” (p. 128, 208), “**Revolutions**” (p. 189), “**Hemp**” (p. 101), “**Inspiration**” (p. 154, 155), “**Bulls**” (p. 110), “**Ragousts**” (p.143), “**ear**” (p. 195), “**nose**” (p. 201), “**Tongue**” (p. 195), “**Sprout**” (p. 202) and “**Topography**” (p. 35) have been translated utilizing their related variants in Albanian language respectively as “**ierr t**” (p. 363, 370), “**revolucionin**” (p. 189), “**k rp**” (p. 101), “**frym zim**” (p. 342, 343) “**dema**” (p. 304), “**ragut** ” (p. 332), “**vesh**” (p. 357), “**hund** ” (p. 358), “**gjuh** ” (p. 353), “**vesh** ” (p. 358) and “**topografi**” (p. 240). Moreover, the pun “**vessel**” (p. 153, 156) has been translated as “**en** ” (342) and is accompanied with an explanation at the footnotes, while the second case has been translated as “**fuçi**” (p. 343). Another evident phenomenon is the avoidance of the noun “**gravity**”, part of the expression “**Weight and Gravity**” (p. 60) from the translation and its substitution with a more general variant: “**me pesh mjaftt madhe**” (p. 335).

What is more, in accordance with the requirements of the language of translation, the translator has adapted several puns like: “**Remains**” (p. 70), “**penetrating**” (p. 39) and “**head and ears**” (p. 195) and has transmitted them as: “**dit t e mjera**” (p. 270), “**zhbiruesaq t m dhenj**” (p. 244) and “**kok e k mb** ” (p. 354). As with neologisms, a considerable number of puns have not been included in the translated version. Such examples are puns like “**Deceived**” (p. 171), “**Academy**” (p. 166), “**sower**” (p.186), “**... which perhaps, the Candid Reader ...to believe.**” (p. 180) and “**... a prodigious Number of dark, ... themselves**” (p. 24).

Conclusion

Neologisms and puns are important elements in Swift's "A Tale of a Tub". The writer utilizes them in order to attack negative features and to express ideas which he would have never dared to do without. Taking into consideration the fact that his satire is considered to be multi-level oriented, it can be argued that the implementation of the former devices enable the writer to achieve his intended impact on the reader. In discussing about the neologisms, it has been highlighted their morphological structure and their satirical purpose, pointing out that in both cases, Jonathan Swift aims at raising self-awareness towards problematic issues. His style, being very ambiguous is as misleading as orienting, motivating the critical reader to consider and reconsider what he has actually read. On the aspect of the translation of neologisms and puns, it is worth mentioning the fact that, owing to the view of conveying the closest possible effect with the text in the source language, the translator has provided equivalent variants for a certain number of neologisms and puns, has adapted some others, has provided further explanations for some of them and has avoided from the translation a considerable part of both elements.

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University of Shkodra “Luigj Gurakuqi”, Shkodra, Albania