ISSN 2738-2699

YEREVAN STATE UNIVERSITY

TRANSLATION STUDIES: THEORY AND PRACTICE

International Scientific Journal

volume 5 | issue 1 (9)

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Department of Translation Studies

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YEREVAN 2025

The international scientific journal is published upon the decision of the Academic Council of Yerevan State University.

The *Translation Studies: Theory and Practice* (TSTP) is a double-blind peer-reviewed international scientific journal published by the Department of Translation Studies of Yerevan State University. It presents original research articles of high standards in all areas of translation. The journal appears in two issues per annum. Papers submitted to the journal should be written in English. The journal is available both in print and online.

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RESEARCH ARTICLES

DOI: https://doi.org/10.46991/TSTP/2025.5.1.007

FROM STORYTELLING TO TRANSLATING: ON SOME NOTABLE CASES OF TRANSLATION

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Abstract: This paper deals with some atypical cases of translation, renderings whose authors were accomplished ethnographers and folklorists, collectors of oral lore, or storytellers. We will also refer to bilingual storytellers, reciting tales with equal fluency in two languages. The mentioned types of translators are characteristic of cultures that, alongside homeland storytelling, also have diasporic storytelling communities. Our study is primarily based on *"Hazaran Blbul" (The Bird of a Thousand Voices)*[1], one of the most popular Armenian fairy tales. The chosen texts are not translations in the traditional sense; they are rendered from oral narratives. Some of the original texts are no longer available. Accordingly, we deal with unique cases with absent source texts.

Keywords: translator; recorder; storyteller; folklore scholar; bilingual storytellers

1. Introduction

Traditionally, folklore scholars have been little interested in translated folk tales, as translated folk literature is no longer considered authentic folklore and part of a culture's oral heritage. Students of translation studies, in turn, were not eager to study translated folklore texts because the latter are oral and anonymous. In contrast, translation studies predominantly focus on written texts created by an individually identifiable author. In recent years, however, interest has risen in studying the translations and adaptations of folk tales (Gogiashvili 2023; Jivanyan 2021, 2022; Neri 2021).

In this article, we will primarily discuss the translators of folk tales, assuming that our study will make a modest contribution to the diversity of themes in translation studies. We will focus on recorder-translators, who put the oral narratives in writing, or take down in shorthand later to render it, storyteller-translators, who may interrupt their

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Received: 11.04.2025
Revised: 31.05.2025
Accepted: 02.06.2025

[1] Comparable to Persian *Hazardastan* meaning "a thousand stories" or nightingale (Cf. Persian bolbol//bulbul). The latter can be used to describe a skilled storyteller or someone with extensive knowledge of tales.

'performance' to explain phrases or text fragments they believe the audience might not understand, and bilingual storytellers, who tell tales with equal fluency in two (or more) languages. Additionally, we will refer to the 'absent' source texts, 'linguistic otherness' in folk tales and the figure of the interpreter in folk tales.

2. The Translated Folk Tale

Folk tales, particularly fairy tales, are a unique text type and have dimensions distinct from relevant literary versions. It is commonly believed that fairy tale studies encompass the recording, publication, and interpretation of fairy tales of a given culture. However, such an approach overlooks an interesting and important area related to fairy tales: the translated fairy tale, with its various possible textual manifestations, including direct and mediated interpretations, adaptations, and retellings, which are distinguished by varying degrees of separation from the source texts. To quote Martine Hennard Dutheil de la Rochere:

> As they are passed on from one generation to the next, fairy tales owe their "eternal youth" to various forms of translation, transposition and transmediation in the endless play of repetition, reinterpretation, and transformation across languages, art forms, and media. (Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère 2019: 59)

Our previous articles discussed Armenian fairy tales, which were mainly translated from printed sources. In this survey, we will consider renderings whose source texts have not been published and exist only as recordings or shorthand texts of the orally recited tales, or are no longer available. When the source text is an oral narrative, the translator has to cope with its unusual nature and complexity, conditioned by the source text's orality, and may encounter difficulties uncommon in literary translations. In the annotations to his anthology of "Folk tales of the British Isles," James Riordan writes:

> An English recording of the tales told by the storytellers of the past provides only a pale shadow of the original narration. The voices, with their modulations, fall silent on the printed page; the audience is absent. Only the pattern of narrative and the process of motifs remain. This is especially true of translations. (Riordan 1987: 343)

Caterina Neri, speaking on translating folklore, comments: "In fact, when we translate a text of oral origin, we must always consider the 'path' that led it to become a written text, and therefore consider the elements that have been lost, modified, or added" (Neri 2021: 29).

Translators of oral texts are more likely to make mistakes than translators of literary texts. They may have insufficient knowledge of the dialect of the source narrative: folklore is always performed in dialect. Hence, misinterpretations and mistranslations of specific dialectal elements, which can have a meaning different from their common sense, are possible.

Our observations are mainly based on the material of several versions of *Hazaran Blbul* (ATU 707, *The Three Golden Children*), one of the most popular Armenian fairy tales. It has numerous translated versions, including *The Bird of a Thousand Voices, The Bird of a Thousand Songs, The Bird Hazaran, The Fairy Nightingale,* and *Die Wundernachtigall. We will* focus on three of the rendered versions: the German *Die Wundernachtigall* included in Heinrich Adalbert von Wlislocki's *Märchen und Sagen der Bukowinaer und Siebenbürger Armenier* (Hamburg, 1891), the French *Assadur le Danseur* from Minas Tcheraz's *L'orient inédit, légendes et traditions arméniennes, grecques et turques* (Paris, 1912) and the English version from Susie Hoogasian-Villa's *100 Armenian Tales and Their Folkloristic Relevance* (Detroit, 1966).

3. Storyteller-Translators

Storytellers do not often translate their texts, if only occasionally; however, tellers who render their narratives are not unknown to folklorists. In the Foreword to his collection of Armenian folk tales, the Transylvanian linguist and folklorist Heinrich Adalbert von Wlislocki, better known for his publications on the language and folklore of the Romani people, refers to a remarkable storyteller of Hungarian Armenians' folktales, who also acted as a translator. Thus, already in the 1980s, the scholar reveals the figure of the teller-interpreter:

> I owe the creation of this collection primarily to the highly learned Armenian elder, Mr. Anton Bosnyak in Mühlbach (Transylvania), who shared with me most of the Transylvanian Armenian tales included here and rendered me great assistance in translating them into German… As for the German translation, it is very accurate, almost word for word, and has been revised by several Armenian scholars. (Wlislocki 1891: v)

In a certain sense, a storyteller's translation of folk tales can be seen as a specific form of self-translation, which is rendering the source text into the target text by the author of the source text. While research on self-translation traditionally focuses on literary self-translation and deals with written texts, self-translation of oral narratives is distinct because the teller-translators are not the authors of the translated texts, but merely their reproducers[2].

The tellers' renderings as samples of self-translation are comparable to bilingual storytelling. Bilingual tellers can perform in two or even more languages with almost equal fluency and were known among Scottish, Irish, and Armenian tellers. From Minas Tcheraz's footnotes to his French translation of a *Hazaran Blbul* version called *"Barogh Asadur"* (*Theodore the Dancer),* we learn that there have been bilingual storytellers in Western Armenia who, depending on the audience, recited their stories in Armenian or Turkish. According to his informant, Loussaper Tashdjian, the mother

[2] It is difficult to tell whether *Die Wundernachtigall* was translated by Anton Bosnyak and Wlislocki or passed onto the latter by other scholars, whose names (G. Munzath, J. Hanusch) Wlislocki mentions in his Foreword. Although the collection includes many footnotes commenting on the folk tales, no notes regarding this particular tale are found.

of renowned Armenian Musician Nigoghos Tashdjian," from whom Tcheraz recorded many tales, not only did these tellers 'translate' the plot of the folk tales, but also the names of the personages. Thus, when the bilingual storyteller shifted from Armenian to Turkish, the eponymous title of the fairy tale and the protagonist's name changed from *Asadur* to *Khudaverdi* (from Persian *Khuda* - God and Turkish *Verdi* - given) (Tcheraz 1912: 69). Further on will see that, as a recorder-translator, Tcheraz follows his informant's strategy of translating proper names and replacing the protagonist's name with its French equivalent.

4. Recorder Translators

Recorder-translators are distinct from common translators in that they translate from an oral narrative they have taken down or recorded. Susie Hoogasian-Villa, an American-born Armenian folklorist, is a remarkable example of a recorder-translator. Her recordings of Armenian folk tales told by Delray (a neighbourhood of Detroit) Armenians are kept in the Wayne State University archives. Hoogasian-Villa's version of *Hazaran Blbul*, is entitled *The Golden Headed Twins*. It differs noticeably from other versions and includes episodes found only in that telling. Villa was an accomplished folklorist and apart from recording, transcribing and translating the fairy tale, she also brings parallel versions from other cultures, indicates different motifs present in this tale and gives detailed information about her storyteller, Mariam Serabian describing her as:

> My tiny, red-haired grandmother…a short, round figure, was a master at telling fortunes by using tiny Turkish coffee cups. She was a skilful nurse, too, and an expert at using folk cures, particularly a ritual for counteracting the evil eye!". (Hoogasian -Villa 1966: 537)

The recorder-translators' commentaries on their renderings are sometimes confusing and may not provide thorough information. Between 1903 and 1905, *Fairy Tales of Caucasus: A Pearl Necklace («Сказки Кавказа: жемчужное ожерелье»)*, was published in Moscow (Gatsuk 1903-1905). The folk tales were retold by the Russian folklorist and translator V.V. Gatsuk, better known for rendering Andersen's and Grimm's tales. In the footnote to the Armenian tale *The King Who Was a Water Carrier («Царь водонос»),* he comments: "Accurately translated from an oral narrative. All language particularities have been preserved (Gatsuk 1903-1905: 42). A question arises: did he take down the text before translating, or did he simultaneously translate and record the text? To do that, he should have had an excellent command of Armenian. However, there is no evidence that he was familiar with the language. However, the Gatsuk family was affiliated with *the Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages* in Moscow and printed numerous academic editions of the Institute. It is possible that the folklorist Gatsuk may have received some assistance from colleagues or friends within the Armenian milieu.

Some recorder-translators of folk tales can be defined as intrusive translators. They may make alterations in the text, placing their own creative twist on the story, changing or inserting names for the nameless personages to make the narrative more understandable. An interesting example can be brought from Scottish folklore material. In the *Introduction* to *Stories from South Uist,* told by Angus MacLellan, Dr John Lorne Campbell, the outstanding scholar of Scottish folklore and Celtic studies, writes that when translating Gaelic folk stories into English, he had to give names to the "characters":

> The stories are not embellished in any way in the process of translation, but, as some of the devices of the spoken tale do not always answer when exactly reproduced in print, it has been advisable at times, for instance, to invert clauses and define the names of persons or places… In a few cases, I have bestowed names on characters in some stories who were only called 'a crofter' or 'a farm servant,' for the sake of clarity. I have dropped scores of 'said he's,' and I have divided sentences which in the Gaelic are linked by the conjunction 'and,' but which would not be so linked in English. (Campbell 1997: xiii)
> .

In this manner, the recorder-translator does extensive translational editing, becoming a 'co-author.' To a certain extent, such an interference runs against the poetics of the fairy tale genre since fairy-tale protagonists are often unnamed; lack of proper names or namelessness of the characters is one of the essential dimensions of the folk tale. The Jungian analyst Marie-Louise von Franz writes:

> So as long as it is Miller So-and-So, it is still a local saga but when it comes to 'A miller once went to shoot a fox…,' then it begins to be a fairy tale, a general story in a form in which it could migrate to another village, for it is no longer bound to a particular mill and a particular man. So, probably Lüthi's statement is correct: fairy tales are an abstraction. They are an abstraction of a local saga, condensed and made into a crystallized form, and thus they can be handed on and are better remembered because they appeal to the people. (Franz 1996: 20)

A comparable interference occurs when the recorder translates the protagonists' names, contributing to the covert rendering of the original text. Going back to Minas Tcheraz's version of *Hazaran Blblul*, we can see that following his informant's strategy of bilingual storytelling, he translates the protagonist's name, changing *Barogh Asadur* into its French equivalent, *Theodore le Danseur (Theodore the Dancer).*

The translation of character names in translated folk tales is akin to the covert interpretation of character names in literary fairy tales, when the original names are localised, Armenianed, Russianed, etc., to bring them closer to the recipient culture. Translating proper names was a strategy widely accepted in the 19th and 20th centuries in Armenia, particularly in translated children's literature.

5. Absent Source Texts

The source recordings of Tcheraz's and Wlislocki's versions of *Hazaran Blblul* have not survived. Accordingly, we deal with unique cases with absent source texts. The recorded or written text of the original story often gets lost when the translation is entirely target-oriented, and the preservation of the source text is not of significant interest to the translator. Translations with absent source texts may gain considerable importance and even become irreplaceable. They are characteristic of cultures with diasporic storytelling communities, which are dispersed outside their traditional homeland, and multinational communities with audiences from different cultures.

The afterlife of some of the tales in Wlislocki's collection of Armenian tales in German is notable. In 1914, Atabek Khnkoyan, a renowned Armenian children's author, translated one of the tales from this collection, called *Bruder und Schwester («Քույր և եղբայր»), into Armenian.* This rendering cannot be considered a back translation: reverse translation is used as a quality assurance method, whereas Khnokoyan's text was translated and published for the readers of a children's magazine. This is an uncommon, yet interesting example where the source text is lost and the target text serves as a source for a rendering performed in the language of the original.

6. Translating Elements of Linguistic Otherness in Folk Tales

Although uncommon, in some instances, the recorder's or the storyteller's translation may cover brief stretches of texts, e.g., narrative fragments, sentences or selected words only. The Armenian folk tale is characterised by a certain degree of tolerance to elements of other cultures. There is a 'peaceful coexistence' of Christening scenes, heathen creatures, saints, priests and dervishes. This tolerance also works on the linguistic level, as acceptance of other language elements and the ability to merge them with the Armenian linguistic context. In Armenian folk tales, one can encounter Muslim names, words, or phrases in Turkish, Arabic, Kurdish or Russian. Sometimes the task of interpreting these terms is taken upon by the storyteller. Thus, in the Armenian *The Tale of Allahverdi*, the storyteller translates the Muslim proper name in the very narrative, explaining *Allahverdi* as given by God:

> There was a very mighty king in the past, and he had no children. A dervish cast lots on this king, came to see him and said:
> "I will help you have a child, but you should promise to give it to me when the child is fifteen."
> "I promise," said the King. So, not long after, a fine son was born to him. They christened him, and the name which they gave to him was Khudaverdi, that is, God-given. (Ghaziyan 1983: 53-54)

We have encountered several Armenian folk tales, which include proverbs in Turkish; one of these proverbs, *Sabr Salamat* (meaning "patience is safety"), serves as the title of the tale (Ghaziyan 1983: 295). The proverbs are translated by the tale's recorder, Nazareth Martirossian. Similar language units stand out in the tale narrative and serve as miniature inlays into the main body of the text, breaking it into episodes. Foreign language elements present linguistic otherness integrated into the text and may create an air of sound judgement or mystery, comparable to Latin words or blends of Latin words used for spells in J.K. Rowling's fantasy texts.

7. The Translator as a Fairy Tale Character

In the concluding part of the article, we will refer to a singular character, the translator, as a distinct figure in fairy tales, appearing in Susie Hoogasian-Villa's remarkably language-centred version of *Hazaran Blbul, The Golden Headed Twins.* Two of the tale's personages, the Magic Bird and the protagonist's horse, are endowed with the gift of human speech, an essential quality of anthropomorphic characters. Furthermore, when the protagonist brings the magical singing bird his sister yearned for, the old, wicked midwife advises her to ask for an interpreter who would understand and explain what the bird speaks about:

> The midwife waited until the next day when the boy was in town, then she went to visit the sister in the cave. "See, my sweet one, isn't your Hazaran Bulbul a comfort to you? But do you understand the bird's language?" When the girl told her that she did not, the woman said, "Tell your brother to bring you an interpreter." The midwife was sure now that this time, the boy would die.
> That evening when her brother returned, again the sister would not talk to him. "What is the matter, sister? What have I done to offend you?"
> "Why don't you get me an interpreter for this bird? I can't understand what it is saying."
> "Sister, wait, you are going to eat my head yet," the brother said. Sadly, he embraced her, mounted his horse and rode away to fulfill her request.
> Again he talked to Tanzara who invited him in and gave him a beautiful girl who was to serve as interpreter. (Hoogasian-Villa 1966: 245)

The figure of the interpreter is unusual for folk tales of this cycle (ATU 707) and also for folk tales of other types. Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk Literature* mentions only a few motifs related to interpreting and interpretation:

> A182.3.0.4. God does not directly address women; uses interpreter. Jewish: Neuman. 96 (Thompson 1975: 96)
> K137.1. Two jars full of live black wasps sold as interpreters of foreign language India: Thompson-Balys (ibid., 248)
> K137.2. A parrot knowing only two words is sold as speaking a foreign language. India: Thompson-Balys. (ibid., 248)

We also suggest that requiring an interpreter for the speaking bird could be a unique narrative device: the storyteller Mariam Serabian was an immigrant from Kharbert (Harpoot). Consequently, she would speak and perform in the Kharberd dialect of Armenian. Through the interpreter episode, she might hint at the gap between her Armenian and the recorder's. It is only natural that the latter, an American-born student of folklore, would not have an equal command of her informant's dialect. It is possible that the teller would adjust the language of her narrative to the listener, temporarily 'identifying' herself with the magic bird's interpreter.

8. Conclusion

The study of the translation of folk tales by storytellers and recorders may contribute to a new field of translation studies, since these renderings are characterised by distinct dimensions, making them different from the translation of literary works. They are not translations of individual authors' texts, but renderings of texts of collective authorship and are transmitted orally by generations of tellers. When the source text is an oral narrative, the translator has to cope with difficulties uncommon in literary translations. Although unusual, the recorder's or the storyteller's translation may only cover brief stretches of texts, narrative fragments, sentences or selected words. The recorded text of the original story often gets lost when the translation is entirely target-oriented. They are characteristic of cultures with diasporic storytelling communities, dispersed outside their traditional homeland. Translations with absent source texts may gain considerable importance and even become irreplaceable.

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Conflict of Interests
The authors declare no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

Ethical Standards
The authors affirm this research did not involve human subjects.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.46991/TSTP/2025.5.1.016

ROMANIAN LITERATURE IN BRITISH TRANSLATION PRIZES

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Abstract: As a component of a larger project on translation awards, this article examines the presence of literary works originally written in Romanian in recent iterations of four prominent British prizes for literary translation: the EBRD Literature Prize, the Warwick Prize for Women in Translation, the International Booker Prize, and the Oxford-Weidenfeld Prize. Noting that Romanian is the official language in both Romania and Moldova, the article opens by outlining the necessary linguistic, literary, and sociohistorical background, before moving to the British context by presenting the framework and scope regarding the four selected literary translation awards. After scrutinising the longlists, shortlists, and winners of the awards to determine the presence of translated Romanian-language works, the analysis is discussed and then briefly compared with some of the project's other findings.

Keywords: Romanian literature; Moldovan literature; literary translation prizes; literary translation in the United Kingdom; Romanian-English translation

1. Introduction

In 2024, the prestigious Dublin Literary Award – one of the world's best-known annual literary prizes – was given to a translated work of Romanian literature for the first time (O'Donaghue 2024). The book in question was *Solenoid*, by the author, literary critic, and academic Mircea Cărtărescu, the original of which was published in Romania in 2015. The work was translated into English by Sean Cotter, and it was this translation which was recognised by the Dublin Literary Award, one of the most well-endowed global translation prizes in financial terms. And though the Award is of course based in the Republic of Ireland, the visibility that came with Cărtărescu's victory also garnered the attention of media elsewhere, including in the neighbouring United Kingdom (for example, see Creamer 2024).

As part of the author's ongoing broad-based study delving into the presence and role of a range of smaller literatures and cultures in selected British literary translation awards and prizes, it was decided to briefly chart the presence of Romanian literature in the longlists, shortlists, and prize-winners of four major awards recognising

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Received: 11.04.2025
Revised: 08.06.2025
Accepted: 10.06.2025

excellence in literary translation into English. As will be presented in further detail later, these prizes comprise (by reverse chronological order of the year of the first award in their current format): the EBRD Literature Prize (2018); the Warwick Prize for Women in Translation (2017); the International Booker Prize (relaunched in 2016); and the Oxford-Weidenfeld Prize (1999). This study takes a similar approach to the author's previous works linked to the topic.[1] Among others, these have included a profile tracing the specific case of translated Polish works in the same four prizes (Hoyte-West 2024a), as well as using the 2023 International Booker Prize victory for Georgi Gospodinov's novel *Time Shelter* [Времеубежище] (translated by Angela Rodel) as a starting point to ascertain the trajectory of translated Bulgarian literature in same four awards which are analysed in this article (Hoyte-West 2024b).

As with the current article, the choice of these selected case studies was motivated by the author's research interests in the languages and cultures concerned. In this vein, and focusing on the particular instances of the four selected British translation prizes, this profile also aims to provide an exploratory overview of shortlisted and prizewinning literature originally written in Romanian by authors from Romania and Moldova. In following the author's aforementioned studies on selected literary translation awards, the chosen methodology is desk-based and qualitative (see Bassot 2022). This involved visiting the websites of the relevant prizes as well as consulting appropriate media resources, focusing on the timescale from the year 2017 onwards as the temporal frame for the present analysis.

2. Some Brief Remarks on Romanian Language and Culture

As the national language of the two neighbouring southeastern European nations of Romania and Moldova, Romanian is a member of the Romance language sub-family within the Indo-European languages. In terms of its geographical concentration, it is perhaps notable for being a linguistic island amid a sea of languages from other linguistic families and sub-families, notably Hungarian as well as Slavic and other languages. As with many Balkan languages, the grammar and lexis of Romanian displays evidence of contact between speakers of these different tongues (Sala and Posner 2025). The rich history and culture of the Romanian language and its literature has already been covered extensively elsewhere, including in a recent edited volume on *Romanian Literature as World Literature* (Moraru & Terian 2017). Therefore, this section of this study will only mention a short selection of salient points.

When the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia unified and gained their independence in 1860, after centuries of Ottoman rule, Romanian became the principal language of the new country. At the same time, it was also spoken in parts of the

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[1] Though focusing on translated literary works from Romanian into English, the literary-historical focus of this article also aligns with the approach taken by a comprehensive two-volume edited monograph on the history of translations into Romanian during the 20th century (see Constantinescu, Dejica, and Vîlceanu 2021, 2022). This is part of a wider project on Romanian translation history headed by Ștefan cel Mare University of Suceava in association with almost two dozen institutional partners - for more information, please see: https://itlr.usv.ro/.

Habsburg-ruled lands, including in Transylvania and in the crownland of Bukovina (see Kamusella 2009: 207-211). After 1918, Romania was expanded by the incorporation of those former Habsburg territories, as well as the former Russian-ruled Bessarabia. During World War Two, Romania was to lose part of these territorial gains to the Soviet Union, which incorporated the northern segment of Bukovina into the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and demarcated Bessarabia as the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic (Kamusella 2021: 115-117). In the latter, over the ensuing decades, political and ideological reasons underpinned the development of the local variant of Romanian into the Moldovan language, which was written using the Cyrillic alphabet. Under this name, the language lasted up until the end of the Soviet Union and into independent Moldova. Indeed, debates as to the exact name of this language proved enduring; finally, the state language was determined as Romanian and the linguistic designation of Moldovan was definitively consigned to history (for more, see King 1999; Ciscel 2006; Kamusella 2021; Negură & Suveica 2023: 467-470, etc.).

Returning to the Romanian context, the aftermath of World War Two also brought state Communism as the official ideology, a situation which lasted until the overthrow of Nicolae Ceausescu in 1989 (Turnock, Latham, Cucu & Hitchins 2025). Nowadays, with Romania a full member state of the European Union, Romanian has therefore been an official language of that organisation since 2007 (European Union 2025). Most recently, Moldova has also received official candidate status for EU membership (European Commission 2025).

In noting the wealth of linguistic and literary history that the Romanian language embodies, the question of what qualifies as Romanian literature for the purposes of this article should also be briefly treated. As illustrated by various extant works by authors from the early modern era into the 1800s (for example, see Crețu 2017; Dondorici 2023), Romanian was part of the multilingual Balkans of that time. Similarly to other national and ethnolinguistic contexts, the nineteenth century also coincided with the initial blooming of Romanian literature, with great works of poetry, theatre, and literature flowing from the pens of luminaries such as Mihai Eminescu, Ion Luca Caragiale, and others (for example, see Terian 2017), many of whose works have been widely translated. Considerable literary activity continued into the first half of the twentieth century and beyond, with many writers active not only in Romania itself but also abroad (Terian 2015), particularly in interwar and postwar France, where several wrote in French. Nowadays, there is of course a wealth of literary production in Romanian from both Romania and Moldova, as is well-attested by attributes such as the European Union Prize for Literature (see EU Prize for Literature 2025a; 2025b) and other such accolades.

Accordingly, in noting related discussions on the presence of diaspora and minority writers (for example, see Ung 2021), it must also be remembered that both countries are also home to other ethnic and linguistic communities. This includes speakers of languages such as Hungarian, German, and Polish in the case of Romania, and of Russian and Gagauz in Moldova (for a full list, see Council of Europe 2023; Manole 2021). By way of example, instances of prominent writers from the area writing in other languages include the Bukovina-born Paul Celan, Gregor von Rezzori, and Rose Ausländer (see Hirano 2023; Lajarrige 2023; Reichert 2023), who all wrote principally in German as does the internationally-acclaimed and 2009 Nobel laureate Herta Müller (The Nobel Prize 2025). Yet, though acknowledging the diversity of languages and cultures present in both Romanian and Moldova, this study – similarly to the author's previous work on Polish literature in British translation awards (Hoyte-West 2024a) – takes a more streamlined definition – i.e., through a more limited focus on literature written originally in the Romanian language by authors from Romania and/or Moldova.

Before proceeding to an overview of the relevant literary translation awards, it is necessary to offer a short overview of the links between the Romanian-speaking world and the United Kingdom. Though the two countries had had diplomatic links since the late nineteenth century, Romania had developed stronger links with the French-speaking world (Quinney 2007). However, as demonstrated by travelogues of the time, Romanians did travel to Britain and record their reminiscences in literary form (Culea 2015). After World War Two and during the Communist era, the relative isolation - linked with the acute ideological differences of socialist Romania and Soviet Moldova with the Western world – meant that relations with the United Kingdom were more complicated (Sitariu 2006). However, since Romania joined the European Union in 2007, a significant diaspora has emerged (Grierson 2018). In addition, the expansion of Romania's citizenship laws at the turn of the current century has also ensured that some citizens of Moldova have become eligible for an additional Romanian passport by descent (Pop 2009: 80-82), a development which thus – in the pre-Brexit era – also gave rights for free movement to the United Kingdom.

With regard to the teaching of Romanian, it appears that no official secondary school qualifications in the language are currently available. At the university level, however, a full undergraduate degree programme (BA Romanian and East European Studies) is offered at University College London's School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES). This includes appropriate training in language, literature, history, and culture, and postgraduate-level modules and evening language classes are also available (UCL 2025). A Romanian lectorate was also established at the University of Oxford in 2012 (Taylor Institution Library 2023), and even though the language is not available as a full single or joint honours degree programme in the Faculty of Modern Languages, there is nonetheless a broad scope of teaching and research activities on offer. In terms of wider cultural diplomacy, the London branch of the Romanian Cultural Institute (*Institutul Cultural Român*, the official organisation charged with promoting Romania abroad) organises a range of regular events and other initiatives to showcase Romanian cultural production (Romanian Cultural Institute 2025).

3. The Four Literary Translation Awards

As Swedish literary scholar Paul Tenngart states at the opening of his recent comprehensive monograph on the Nobel Prize in Literature, "every literary award involves a complex transaction between different kinds of capital" (Tenngart 2024: 6). In this regard, in turning to the annual literary translation prizes which are the focus of this study, it is notable that all were created within the past quarter-century or so and thus arguably reflect growing interest – cultural, economic, and other – in translated literature among British book-buyers (Hoyte-West 2023a: 237-238).

In order of recency, the awards are the EBRD Literature Prize (2018), the Warwick Prize for Women in Translation (2017), and the International Booker Prize (originally created in 2004, but relaunched in its present format in 2016), with the oldest being the Oxford-Weidenfeld Prize (1999). Of the four, two have strong links with prestigious universities – the Warwick Prize for Women in Translation with the University of Warwick (2025a), and the Oxford-Weidenfeld Prize with three colleges (New, Queen's, and St Anne's) of the University of Oxford (OCCT 2025a). As denoted by its name, the EBRD Literature Prize has its origins in the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, a London-based international organisation (EBRD 2025). The International Booker Prize, itself linked to the highly-prestigious Booker Prize which recognises literature originally written in English, is run by an associated foundation (The Booker Prizes 2025a).

All of the prizes analysed here focus solely on recognising excellence in literary translation, and in this regard may be considered different to the Dublin Literary Award, which chooses its overall winner not only from works translated into English, but also from works originally written in English by authors worldwide. However, some of the awards may differ in their focus – for example, as detailed in the author's comprehensive study of that award (Hoyte-West 2022), the EBRD Literature Prize particularly centres on recognising literary works from the countries that the Bank operates in, including works originally written in less-commonly translated languages. And as its name suggests, the Warwick Prize for Women in Translation places a spotlight on literary works originally written by women authors (Hoyte-West 2023b).

4. Research Findings

In line with the qualitative and desk-based approach outlined in the introduction to this article, the official websites of the four awards were accessed to obtain the requisite information – i.e., the presence of works translated from Romanian from 2017 up to the time of writing (April 2025).

With regard to the longlists and shortlists for the Warwick Prize for Women in Translation, to date only one work originally in Romanian has featured in the listings. This was in 2017, when Ioana Pârvulescu's novel *Life Begins on Friday* [*Viaţa începe vineri*], translated by Alistair Ian Blyth, featured on the award's maiden longlist (University of Warwick 2025b).

Moving to the International Booker Prize, the longlist for the current year (The Booker Prizes 2025b) featured Mircea Cărtărescu's *Solenoid*, translated by Sean Cotter and – as previously highlighted – the victor of the 2024 Dublin Literary Award. Though Cărtărescu's novel did not advance to the shortlist for the 2025 International Booker Prize, the fact that it was the first novel originally written in Romanian that had ever been longlisted for the Prize was considered noteworthy, as illustrated by a special interview with the author and translator commemorating this fact on the official Prize website (The Booker Prizes 2025c).

Mindful of its distinct bearing towards recognising excellence in less-translated literatures, it is perhaps unsurprising that recent shortlists and finalists for the EBRD Literature Prize contain four works translated from Romanian. In 2019, the Prize's second year, Varujan Vosganian's *The Book of Whispers* [*Cartea şoaptelor*] translated by Alastair Ian Blyth, was longlisted (Ross 2019). In 2021, Matei Vișniec's *Mr K Released* [*Domnul K. eliberat*], translated by Jozefina Komporaly, also reached the longlist[2] and was even selected as one of the three finalists (Ross 2021a; 2021b). In 2024, Carla Baricz's translation of Norman Manea's *Exiled Shadow* [*Umbra exilată*] was shortlisted (Powell 2024), and the current year's shortlist (2025) features Moldovan-Romanian author Liliana Corobca's *Too Great a Sky* [*Capătul drumului*], translated by Monica Cure (Powell 2025). At the time of writing this article (April 2025), the three finalists and the ultimate winner of the 2025 EBRD Literature Prize had not yet been announced.

The listings for the oldest of the four literary translation prizes analysed here, the Oxford-Weidenfeld Prize (OCCT 2025b), contained three works originally written in Romanian during the period analysed. In 2017, Philip Ó Ceallaigh's translation of Mihail Sebastian's *For Two Thousand Years* [*De două mii de ani*] reached the shortlist, and the 2024 longlist for the Prize contained Norman Manea's *Exiled Shadow* [*Umbra exilată*] in its translation by Carla Baricz. Most notably for literature translated from Romanian, however, was the 2023 award, which was won by Monica Cure's translation of Liliana Corobca's *The Censor's Notebook* [*Caiet de cenzor*]. From all of the prizes and works examined in this study, this accolade remains thus far the sole occurrence of a translated work of literature originally written in Romanian proving victorious in a major British translation award.

5. Conclusion

In briefly summarising the findings, it has been demonstrated that literary works translated from Romanian are undeniably present in the listings of all four of the major prizes surveyed, albeit to varying degrees. In the cases of the Warwick Prize for Women in Translation and the International Booker Prize, the study has detailed that – at present – just a single work has been longlisted for either award. However, a significantly stronger showing is visible in the listings for the EBRD Literature Prize (four works) and the three works recognised by the Oxford-Weidenfeld Prize, including selection as the overall winner of the 2023 prize. Of the works analysed, the findings are also notable for the presence of multiple entries, either with regard to the same work receiving consideration for different awards (such as Carla Baricz's translation of Norman Manea's *Exiled Shadow*), different works by the same author (for example, two works apiece by Liliana Corobca and Norman Manea), as well as

[2] Recent editions of the EBRD Literature Prize have renamed this stage as the 'shortlist', from which three finalists (and ultimately an overall winner) are chosen.

different authors translated by the same translator (for example, Alastair Ian Blyth and Monica Cure). It is also noteworthy that the prize listings so far have recognised the translations of works originally written either in the twentieth or twenty-first centuries, almost all by living authors. This means that, to date, no examples of older works from the nineteenth-century literary canon have yet featured in these four main awards. In addition, in thematic terms a number of the works also engage with elements of the totalitarian past of Romania and Moldova, including issues relating to memory and remembrance.

In terms of extending the scope of this research, more detailed analysis on the presence of translated works from Romanian in the British context could involve contacting authors, translators, and publishers. Noting the wide range of factors that govern the global circulation of literary works (Sapiro 2016) as well as within the Romanian context (Culea 2013), this would thereby permit a fuller picture of the procedures underpinning the translation and publishing of a given work to be obtained. In addition, a more holistic and wide-ranging comparative study could involve analysing the translations of works by authors writing in the various minority languages of Romania and Moldova. Literary translations from Romanian into other European languages could also prove an interesting source worthy of further scrutiny.

In common with the author's earlier case studies profiling Bulgarian and Polish literature (Hoyte-West 2024a; 2024b), the future trajectory of translated literature from Romanian in British translation prizes will need to be examined in subsequent editions of the four awards. This will see whether events such as the 2023 Oxford-Weidenfeld Prize for *The Censor's Notebook* or *Solenoid's* longlisting for the 2025 International Booker Prize are indeed indicative of a broader trend. For example, the early signs following *Time Shelter's* victory in the 2023 International Booker Prize tended towards growing interest in literary works translated into English from Bulgarian (Hoyte-West 2024b). And in now demonstrating a relatively strong presence, works translated from Polish have become increasingly widespread in the listings for major British literary translation awards (Hoyte-West 2024a). Therefore, given its strong showing among the longlists, shortlists, and prize-winners of the four awards profiled here, it may be advanced that translations of literary works from Romanian will become more and more prevalent on the shelves of British bookshops over the coming years. As a direct result, it is to be hoped that increasing amounts of literature originally written in Romanian will become available to the book-buying public in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, thus broadening the audience for key literary works from Romania and Moldova.

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Conflict of Interests
The author declares no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

Ethical Standards
The author affirms this research did not involve human subjects.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.46991/TSTP/2025.5.1.027

TRANSLATING A NON-STANDARD VARIETY OF RUSSIAN INTO ITALIAN: THE CASE OF THE ODESAN LANGUAGE

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Abstract. This paper aims to illustrate how a non-standard Russian variety is translated into the Italian language, by analysing some literary works. The analysis focuses on the so-called 'Odesa language,' a contact variety of Russian that originated in the city of Odesa at the end of the 18th century. This variety of Russian spoken in Odesa differs from the other varieties of Russian, as it emerged in a multilingual and multicultural space and shows several influences and calques from the languages present in the city. The results of this contact are found at all linguistic levels and can be attributed mainly to the strong presence of Yiddish and Ukrainian substrates. Considering that the language of Odesa displays different non-standard features, it may be challenging for any translator to convey certain linguistic structures. Therefore, I suggest that a successful translating practice should acknowledge the influence of other languages and thus resort to a third language as a mediating language to translate from one language into another. Focusing on the literary works of Isaac Babel, in particularly on *Odessa Stories*, I will try to show how the linguistic features of the Odesan language are displayed in the Italian translation. In order to do this, I will use three different Italian editions of *Odessa Stories*, comparing them with the Russian one. Furthermore, I will try to figure out which Italian edition is more adherent to the Russian original and which conserves the non-standard nature and the typical grammatical constructions of the Odesa language.

Keywords: translation; Odesa language; language interference; Odessa Stories; Isaac Babel

1. Introduction

Since its foundation in 1794, the city of Odesa[1] has been surrounded by various myths concerning its historical origins, its cultural space, and, most importantly, its

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Received: 09.11.2023
Revised: 29.09.2024
Accepted: 02.06.2025

[1] In Ukrainian, the city's name is spelled with a single 's' – Odesa – while in Russian it appears with a double 's' – Odessa.
In this article, I use different spellings depending on the context: Odesa in relation to contemporary times according to the norms of spelling established by Ukraine's government in order to respect what

multiethnic character. Over the centuries, this city attracted the attention of many artists, historians, and various figures, contributing to building a set of myths that persist nowadays within the Russian culture and outside its borders. Odesa has always been known for being a multiethnic city, since it was populated by different and heterogeneous communities, including Ukrainians, Jews, Russians, Belarusians, Poles, Greeks, Italians, Germans, French, Armenians, Bulgars, and Moldavians. Because of its liberal climate, economic centre, and its major port, Odesa attracted merchants, traders, and other people from different countries. Here, they were able to conduct their own affairs and enjoy rights, as the newly settled city was free from taxation and any form of restriction. The atmosphere of tolerance and respect, as well as the economic opportunities of the city attracted a large number of Jews in the course of the 19th century, whereby they could create new lives and conduct their own business activities without being victims of discrimination and persecution of various kinds. Towards the end of the 19th century, Odesa's population dramatically arose due to increased immigration, becoming the fourth-largest city of the Russian Empire after Moscow, Saint Petersburg, and Warsaw.

By the end of 19th century, the city's population was extremely heterogeneous. The population was mainly composed of Russians, Jews, and Ukrainians. Russians held the majority of administrative positions, while Jews were predominant in the middle and lower classes, and only a small percentage of the population, mostly labourers, were Ukrainians. The Jewish population was the second largest non-Russian speaking group and occupied the full socioeconomic spectrum of the city (Grenoble 2017: 5). Because of its humorous character and the strong presence of Jews and criminals, Odesa has acquired in the course of its history the reputation of 'capital city of humour,' 'Jewish' city and 'town of criminals' in the Russian-speaking cultural environment (Sicher 2015: 221). The ethnically heterogeneous population, who had settled in the city during the 19th century, had contributed to the development of a unique contact variety known in the post-Soviet culture as the "Odesa language" (odes'ka mova; odesskij jazyk) [2].

This contact variety emerged during the 19th century as people from different nations settled in the city, and it became a means of communication among them. The Odesa language is often described as a form of 'corrupted' Russian, a broken language that enabled inter-ethnic communication in the region. This idiom shows a diverse range of norm violations that seem due to language contact, i.e., they can be explained as effects of the influence of the languages present in the town. The results of linguistic contact can be seen at all linguistic levels (phonological, lexical, morphological, and syntactic). The analysis of the Odesa language is, however, hampered by the high variability of its features and the scarcity of available sources; the only data about Odesa language are a collection of written records made between the 2nd half of the 19th and the 1st half of the 20th century. On the basis of a few accounts, it is likely that this

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the sovereign country has chosen, and Odessa in relation to the stories by Babel set in the city on the Black Sea.

[2] Although the variety spoken in Odesa is an urban variety, and thus ascribable to the category of dialect, because of its prestige and representation in literature, it is often referred to as a language (e.g. Stepanov 2004, 2013, 2019; Kabanen 2008/ 2010/2021; Bakuntsev 2011; Verschik 2003/2007; Stetsyuchenko, Ostashko 1999; Karpenko 1991; Sicher 2012 etc.).

variety was spoken by people with different native languages who used Russian as a lingua franca. Even though the Odesa language is widely known in Russian popular culture, and prominently features in literature, television, jokes, books, and oral tradition, it remains an understudied phenomenon and lacking in with limited linguistic documentation.

The first attempt to study the peculiarities of Russian speech in Odesa was made in the 19th century by Konstantin Zeleneckij, a professor at the Richelieu lyceum. In an academic work published in 1855, Zeleneckij argued that the local Russian speech was characterized by certain inaccuracies, such as the use of words and expressions from other languages, incorrect use of declensions and stresses, and various deviations widespread among the local population. In Zeleneckij's point of view, such inaccuracies could be traced to the influence of foreigners who had settled in the region.

Over the past few decades, the Odesa language has attracted the attention of linguists. Many have attempted to define its status, but no consensus has yet been reached, leaving it an open question. Some researchers examine this idiom in relation to various known linguistic phenomena, such as mixed languages (Mustajoki 2013), creoles, and pidgins (Kalmykova 2015), or koine (Stepanov 2004). Others consider it either a Russian-Jewish variety (Verschik 2003) or a regional variety of Russian (Bakuntsev 2011). Still, some argue that it cannot be directly attributed to any of these linguistic phenomena (Kabanen 2010: 287).Nevertheless, most modern scholarly works on the Odesa language focus on its linguistic features and how it is perceived in the imagination of people in the Russian-speaking cultural realm (Kabanen 2010/2019/2021; Stepanov 2013/2019/2004; Mečkovskaja 2006; Grenoble 2015/2017/2022; Verschik 2003).

2. Research Goals

The uniqueness of the Odesa language has become, over the century, a primary subject in different sources, particularly in the prose of the Soviet writer Isaak Babel, who contributed to spread out the myth of the Odesa language and shape a set of stereotypes and figures in the post-Soviet popular culture. In this research, the non-standard features of the Odesa language, as presented in the Russian edition of Babel's cycle *Odessa Stories*, will be compared across three Italian translations by Rosana Platone (2012), Franco Lucentini (1988), and Giovanni Pacini (2022) to investigate the differences between these versions. In particular, the current research aims to explore how the traits of the Odesa language are displayed in the Italian translations and determine which version better conveys the typical constructions and the vernacular character of the Odesan speech. In addition, we will investigate whether a secondary source language or variety was used during the translation process from the original text to the target one. Specifically, we will analyze the main peculiar features occurring in the characters' dialogues to observe their transformation in the Italian versions and explain them, focusing on linguistic interference possibly due to a third intermediary language, such as Yiddish or Ukrainian. To achieve this, we will describe each feature as it appears in the different stories, providing a clear picture of the most salient traits of Babel’s language.

3. Language of Odesa in Literature

3.1. Translating a Non-Standard Variety in Literature

Translating a literary text can be a complex process and poses a challenge for any translator, especially when encountering items such as vocabulary, grammatical structures, and realia specific to varieties and cultures different from the target one. Therefore, the translator should take responsibility for preserving the hybrid character of the text, including its multilingual elements and the cultural context in which it was created. Based on this last point, the translator should also take into account the author’s biography in order to understand which aspects influence their writing style and ideas. Despite the large number of literary texts containing non-standard and dialect features, studies dedicated to hybrid languages in fiction, particularly in their written form, remain scarce (Grenoble 2015). In this research, I will examine a non-standard Russian variety (Odesa language) and its translations into Italian, which at times incorporate regional and non-standard varieties of the Italian language. It is important to note, however, that the translation of contact varieties in the Italian context has traditionally been overlooked as a subject of research in translation studies (Cavagnoli 2014: 174).

A possible reason for this narrow-minded approach to the translation of hybrid languages stems from the tradition, within the Italian publishing industry, where a translated text is deemed acceptable only if it reads fluently and shows no deviation. As a result, the final text is often manipulated, with foreign elements and stylistic peculiarities replaced by standard features of the target language. In our opinion, disregarding the hybrid features in a literary work results in a significant distortion of the text's cultural heritage and the community that produced it.

Therefore, the translator should employ translation strategies in order to preserve the otherness of the source text which constitutes its core. To achieve this and retain the peculiarities in the target text, different translation strategies must be chosen, particularly those that can reflect the hybrid character of the original text. One such strategy is the use of translation equivalence, that best conveys the specific characteristics and nuances of the source text. In translation studies, that of "translation equivalent" is a fundamental concept that refers to a word, phrase, or expression in the target language that carries the same meaning or serves the same function as a linguistic element in the source language. In other words, it is the unit in the target language that conveys the meaning and effect of the original word or phrase within the specific context of the translation. This concept is often debated because a direct or exact equivalent does not always exist between two languages, especially when it comes to cultural nuances, idioms, wordplay, or other forms of non-literal language. Therefore, translators must consider various aspects such as context, communicative function, and the original intention to select the most appropriate equivalent (Newmark

1988). However, it must be acknowledged that some loss of meaning in specific traits and expressions during the translation process is inevitable. In the context of translating contact varieties into Italian, one of the strategies often adopted by Italian translators is resorting to the varieties of the Italian spoken language, such as diatopic (i.e., regional and local) varieties and diastratic (i.e., popular) Italian. Some examples of such strategies can be found in numerous novels of Anglo-American and African literature, such as the works of Mark Twain and Amos Tutuola (Cavagnoli 2014).

These strategies are employed to introduce local colour, as well as to transpose the vernacular nature and the colloquial forms contained in the characters' dialogues. As we will see in the course of our analysis, such strategies were adopted also to convey the folk traits of Babel's characters' speech in the *Odessa Stories*.

3.2. The Odesa language as a Literary Dialect

Although research on the Russian spoken in Odesa is scarce, some studies have examined the Odesa language and its role in literature. Notably, Lenore Grenoble's study (2015) is one such investigation into the Odesa language's literary significance. Given that the Odesa language displays different non-standard traits and predominantly appears in written texts such as fictional narratives, humorous feuilletons, and jocular textbooks, Grenoble argues that it can be considered as a literary dialect (Grenoble, 2015, p. 344). Literary dialect refers to the depiction of non-standard language in literature and is defined as an author's attempt to represent a regional and social speech in written form (Grenoble 2017: 8). According to Grenoble (ibid.), the author deliberately chooses to portray a character speaking a certain language to convey insights into their history and social status within the narrative.

Grenoble points out three different techniques for representing the Odesa language in literature, each used by various Odesan authors. According to Grenoble, some Russian writers, born and raised in Odesa, inclunding I. E. Babel, V. E. Zhabotinskii S.S. Iushkevich, used the Odesa dialect in their works resorting to three different techniques: (1) *selective reproduction*, in which marked features of the Odesa dialect are presented frequently enough to signal the use of a different dialect or language without compromising the reader's understanding, assuming they are not proficient in both varieties; (2) *exiplicit attribution*, in which the narrator or another character directly identifies a speech act as nonstandard; and (3) *verbal transposition*, or devised transitional interference, where a character's speech is reported as if they were speaking their first language (L1), but influenced by their second (L2).

Babel definitely resorts to the technique of 'selective reproduction,' in which the non-standard forms occurring in the characters' fictional dialogues do not interfere with the readability of the text (Grenoble 2015: 345-346). In other words, bilingual competence is not required, as the reader can infer the meaning of foreign words and non-standard constructions through the context or their transparent meaning (Grenoble 2015). This is clearly displayed by Babel in his tales, where Yiddish words regarding the cultural and religious spheres as well as Yiddish syntax with Russian words occur frequently. Aside from the challenges of translating Babel's hybrid language, it is important for the translator to retain those cultural and extralinguistic aspects that constitute the basis for the “Odesanness” of the original text.

3.3. Isaac Babel and the Odessa Stories

As mentioned before, when a translator approaches a text with multilingual traits, they are compelled to consider not only linguistic and extralinguistic factors but also the biography of the author. Isaac Babel (1894-1940) is considered one of the greatest writers of Russian Jewry and one of the most important representatives of the so-called “Odesa School.” Babel was born in Moldavanka, a Jewish quarter of Odesa, to Jewish parents. He grew up in a Russian-speaking home, though he understood Yiddish and learnt Hebrew and French by reading Maupassant. As reported in many studies, his life was deeply marked by a constant conflict between his Russian identity and a purely Jewish identity. In 1939, he was arrested, charged with terrorism and then executed in 1940. His surviving manuscripts were confiscated by the NKVD and destroyed.

Following the upheavals caused by the Bolshevik Revolution, Babel decided to write a cycle of tales set in Odesa, with the purpose of preserving the city’s cultural heritage and depicting Moldavanka with its Jewish gangsters. Therefore, in the early 1920s, he rented a room in the Jewish neighbourhood to closely observe and authentically recreate the atmosphere and the Odesan citizens’ way of speaking as faithfully as possible. *Odessa Stories* was first published by Babel in Odesa in 1921, and in 1924 it appeared in Soviet magazines before being collected into book form, which brought him fame within Soviet Literature. The standard Russian collection of Babel’s tales is prevalently composed of four stories, including *The King* (Король), *How It Was Done in Odesa* (Как это делалось в Одессе), *Lyubka the Cossack* (Любка Казак), and *The Father* (Отец). However, in our analysis will also incorporate additional stories that feature significant traits of the Odesa Language. These stories can be viewed as tales of an exotic, vanished world, where Jews held a prominent place before the Russian Revolution (Sicher 2015: 233). Babel skilfully portrays a romanticized and ironized Moldavanka, capturing the adventures of its gangsters and creating a fictional and mythological imagine of the Odesa’s Jewish criminality.

In the cycle of *Odessa stories*, Babel writes using colourful metaphors, varying between standard Russian and the Odesa language; interestingly, the Odessisms mainly occur in the dialogues among characters. In his tales, Babel chooses certain morphosyntactic features and particular phraseologisms and lexicon based on the character, assigning a distinct linguistic code to those who are representatives of the Jewish community of Odesa. Babel successfully recreates the atmosphere of the Moldavanka and its dwellers by introducing items belonging to the Yiddish and the Jewish cultures. Many of the grammatical constructions in Babel’s works are typical to some Jewish-Russian varieties (Verschik 2003), whereas others are characteristic of Southern Russian dialects. Furthermore, some of these features are nowadays vastly known in Russian popular culture as stereotypical traits of Odesa Jews and employed in television and films to evoke the Odesan humour, which is strictly related to the Jewish humor (Kabanen 2021; Grenoble & Kantarovich 2017). This is because, according to many experts (Verschik 2003; Grenoble 2015/2017), the Odesan jargon was prevalently spoken by the Odesa Jewish community. As far as the Ukrainian interference is concerned, the presence of Ukrainian features in the Odesan language can be seen in the use of prepositions (e.g., *за* + ACC instead of *о* + PREP, *с* + GEN instead of *от* + GEN), lexical borrowings (e.g., *кавун*, *вечерять*, *тикать*), and pronouns (e.g. the use of *мене/мине*).

4. Translating Babel through Intermediary Languages: The Role of Yiddish or Ukrainian Languages

Translation from an intermediary language occurs when translation is not made directly from the original source language (Al Shunnaq 2019: 124). When translation occurs through an intermediary language, at least three languages participate in the process: (i) the source language, (ii) the intermediary language, and (iii) the target language. In other cases, however, the number of the languages involved in the process can be higher, as the source texts can have multilingual features. According to Al Shunnaq (2019: 124), an intermediary language can be defined as a language that mediates between two different languages. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that, unfortunately, the studies concerning intermediary translation are quite neglected in the world of scholarship (Mirzoeva 2016).

Translating Babel's works has always presented a challenge for any translator especially due to his stylistic peculiarities, colourful metaphors, and playful contrasts achieved through the use of creative language. In his literary works, the Yiddish component is crucial, as it is rooted in Babel's origins, with over a third of Odessa's population between the 19th century and the 20th century being Yiddish speakers (Sicher 2012: 99). Since his childhood Babel grew up among a mix of speakers of different languages. Although he wrote primarily in Russian, it was not strictly Babel's native language and he seemed to be fluent in at least Russian, Ukrainian, Yiddish and French. From the biography studies by Sicher (2012) we know that Babel grew up in a Yiddish-speaking milieu, his first literary stories were written in French, and that he was also fluent in Ukrainian. So, considering Babel's Jewish origins and his fluency in several languages, and tendency to write in multiple languages, we assume that the translator should be aware of the Yiddish and Ukrainian linguistic influence and, as a result, recognize Yiddish and Ukrainian as possible intermediary languages during the translating process, as Babel's multilingualism could have left a clear mark on his prose.

However, trying to figure out which language is the mostly involved in the interference within the source text is a challenging task. As we will see later, in several cases it is difficult to ascertain whether Yiddish or Ukrainian is responsible for certain hybrid constructions, as both languages contribute significantly to the ungrammatical (i.e., non-standard) nature of the Odesa language. Considering the *Odessa stories*, the narration in the source text is given in Russian, but the dialogues of the characters display several 'corrupted' forms caused by the Yiddish and the Ukrainian influence. Therefore, it is inevitable to resort to an intermediary language when addressing the deviations in the text. At the same time, it is important to comprehend which strategies the translator should use to interpret and translate constructions and words that do not belong to the standard variety of Russian.

As mentioned before, it is difficult to establish whether Yiddish or Ukrainian causes the linguistic deviations. However, given Babel's deliberate purpose to accurately recreate the speech of Odesa's Jews and his intentional use of Yiddishisms and other hybrid forms, we can assume that the grammatical constructions occurring in the speech of his characters are mainly the result of Yiddish interference. In light of this complexity, how can we determine whether the translator is aware of the Yiddish and Ukrainian linguistic interference? Firstly, we must consider that in the various Italian editions analyzed in this research, it was impossible to ascertain whether the translators used a third intermediary language when translating from the Russian source text into Italian. However, the three Italian are aware of the peculiarity of the Odessa language in Babel's works, as reported in their prefaces:

> "In 1955 (or '56) I knew and I did not know Russian. *The Odessa Stories* posed a particular challenge due to their double local Jewish and Ukrainian colouring. Therefore, I would not have accepted Einaudi's proposal to translate them, if I had not discovered that Mrs. Babel, the writer's widow, was my neighbour."[3] (Lucentini 1988)

> "Babel's language is enriched - among other things – by the powerful integration of Odesan speech and its various components, including foreign, Jewish elements."[4] (Pacini 2022)

Based on such statements, we can assume that the translators were aware of the hybrid linguistic features contained in the source text. Therefore, it is plausible that both Pacini and Lucentini resorted to a certain knowledge of Yiddish and Ukrainian when translating the Russian text into Italian.

Rossana Platone recognizes the strong influence of Yiddish and Ukrainian, as well as the 'ungrammatical' nature of Babel's language. She also acknowledges Babel's extraordinary skill in using *skaz,* a traditional Russian oral narrative form. As she notes in the preface introducing the edition of 2012:

> "Babel skilfully masters the language of the Odesites, a blend of Ukrainian, Yiddish, Polish, and Russian, a mixture of jargons, a melting pot of proverbs of various origins, together with the characteristic errors of Russian-Jewish speech."[5] (Platone 2012)

5. Analysis of *Odessa Stories*

In this section, the source text of Babel's *Odessa Stories* ("Odesskie Rasskazy," *Sobranie sočinenij v četyrech tomach,* Vremja, Moskva, 2006) will be compared with three different Italian translations, namely (1) *Racconti di Odessa,* translated by Franco

[3] Translated by the author (F. B.)
[4] Translated by the author (F. B.)
[5] Translated by the author (F. B.)

Lucentini (Torino, Einaudi, 1988), (2) *Racconti di Odessa*, edited by Rossana Platone (Milano, BUR, 2012), and (3) *Racconti di Odessa*, translated by Gianlorenzo Pacini (Milano, Mondadori, 2022).

The comparison of parallel passages aims to explain the distinct linguistic features of the Odesa language and determine which Italian edition best reflects the ungrammatical and non-standard elements of the Odessan speech, as well as whether the translator has resorted to an intermediary language in the translation process. The analysis is based on select fragments of the stories, chosen for their critical features. These fragments are taken from *Odessa stories*, in particular from the tales *The King* (Korol), *How It Was Done in Odessa* (Kak eto delalos v Odesse), *The Father* (Otets) and *Sunset* (Zakat).

5.1. *The King*

Table (1) shows passages from "The King" in their original version and how they are translated into the three Italian versions. The non-standard forms in the source text are highlighted in bold, as well as their respective translations in the target text.

Source text	1st Italian translation (Lucentini 1988)	2nd Italian translation (Platone 2012)	3rd Italian translation (Pacini 2022)
- Беня, ты знаешь, что **мине сдается**? - Я **имею** Вам **сказать** пару слов. - Беня **знает за** облову. - Пусть вас не волнует **этих глупостей**.	-Benja, lo sai che **mi pare**? - **Devo dirvi** due parole. - Benja sa della retata. - non preoccupatevi di certe inezie.	"Benja, sai cosa **mi sembra**?" "**Ho da dirvi un paio di parole**." "Benja sa della retata." "e non vi preoccupino queste sciocchezze."	"Benja, sai che **mi pare a me**? "**Ho due parole da dirvi**" "Benja sa della retata." "**non state a** preoccuparvi di queste sciocchezze…"

Table 1: Passages from *The King*

In the select fragments, the influence of Yiddish and Ukrainian is extremely evident. In the sentence '*Беня, ты знаешь, что мине сдается?,'* the interferences of Ukrainian are displayed through the use of the Ukrainianized form of the personal pronoun *мине* 'me-dative' (instead of the Russian *мне*) and the Ukrainian verb *здається* 'appear' rather than the Russian equivalent *кажется*. Due to the influence of Yiddish and Ukrainian, some verbs such us *иметь* 'have' and *делать* 'do' are used differently than in Russian.

In the utterance *Я имею Вам сказать пару слов* 'I have to say you a few words,' the verb *иметь* functions as a modal verb, conveying a sense of duty or necessity. In Ukrainian, the verb *мати* 'have' carries the same meaning (as seen in *я маю їхати до Києва* 'I have to go to Kyiv'). Furthermore, the Ukrainian verb *мати* 'have' can also be used in possessive constructions, as in *я маю книгу* 'I have a book,' unlike the Russian locative possessive construction *у меня есть книга*, lit. 'the book is at mine's.' We must note that the same functions are expressed by the Yiddish equivalent *hobn* 'to have.' Since both Yiddish and Ukrainian are "have-languages," it is difficult to determine which language causes the abovementioned syntactic construction, i.e., either the Ukrainian *я* ***маю*** *вам* ***сказати*** *кілька слів* 'I have a few words to say to you', lit. 'I have to you-DAT say few words,' or the Yiddish *Ikh* ***hob*** *a por verter aykh* ***tsu zogn,*** lit. 'I have to you-ACC/DAT a few words to say' (Stepanov 2013: 400). We might assume that the constructions with the Russian verb *иметь* 'to have' in the Odesa language are influenced by Yiddish, with additional support of the Ukrainian grammatical system. As for the Italian translations, no significant differences are noticeable, since the construction containing the verb *avere* 'to have' conveying a sense of duty or necessity also exists in the Italian language, as in ***ho*** *da* ***dirvi*** *due parole*, 'I have to tell you a few words.'

Based on this aspect, it is crucial to keep in mind that the perception of the original text by a Russian-speaking reader significantly differs from that of an Italophone reader, as the have-construction in Italian – unlike its Russian counterpart – is not ungrammatical. However, it is interesting to note that the translation by Lucentini uses the verb *dovere* 'must,' suggesting that he may not have relied on Yiddish or Ukrainian but instead translated it directly from Russian.

Other salient and typical features of the Odesa language include variants of case government that are probably due to Ukrainian interference, as well as an overuse of the genitive plural instead of the accusative form. For instance, in the Odesa language, instead of the preposition *о, об* 'about' followed by the prepositional case, it is common to use the preposition *за* 'for' followed by the accusative case, as in *Беня знает за облову* 'Benja knows ZA-about the raid-ACC.' This pattern reflects the Ukrainian usage, as in *вона знає за тебе* 'she knows about you,' lit. 'she knows ZA-about you-ACC.'

5.2. *How It Was Done in Odessa*

Table (2) present passages from the story *How it was done in Odessa* in their original version, along with its/their translation into the three Italian versions.

Source text	1st Italian translation (Lucentini 1988)	2nd Italian translation (Platone 2012)	3rd Italian translation (Pacini 2022)
- Беня говорит мало, но говорит **смачно**. - Он думает **об выпить** хорошую стопку водки, об дать кому-нибудь морде […]	-Benja parla poco, ma parla **saporito**. - Pensa **a bersi** un buon gotto di vodka e a picchiare qualcuno sul muso…	"Benja parla poco, ma **c'è succo in quel che dice**." -Pensa **a bere** un buon bicchiere di vodka, a picchiare qualcuno sul muso…	"Benja parla poco, ma parla **colorito**." -Pensa **a mandare** giù un bel bicchiere di vodka, a rompere il muso a qualcuno…

Table 2: Passages from *How It Was Done in Odessa*

The Odesa language features a unique lexicon, enriched by borrowings from Ukrainian, Yiddish, and other languages. Ukrainian has contributed the most foreign lexical elements to the Odesan speech. Some of these borrowings can be found in Babel's tales, as illustrated in the example: *Беня говорит мало, но говорит* ***смачно*** 'Benja does not talk a lot, but he speaks deliciously.' In this sentence, the Ukrainian adverb *смачно* is used to mean 'deliciously.'

Rosanna Platone's translation offers an interesting version by introducing the word *succo* 'juice,' used here in a figurative sense. In Italian, the word *succo* can serve as a synonym for 'gist,' 'essence' when discussing the main topic of a conversation, speech, or problem, as in *il succo della questione* 'the gist (lit. the juice) of the matter.' Calques from Yiddish are more evident at the syntactic level. In the *Odessa stories,* several object infinitives are preceded by a preposition. This structure is ungrammatical in standard Russian but common in Yiddish, as shown in the following example: *Он думает* ***об выпить*** *хорошую стопку водки,* ***об дать*** *кому-нибудь морде* 'he thinks about drinking a glass of vodka, hitting someone on the muzzle.' This is a calque from the Yiddish *Er trakht* ***vegn oysdrinkn*** *a glezl, vegn shlogn emetsn* 'he thinks about drinking a glass of vodka, hitting someone on the muzzle.' A similar construction is also found in Italian, where a dependent clause can be realized using a preposition (*di* or *a*) followed by the infinitive verb: *pensa* ***a bere*** 'he thinks about drinking.'

5.3. *The Father*

Table (3) provides passages from *The Father* in their original version, along with its/their translation in the three Italian versions.

Source text	1st Italian translation (Lucentini 1988)	2nd Italian translation (Platone 2012)	3rd Italian translation (Pacini 2022)
- Если хотите что-нибудь наблюдать из жизни, то зайдите к нам на двор есть **с чего посмеяться**... - но я выведу **этот грязь**. - Или сделайте со мной что-нибудь, или я **делаю конец** моей жизни...	-Se volete imparare qualche cosa dalla vita, entrate qui da noi. **Riderete**. - Ma adesso, - gridò, - faremo pulizia! - O vedete di farci qualche cosa, papà, o io **la faccio finita e m'ammazzo**.	"Se volete osservare qualcosa della vita, entrate nel nostro cortile, **c'è da ridere…**" "ma la butterò fuori questa sporcizia." "O fate qualcosa per me papà, o **metterò fine alla mia vita**…"	"se volete imparare qualcosa dalla vita entrate da noi, **vi farete due risate**…" "ma ve lo sistemo questo sporco!" "O voi fate qualcosa di me, papà, oppure io **la faccio finita con la mia vita**…"

Table 3: Passages from *The Father*

In the first excerpt, it is difficult to determine which language influenced the deviant use of preposition *с* + genitive case instead of *над* + instrumental case with the verb *смеяться* 'laugh,' as both Yiddish and Ukrainian may have contributed to this governance pattern: *с чего посмеяться* (Russian) / *сміятися з чимось* (Ukrainian) / *lakhn fun epes* (Yiddish). The same issue arises in cases, where gender agreement is violated, as shown in the following example: *но я выведу* ***этот грязь*** 'but I take out this-MASC dirt-FEM.’ In this case, the agreement violation could be attributed to both Yiddish and Ukrainian, as the equivalents of the noun *грязь* (‘dirt,’ feminine in Russian) are masculine nouns in both languages, e.g., *бруд* (Ukrainian) and *der koyn* (Yiddish). In the Italian translations, the rendering of this deviant form is missing, as the agreement between the adjective and the noun is maintained: *ma la butterò fuori* ***questa sporcizia*** ‘but I’ll throw out this-FEM dirt-FEM’; *ma ve lo sistemo* ***questo sporco*** ‘but I’ll take care of this-MASC dirt-MASC for you.’ In the final fragment, we can observe how the verb *делать* ‘to do’ is used in unusual and unexpected combinations. According to Stepanov (2013: 235), its widespread use is likely influenced by Yiddish, as in *делать конец* ‘to put (lit. do) an end to,’ mirroring the expression *der sof makhn* ‘do the end.’ Also in this case, the effect of the Odessan ‘broken’ grammar is lost in translation, as the Italian translators employ idiomatic expressions with the same meaning, such as *farla finita* ‘lit. make it finished’ to convey the idea of putting an end to one’s life.

5.4. *Sunset*

Table (4) presents a passage from the story *Sunset* in its original version, along with its translations in the three Italian versions.

Source text	1st Italian translation (Lucentini 1988)	2nd Italian translation (Platone 2012)	3rd Italian translation (Pacini 2022)
- Заворачивайте биндюг, дяденька Крик, **бо сыны** ваши **хочут** лупцовать вас...	*Not available*[6]	“Voltate il carro, zietto Krik, i vostri figli vogliono picchiarvi…”	“Voltate il carro, zio Krik, **perché** i vostri figli vogliono bastonarvi…”

Table 4: A passage from *Sunset*

The passage in Table (4) illustrates several features of the Odesa language, that can mainly be attributed to the interference of Ukrainian: *Заворачивайте биндюг, дяденька Крик,* ***бо сыны*** *ваши* ***хочут*** *лупцовать вас...* ‘Turn your cart, uncle Krik, because your sons want to beat you.’ The first non-standard element is the conjugation *бо*, which serves as a more informal and colloquial variant of the Ukrainian equivalent *тому що* ‘because’ and is never used in standard Russian. It is interesting to note that this word has not been translated in the version by Platone’s version, unlike in Pacini’s version, where the Ukrainian borrowing was translated. Other non-standard elements include the endings of the word *сыны* ‘sons’ (instead of *сыновья*) and *хочут* 'they want' (instead of the form *хотят*). It is interesting to notice that, in both cases, the required endings are exceptions, while the endings in the Odesan variety - though ungrammatical - align with the declension and conjugation patterns of Russian. These features are completely lost in the Italian version, which presents only morphologically well-formed words.

[6] The translation of the story *Sunset* is not present in the edition written by Lucentini.

6. Exploring the Non-Standard Character of the Odesa Language in Italian Translations

After analysing and comparing the grammatical features of the Odesa language in both the source text and the target texts, this section aims to determine whether any of the Italian editions conserves, though only partially, the non-standard character of the Odesan speech. Through a careful analysis of fragments from the *Odessa stories*, we have observed that certain features are also present in some traits of popular Italian and informal spoken Italian. Such features suggest that the italophone translators deliberately incorporated traits of colloquial Italian to convey a certain vernacular character, thereby preserving the popular nature of the Odesa language in the target text. The characteristics of spoken Italian present in the translations of *Odessa Stories* is illustrated and discussed below.

In the tale *The King*, the sentence *'Беня, ты знаешь, что мине сдается?'* has been translated into Italian by Pacini as: *'Benja, sai che mi pare a me?.'* This sentence exhibits a typical linguistic phenomenon known as 'left-dislocation' (cf. Cinque 1977), which is characteristic of neo-standard and popular Italian. Neo-standard Italian refers to a variety of the Italian language that incorporates elements of colloquial speech. This variety was defined by Francesco Sabatini with the term "Italiano dell'uso medio" (Italian of an average use), indicating a form strongly influenced by the spoken language (Fiorentino, 2018: 92). One of the distinctive features of this variety is the so-called 'left-dislocation' (Fiorentino 2018), a typical phenomenon of spontaneous speech, where the indirect object is fronted and recalled, resulting in its duplication, via a pronoun within the same sentence.

Let us consider the following example:

Sai cosa ***mi*** *pare* ***a me****?* (Do you know what it seems to me)

The construction is not permitted in standard literary Italian due to the repetition of the indirect pronoun (*a me* and *mi*), although it is commonly used in colloquial speech. Additionally, the verb *parere* is less used in standard Italian than its equivalent *sembrare*, but it remains a distinct feature of some regional Italian dialects.

Popular Italian, on the other hand, represents the language of semi-literate individuals, who do not fully acquire the standard Italian language. According to some Italian sociolinguists (cf. Berruto 1987), there exists a continuum between informal spoken Italian and popular Italian, as both varieties share certain features, such as the use of regionalisms and various types of redundances, including left-dislocations.

Another feature characteristic of spoken Italian appears in the sentence uttered by Benja Krik in Pacini's translation: *"non* ***state a*** *preoccuparvi di queste sciocchezze…"* 'Don't let these silly things bother you.' where, the construction *stare a + infinitive* 'be about to' (lit. 'to stay at') represents a typical trait of the dialect spoken in Rome (Treccani 2010).

Besides the traits linked to spoken Italian and regional varieties, the translators employed various idiomatic expressions that frequently occur in the colloquial speech in order to convey and preserve the popular tone of the source text, as seen in the following sentences:

- *"Pensa a* ***mandare giù*** *un bel bicchiere di vodka"*: in this context, **mandare giù** (lit. 'to send it down') is used idiomatically to mean swallowing (WordSense Online Dictionary. s.v. "mandare giù.").
- *"Oppure io la* ***faccio finita con*** *la mia vita…"*: **farla finita con la vita** (lit.'to make it finished with my life') is used with the idiomatic meaning of committing suicide.
- *"Benja parla poco, ma c'è* ***succo*** *in quel che dice."*: here, the word '**succo**' (lit. 'juice,' 'secretion,' gist') can take on different connotative meanings depending on the context. In this case, the word is used with reference to the idiomatic expression of **'il succo del discorso'** 'the gist of the speech.'
- *"****Vi farete due risate****…"*: the idiomatic expression **farsi due risate** 'make a couple of laughs ourselves' corresponds to the expression 'to have a laugh.'

7. Conclusion

The analysis conducted on some selected fragments has shown that none of the translations considered is able to convey the ungrammatical nature of the Odesa language, although they partially manage to preserve the popular character of the original text. The deviant forms occurring in the source text do not find an equivalent result in the target texts due to certain similarities between Yiddish and Italian's grammatical structures, as well as differences between the Russian and the Italian linguistic systems. Since the main ungrammatical traits of the Odesa language are primarily achieved through the ungrammatical use of government rules, prepositions and syntactic borrowings from Yiddish, finding an equivalent in Italian that corresponds to the broken Russian spoken by Babel's gangsters is absolutely impossible. Based on this, translating the Odesa language into Italian without losing its inherent incorrectness is extremely difficult, as the Italophone translator must contend with hybrid constructions which are hard to reproduce. Achieving an adequate and precise translation is particularly challenging especially in those passages where syntactic calques from Yiddish and Ukrainian occur, as the Italophone audience may struggle to discern the syntactic differences among these languages.

However, when translating the hybrid writing of foreign works, one can consider Cavagnoli's proposal (2017) to explore those strategies in the Italian language that reflect linguistic variation in oral speech, which lead the language to deviate from the standard written norm. These strategies include the use of conjunctions governing the indicative mood, expressions like *mi sa che* to express opinions, as well as an extensive use of the imperfect tense and simplified forms of the conditional. Additionally, this includes the use of the polyfunctional *che*, the polyfunctional pronoun *gli*, *fare* as an auxiliary verb, as long as colloquial expressions and lexical regionalisms.

Finally, it could be beneficial for future translators to explore a translation technique that resorts to an intermediary language to convey the ungrammatical forms influenced by Yiddish and Ukrainian. Although translating Babel presents certain challenges, it has been observed that translators can, in some cases remain faithful to the original text and while also creating something new through their creativity, considering the cultural space of the target text. In conclusion, we hope that the translation of the Odesa language and its prominent feature be subjects of future research: as we have demonstrated translating Babel poses unique challenges, but it is a worthwhile endeavour.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

Ethical Standards

The author affirms this research did not involve human subjects.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.46991/TSTP/2025.5.1.044

RHETORICAL UNIT "SILK ROAD" FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE TRANSLATION

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Abstract: Rhetorical devices, if combined with correctly developed rhetorical strategies, contribute to effective contact with the listeners and prove to be powerful means of immediate impact upon the audience. Figures of speech are among the most significant rhetorical devices, which intensify the expressiveness and emotional impact of a political speech. The term "Silk Road" possessing a long-lasting historical past, has currently acquired metaphorical properties and is often used as a rhetorical device by politicians in different countries and in various circumstance. When public speeches are translated, both the language and socio-cultural context should be carefully examined to maintain the persuasive impact of the original message on the target audience. Hence, a well-done pre-translation discourse analysis of the ST (the text of the uttered speech) will let the translator go deeper into the content-conceptual information and the techniques it is specified by, to identify the verbal and non-verbal elements, which capture the receptor's attention, leading it simultaneously in the direction intended by the speaker. The article focuses on trilingual (Armenian, English, Russian) analysis of the "Silk Road" rhetorical device in RA Prime Minister's speech, to specify its function through the socio-cultural situation case study and to identify its translation properties. The narrative, discourse and comparative methods of analyses have been used in the course of research.

Keywords: public speech; persuasive communication; rhetorical device; Silk Road; translation transformations

1. Introduction

As a subgenre of political discourse, oratory is often considered as an effective tool of persuasion for its significant influence on the target audience. Speeches are usually

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Received: 10.04.2025
Revised: 01.05.2025
Accepted: 02.06.2025

characterized by their immediate and effective interaction with listeners. A good orator is the one who is able to combine the public speaking skills with the socio-cultural environment he/she is acting in, the target audience expectancies and demands, and the rhetorical devices, to make the persuasion more effective and to achieve the desirable impact upon the listeners. According to Aristotle "the right thing in speaking really is that we should be satisfied not to annoy our hearers, without trying to delight them: we ought in fairness to fight our case with no help beyond the bare facts: nothing, therefore, should matter except the proof of those facts. Still … other things affect the result considerably, owing to the defects of our hearers. The arts of language cannot help having a small but real importance, whatever it is we have to expound to others: the way in which a thing is said does affect its intelligibility. Not, however, so much importance as people think. All such arts are fanciful and meant to charm the hearer" (Aristotle 2008: 271-272).

Thus, Peter Newmark (1988) highlights the dual function of speeches, emphasizing the critical intertwining of informative and persuasive elements necessary for effectively engaging the audience and motivating action. This perspective underscores the importance of deliberate language choices in attaining communicative effectiveness, suggesting that the manner in which information is presented can significantly influence the audience's perception and response.[1] Vilen Komissarov (1990) emphasizes the speaker's crucial role in maintaining audience attention through language that is both accessible and aesthetically pleasing. This focus reinforces the idea that the delivery of a speech is as important as its content. Effective oratory surpasses mere informational transmission, it demands an engaging presentation that captivates listeners and sustains their interest. By combining elegant language with clear messaging, speakers can enhance the impact of their speeches, making complex ideas more relatable and memorable, ultimately fostering a stronger connection with the audience. According to Alexander Schweitzer oratory emerges as a vital mechanism for navigating the complexities of social relations, revealing the profound interplay between language, power, and ideology in shaping collective consciousness. He underscores the significant societal consequences of oratory as a publicistic activity, highlighting its ability to mirror, reinforce, and transform the cultural and ideological frameworks of communities (Schweitzer 1988: 110-118).

However, when speeches are translated, both the language and socio-cultural contexts should be carefully examined to maintain the impact of the original message on the target audience. Peter Newmark, while speaking about the cohesive level in translation, considers it an "attempt to follow the thought through the connectives and the feeling tone, and the emotion through value-laden or value-free expressions, is, admittedly, only tentative, but it may determine the difference between a humdrum or

[1] Newmark categorizes texts based on their communicative functions, positioning speeches within a critical space that merges aesthetic considerations with practical objectives. This classification reflects the unique nature of oratory, which demands a careful balance of content and delivery, ensuring that speeches resonate both intellectually and emotionally with listeners. By recognizing this blend of informational and vocative elements, Newmark provides a framework that enriches the understanding of how effective speeches operate within the broader publicistic style, emphasizing the importance of rhetoric in achieving desired outcomes in communication (Newmark 1988: 38-40).

misleading translation and a good one. This cohesive level is a regulator, it secures coherence, it adjusts emphasis … This is where the findings of discourse analysis are pertinent" (Newmark 1988: 24). Consequently, a proper discourse analysis of the source speech creates a good opportunity for a translator to determine the translation strategies from the perspective of Christiane Nord's communicative/functional model of translation-oriented text analysis (Nord 2006: 25-153)[2]. A well-done pre-translation discourse analysis of the ST (the text of the uttered speech) will let the translator go deeper into the content-conceptual information and the techniques it is specified by, to identify the verbal and non-verbal elements, which capture the receptor's attention, leading it simultaneously in the direction, intended by the speaker. Rhetorical devices if combined with correctly developed rhetorical strategies contribute to effective contact with the listeners and prove to be the most powerful means of immediate impact upon the audience. Figures of speech are among the most significant rhetorical devices, which intensify the expressiveness and emotional impact of a political speech.

The research focuses predominantly on trilingual (Armenian, English, Russian) analysis of the "Silk Road" rhetorical device along with socio-cultural elements employed by the RA Prime Minister in his speech "Crossroads of Peace" delivered on 26 October 2023 at the Tbilisi International Forum, to specify its function through the socio-cultural situation case study and to identify its translation properties. The narrative, discourse and comparative methods of analyses have been used in the course of research. The narrative method of analysis employed in the article leads to the identification of language means, which are used by the speaker to specify the socio-cultural situation and his personal interpretation of the events, introduced in the speech. The pre-translation discourse analysis is based on Zellig S. Harris' approach towards analysis from the perspective of "the connection between behavior (or social situation) and language, which has always been considered beyond the scope of linguistics proper" (Harris 1952: 2) to specify the conceptual value of the original speech. Finally, the comparative analysis is undertaken to compare various versions of translation (English and Russian), to determine which of them more accurately transmits the original text and to reveal the linguistic properties of the target languages, which contribute to relevant transformations of the source text.

2. Rhetorical Value of the Unit "Silk Road" within the Scope of Pashinyan's "Crossroads of Peace"

The term "Silk Road" was first used in the second half of XIX century by a famous German geographer and traveller Ferdinand von Richthoven after his several expeditions to China. The name was given to the trade route connecting East Asia with

[2] Nord considers that translation is a process that takes into account both the linguistic features of the source text and its functional/cultural significance. She introduces the concept of functional equivalence, which prioritizes the function of the message in the target language rather than striving for a word-for-word translation. Thus, the translator's goal is to recreate the intended effect or response in the target culture, which may involve adapting cultural references to make sense to the target audience (Nord 2001: 45).

the West World, starting from China to the Mediterranean territories in the period of the II century BC until the XV century AD. "The Silk Road" or "Silk Route" is an ancient network of trade and cultural transmission routes that were central to cultural interaction through regions of the Asian continent connecting the West and East by merchants, pilgrims, monks, soldiers, nomads, and urban dwellers from China and India to the Mediterranean Sea during various periods of time" (Open Ended Social Studies 2015). Consequently, together with trade relations, cultural, spiritual, economic and political interaction started to develop among the people who inhabited the territories along the Silk Road.

The phenomenon of the "Silk Road" is even now the subject of discussions in various fields of research: history, geography, archeology, architecture, political science, literature, linguistics. In his "The Silk Road in World History: A Review Essay" Alfred J. Andrea suggests a detailed analyses of two modern eras of intense academic study of the "trans-Eurasian network of trade routes connecting East and Southeast Asia to Central Asia, India, Southwest Asia, the Mediterranean, and northern Europe, which flourished from roughly 100 BCE to around 1450" (Andrea 2014: 105). He notes, in particular, that the second period has especially resulted in an ever-expanding sense among historians of the scope, and significance of the Silk Road.[3] In his article "Silk Road: Past and Present" Subiday Togan, presenting a brief historical review, focuses predominantly on the Chinese initiative to revive the Silk Road trade in Central Asia named the One Belt One Road Initiative (Togan 2015: 36).[4] From the perspective of archeological researches the "Silk Road" found a rather detailed specification in an article, published in 2021 in "Поволжская археология" (Volga Region Archeology) journal. The authors propose different measures for a new archeological study on the Silk Road, which will lead to global cultural cooperation with a significant contribution of South Korea to the international archeological research on the Silk Road (Kim & Aitbayeva 2021).[5]

As soon as the unit "Silk Road" acquired metaphorical properties and started to be used as a rhetorical device it has become the subject of linguistic and literary researches.

As mentioned above, the present article focuses on trilingual analysis of RA Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's speech "Crossroads of Peace," where he presents the principles of the project and outlines its broader implications for regional diplomacy and peace-building. The speech provides a convincing example of political rhetoric, as it combines persuasive appeals with cultural and political references aimed at shaping

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[3] The two modern eras of intense academic study, mentioned by Alfred J. Andrea are: the first is a period of little more than five decades, from the late nineteenth century into the early1930s, when a succession of European, Japanese, and American scholar-adventurers, working primarily in Chinese Turkestan and China's Gansu Province rediscovered and often looted many of the ancient sites and artifacts of the Silk Road. The second era began to pick up momentum in the 1980s due to a number of geopolitical, cultural, and technological realities as well as the emergence of the New World History as a historiographical field and area of teaching.

[4] Subiday Togan notes, that China intends to remove investment and trade barriers for creation of a sound business environment within the region, and improving road network connectivity.

[5] In the article the prospects are discussed from the scholars' standpoint in South Korea, which is actively involved in archeological research in Eurasia. It must be a long-term collaboration on the Silk Road research in different countries.

public opinion and fostering international cooperation. The speech is deeply embedded in historical and cultural references, particularly concerning the Silk Road, which serves as both a literal and metaphorical foundation for his argument. The speech is strategically constructed to engage both domestic and international audiences by employing historical allusions, rhetorical repetition, parallel structures, and cultural symbolism.

Through the central metaphorical unit, *the Silk Road*, Pashinyan emphasizes the necessity of open borders, peaceful dialogue, and economic interdependence to ensure long-term stability. By invoking the *Մետաքսի ճանապարհ* [Silk Road], Pashinyan references a well-documented historical trade route as well as redefines it as a symbol of economic prosperity, peace, and cooperation. He contrasts this positive historical image with the present geopolitical reality, subtly addressing Armenia's closed borders with Turkey and Azerbaijan. This contrast establishes an implicit critique of regional tensions while reinforcing his vision of a new Silk Road, which he frames as the "Crossroads of Peace." Additionally, Pashinyan emphasizes that the Silk Road was not just a commercial route but also a conduit for cultural exchange:

> Այդ ճանապարհներով մարդիկ ոչ միայն ապրանքներ էին փոխադրում, այլև՝ պատմություններ, սովորույթներ, ավանդույթներ, գիտելիքներ, հմտություններ: (Pashinyan 2023)
>
> (Literally: People transported not only goods along those roads, but also stories, customs, traditions, knowledge, skills.)

The idea that roads facilitate human connection rather than mere commerce strengthens his argument that closed borders hinder economic progress as well as cultural and diplomatic relations.

Along with diplomatic tone, Pashinyan's speech contains instances of subtle irony that highlight regional difficulties:

> Մեր չորս հարևաններից երկուսի հետ մեր ճանապարհները բաց են, ինչը վկայում է նրանց հետ մեր ունեցած հարաբերությունների բարեկամական լինելու մասին: Մեր հարևաններից երկուսի հետ մեր ճանապարհները փակ են, ինչը հարաբերություններում առկա բարդությունների *շատ խոսուն վկայություն* է: (ibid.)
>
> (Literally: Our roads are open with two of our four neighbors, which proves the friendly relations we have with them. Our roads are closed with two of our neighbors, which is a vivid proof of the difficulties in the relationship.)

The phrase *շատ խոսուն վկայություն* (a vivid proof) carries a tone of implicit irony, suggesting that the closed borders speak for themselves without the need for further elaboration. This rhetorical strategy allows Pashinyan to criticize regional obstacles without direct confrontation, maintaining a neutral yet pointed diplomatic stance.

One of the most compelling rhetorical techniques used in Pashinyan's speech is parallelism, a literary device that enhances both the clarity and persuasiveness of his message. Parallel structures make the speech more rhythmically engaging and easier to follow. Simultaneously they serve to reinforce key policy points and commitments. A particularly striking example of this technique appears in his discussion of infrastructure development within this speech:

> …ճանապարհներ, երկաթուղիներ, խողովակաշարեր, մալուխներ, էլեկտրահաղորդման գծեր նորոգելու, կառուցելու, գործարկելու միջոցով: (ibid.)
>
> (Literally: …by means of renovating, building, and operating roads, railways, pipelines, cables, and electricity lines.)

The coherent use of such verbs as *նորոգել* (renovating), *կառուցել* (constructing), *գործարկել* (operating) and the sequential listing of infrastructure components *ճանապարհներ* (roads), *երկաթուղիներ* (railways), *խողովակաշարեր* (pipelines), *մալուխներ* (cables), *էլեկտրահաղորդման գծեր* (electricity lines) create a rhythmic and structured appeal. By listing multiple forms of infrastructure in a systematic and structured manner, Pashinyan presents his argument as comprehensive and well-planned. The usage of a structured sequence implies thorough preparation and a certain strategy, reinforcing his government's credibility and competence. The specific mention of various infrastructure elements suggests that the project is not merely conceptual but includes tangible, actionable developments in different sectors. The sequential use of the verbs *նորոգել* (renovating), *կառուցել* (constructing), *գործարկել* (operating) strengthens the message through reinforcement and rhythm. In classical rhetoric, such tricolon structures are often used to make statements more memorable and impactful, for instance, Julius Caesar's famous "Veni, vidi, vici" or Lincoln's "government of the people, by the people, for the people" (Corbett & Connors 1999: 51-52).

Repetition is a fundamental rhetorical strategy in Pashinyan's speech, serving to reinforce key items and ensure that critical messages resonate with the audience. One of the most prominent repeated elements is the word *ճանապարհներ* (roads), which appears multiple times throughout the speech. This repetition is not accidental. It strategically underscores the central premise of the speech – connectivity is the foundation of peace. By continually returning to the concept of roads, Pashinyan constructs a strong associative link between infrastructure development and regional stability. This rhetorical technique ensures that the audience internalizes the notion that open and functioning transport routes are essential for economic growth, diplomatic engagement, and peaceful coexistence.

Beyond the repetition of single words, entire phrases are echoed for emphasis. A particularly striking example is the phrase *բաց սահմանները, տնտեսական, քաղաքական, մշակութային կապերը* (open borders, economic, political, cultural ties). The phrase encapsulates the broader vision of regional integration, emphasizing that peace is not merely the absence of conflict but rather an active and dynamic process requiring cooperation on multiple levels. By repeating this phrase, Pashinyan both reinforces the key aspects of his peace initiative and highlights the interconnected nature of diplomacy, commerce, governance, and culture.

Repetition in Pashinyan’s speech serves as a rhetorical bridge between past, present, and future. By invoking roads and borders as historical symbols of connection, while also framing them as contemporary political challenges and future aspirations, he situates his policy within a broader historical trajectory. This aligns with Aristotle’s concept of pathos, as it appeals to the audience’s collective memory and aspirations, fostering a sense of continuity and shared destiny (Aristotle 2004: 3-12).

3. Translation Transformations in Context-Oriented Use of the Metaphorical Unit “Silk Road”

After having examined the original speech, which provides valuable insights into Pashinyan's rhetorical strategies, thematic emphasis, and cultural references, it is now essential to turn to how these elements are preserved, altered, or transformed in the Russian and English translations, how key rhetorical devices, linguistic nuances, and cultural contexts have been handled in each language. The analysis will highlight the translators’ choices and the potential implications they have on the perception of the original meaning and tone of the speech.

As mentioned above, Pashinyan effectively uses repetition to highlight the central items of the speech, particularly those related to peace, and cooperation. Thus, the syntagm *Մետաքսի ճանապարհ* (Silk Road) is repeated to emphasize its historical and symbolic significance, while *ճանապարհներ* (roads) appears multiple times throughout the speech, reinforcing the metaphorical notion of pathways that connect countries, peoples, cultures, and ideas.

> «*Մետաքսի ճանապարհ*» արտահայտությունը բոլորիս հայտնի է դեռևս դպրոցական դասագրքերից: Շատերը, համոզված եմ, շատ մանրամասներ չեն հիշում *Մետաքսի ճանապարհի* ժամանակների պատմական անցքերի և իրադարձությունների մասին: Բայց «*Մետաքսի ճանապարհ*» պատմական տերմինը բոլորիս մտքում ասոցացվում է բարեկեցության, խաղաղության, զարգացման, համագործակցության հետ, որովհետև *Մետաքսի ճանապարհն* անցնում էր բազմաթիվ երկրներով ու բնակավայրերով... (Pashinyan 2023)
>
> (Literally: The phrase “Silk Road” is familiar to all of us from school textbooks. Many, I am sure, do not remember many details about the historical events and events of the times of the Silk Road. But the historical term "Silk Road" is associated in all of our minds with prosperity, peace, development, and cooperation, because the Silk Road passed through many countries and settlements...)

In the Russian version, the translator keeps to the established Russian variant of the term Silk Road – *Шелковый путь,* where due to lexical substitution, *road* is replaced by *путь* (path, way**)**, as the word *дорога* (road) is the dominant term used to represent the physical but not moral, ethical and spiritual connections.

> Все мы знаем словосочетание “*Шелковый путь*” еще из школьных учебников. Многие люди, уверен, не помнят многих подробностей об исторических коллизиях и событиях времен *Шелкового пути*. Но исторический термин “*Шелковый путь*” ассоциируется у всех в сознании с процветанием, миром, развитием, сотрудничеством, поскольку *Шелковый путь* проходил через множество стран и населенных пунктов... (ibid.)
>
> (Literally: We all know the phrase “Road” from school textbooks. Many people, I am sure, do not remember many details about the historical collisions and events of the Silk Road times. But the historical term “Silk Road” is associated in everyone’s minds with prosperity, peace, development, cooperation, since the Silk Road passed through many countries and settlements.)

The phrase “Silk Road” is a fixed term in both the historical and symbolic contexts, though in Russian, as mentioned above, the established collocation is *Шелковый путь* (Silk Road). *Путь* (path, way) is a word that can denote a route or a direction, but it also carries a non-physical connotation, and is often used in both literal and metaphorical contexts, which aligns well with the Armenian term *ճանապարհներ* (roads), encompassing both physical roads and the broader symbolic meaning of a journey or method. The use of *путь* (path, way) introduces an additional layer of meaning, suggesting not just a specific path but a way or means to achieve something, perhaps underscoring the broader concept of a journey towards peace and cooperation. The word *путь* (path, way) in Russian thus retains the same dual meaning of a tangible path and an abstract concept of a way to a desired end, be it peace, prosperity, or cooperation.

The syntagm *Шелковая дорога* (*дорога* for road) would be an incorrect choice in Russian because *дорога* (road) generally refers to a physical road, usually in the context of transportation, rather than the broader symbolic journey that *путь* (path, way) conveys. This choice helps preserve the symbolic significance of the term “Silk Road,” which is meant to suggest not only the physical route for trade but also the cultural, economic, and political connections, established along the road.

The distinction between *дорога* (road) and *путь* (path, way) in the Russian translation highlights how subtle shifts in word choice can shape the receptor’s perception of the central issues in the speech. The use of *дорога* (road) in the Russian translation reflects the tangible, real-world implications of connecting nations, while *путь* (path, way) evokes a sense of direction, purpose, and may have even ideological nuances. Both terms work together to preserve the dual nature of *дорога* (road) as physical and metaphorical connectors, allowing the Russian version to maintain the depth of meaning found in the Armenian original.

The use of *путь* (path, way) conveys the idea that the Silk Road is not merely about the movement of goods but also about the movement of ideas, traditions, and relationships, framing it as a broader, more profound journey towards mutual understanding and connection.

Overall, the translation choice in the Russian text plays a significant role in maintaining the balance between the literal and metaphorical meaning of the speech.

The strategic use of *дорога* (road) and *путь* (path, way) ensures that the essential message of interconnectedness, cooperation, and the journey towards peace remains intact across languages. Thus, both the physical and symbolic elements of the speech contribute to the effective communication, intensifying Pashinyan's message of a more connected and peaceful future.

In the English version, the repetition of *Silk Road* and *roads* is effectively maintained, preserving the rhetorical impact of the original Armenian. However, it is important to note that English stylistic conventions often favor variation in sentence structure and word choice to avoid redundancy. While repetition can serve a rhetorical or poetic function, excessive recurrence of a word may sometimes be perceived as overtly formal or even monotonous in English. In this case, the translator retains the repeated use of *road*, ensuring that the original emphasis remains intact while aligning with the English language natural rhythm.

> We all know the phrase "*Silk Road*" from school textbooks. Many people, I am sure, do not remember many details about the historical holes and events of the *Silk Road* times. But the historical term "*Silk Road*" is associated in all of our minds with prosperity, peace, development, cooperation, because the *Silk Road* crossed through many countries and settlements... (ibid.)

The metaphorical use of the "Silk Road" is preserved in the English version, maintaining the historical and symbolic significance of the phrase. One key aspect to consider is the deliberate choice of the word *road* rather than *path* or *route*. While all three terms could theoretically convey the idea of a traveled passage, they each carry different connotations. *Road* suggests a structured, well-established, and physically constructed means of travel, reinforcing the idea of a historical trade network with a tangible infrastructure. In contrast, *path* often implies a smaller, less formal, and more personal route, which would not completely capture the grandeur and geopolitical significance of the Silk Road. Similarly, the word *route* is also avoided, despite its potential relevance. While *route* denotes a course taken from one place to another, it lacks the strong implication of a constructed or established infrastructure that *road* conveys. *Route* is often used to describe directions or mapped-out courses, but it does not necessarily imply permanence or cultural significance in the same way that *road* does. The term "Silk Road" evokes an image of a historic passage that was physically traversed by merchants, travellers, and diplomats over centuries, whereas *Silk Route* might feel more abstract, emphasizing the course rather than the physicality of the trade network. The established term *Silk Road* has thus become the universally recognized name for this network, reinforcing the choice of *road* over the other possible alternatives.

In the excerpt beneath the lexical unit *ճանապարհ* (road) is used without *Silk*, though it retains the concept of the "Silk Road."

> Այդ *ճանապարհներով* մարդիկ ոչ միայն ապրանքներ էին փոխադրում, այլև՝ պատմություններ, սովորույթներ, ավանդույթներ, գիտելիքներ, հմտություններ: *Ճանապարհը* ոչ միայն երկրներ ու քաղաքներ է միմյանց կապում, այլև մարդկանց, և հետևաբար, եթե բանուկ, ակտիվ *ճանապարհը*

> համագործակցության, խաղաղության, հաջողության նշան է, փակ *ճանապարհները* վկայում են պրոբլեմների մասին: (ibid.)

> (Literally: Along these roads, people transported not only goods, but also stories, customs, traditions, knowledge, and skills. The road connects not only countries and cities, but also people, and therefore, if a busy, active road is a sign of cooperation, peace, and success, then closed roads indicate problems.)

The rhetorical function of *ճանապարհ* (road), which is repeated four times within the same paragraph, is to emphasize continuity and unity. However, due to linguistic and stylistic differences, the impact of this repetition may vary across different languages.

> По этим *дорогам* люди перевозили не только товары, но и истории, обычаи, традиции, знания, умения. *Дорога* соединяет не только страны и города, но и людей, и следовательно, если оживленная, активная *дорога* – знак сотрудничества, мира, успеха, то закрытые *дороги* указывают на наличие проблем. (ibid.)

> (Literally: Along these roads, people transported not only goods, but also stories, customs, traditions, knowledge, and skills. The road connects not only countries and cities, but also people, and therefore, if a busy, active road is a sign of cooperation, peace, and success, then closed roads indicate problems.)

In the Russian version, the usage of *дороги* (roads) retains both the literal and metaphorical connotations of the original. Russian likewise Armenian allows for a poetic and philosophical use of repetition without it feeling excessive. The word *дороги* (roads) refers to physical roads as well as it symbolizes historical connections, cooperation, and shared destinies. Given that Russian rhetorical tradition often employs repetition as a means of reinforcing meaning, the translated version effectively preserves the idea that roads serve as conduits for economic, cultural, and political ties. This ensures that the original message – peace and development must be embedded in the infrastructure linking nations – remains intact.

In the English version, the repetition of *roads* is maintained, but its effect is slightly different due to English stylistic norms.

> People transported not only goods through those roads, but also stories, customs, traditions, knowledge, skills. The road connects not only countries and cities, but also people, and hence, while a vibrant, active road is a sign of cooperation, peace, and success, then closed roads are an indication of problems. (ibid.)

While repetition can be a powerful rhetorical tool in English, it is typically used more sparingly than in Armenian or Russian, as English tends to favor lexical variety to maintain fluency and engagement. Nonetheless, the translator ensures that *roads* continue to function as a symbol of connectivity, emphasizing that these are not merely physical routes, but also pathways for cooperation and progress. However, because English often favors communicative clarity over poeticism, the metaphor might sound more explicit and formal compared to the original Armenian.

Overall, while both translations preserve the thematic essence of Pashinyan’s speech, each language shapes the rhetorical impact differently. Russian, with its poetic flexibility, retains much of the natural flow of the Armenian original, while English, with its preference for clarity, makes the metaphor more direct but slightly less lyrical. Despite these nuances, the underlying message remains effective: *roads* are not merely infrastructure, they are symbols of unity, development, and peace.

In another excerpt the metaphorical unit *Մետաքսի ճանապարհ* (Silk Road) plays a significant role in conveying historical, economic, and diplomatic issues. Beyond its literal reference to the ancient trade route, it serves as a powerful symbol of prosperity, peace, and cooperation – values that are central to Pashinyan’s message.

> Մեր չորս հարևաններից երկուսի հետ մեր ճանապարհները բաց են, ինչը վկայում է նրանց հետ մեր ունեցած հարաբերությունների բարեկամական լինելու մասին: Մեր հարևաններից երկուսի հետ մեր ճանապարհները փակ են, ինչը հարաբերություններում առկա բարդությունների շատ խոսուն վկայություն է: (ibid.)
>
> (Literally: Our roads are open with two of our four neighbors, which indicates that we have friendly relations with them. Our paths are closed with our two neighbors, which is a very eloquent indication of the difficulties in our relationship.)

The Armenian phrasing effectively intertwines the historical significance of the Silk Road with contemporary geopolitical realities, reinforcing the idea that roads are not just physical infrastructures but also instruments of diplomacy, mutual understanding, and economic interdependence. This layering of meaning strengthens the argument that peace and collaboration must be ingrained in the very foundations of connectivity between nations.

In the Russian translation, the phrase *Шелковый путь* (Silk Road) is a direct equivalent of the original term. Since the expression is already well established in Russian historical and political discourse, it carries the same connotations of economic exchange, cultural interaction, and geopolitical strategy.

> Наши дороги открыты с двумя из четырех наших соседей, что свидетельствует о дружественных отношениях с ними. Наши дороги с двумя соседями закрыты, что является весьма красноречивым свидетельством сложности отношений. (ibid.)
>
> (Literally: Our roads are open with two of our four neighbors, which indicates that we have friendly relations with them. Our paths are closed with our two neighbors, which is a very eloquent indication of the difficulties in our relationship.)

The phrase *дороги являлись хорошим средством для создания человеческих, культурных, экономических и политических связей* (roads were a good way to create human, cultural, economic, and political connections) successfully preserves the metaphor’s core idea that roads are more than just transport routes; they serve as bridges between people, cultures, and ideologies. The metaphor remains intact, ensuring that the rhetorical significance of the original Armenian is not lost. Russian, likewise Armenian tends to embrace repetition and metaphor in political speech, making the transition from the SL into the TL (Russian) relatively smooth. The reference to *наши дороги открыты с двумя из четырех наших соседей* (our roads are open with two of our four neighbors) accurately reflects the Armenian original both in structure and meaning. The phrase balances diplomatic tact with underlying political tension, subtly addressing regional challenges while maintaining a neutral and constructive tone. Likewise, *что является весьма красноречивым свидетельством сложности отношений* (which is a very telling indication of the complexity of the relationship) effectively conveys the intended message of the original text. The phrase *весьма красноречивым свидетельством* (which is a very telling indication) adds a sense of formality and rhetorical significance, making the statement sound polished and authoritative. The Russian version thus successfully preserves both the diplomatic nuances and the political undertones of the Armenian speech.

In the English version, the metaphorical unit "Silk Road" remains intact, ensuring that the historical and symbolic associations are preserved.

> Our roads are open with two of our four neighbors, which indicates that our relationships with them are friendly. The roads with two of our neighbors are closed, which is clearly telling of existing difficulties in the relationships. (ibid.)

As it can be easily noted, there are subtle differences in how the metaphor and political undertones are conveyed due to English stylistic norms. The phrase *our roads are open with two of our four neighbors* accurately reflects the Armenian original, maintaining the delicate balance between diplomatic language and political implication. However, the phrase which is clearly telling of existing difficulties in the relationships presents a slight tonal shift compared to the Russian *что является весьма красноречивым свидетельством сложности отношений* (which is a very telling indication of the complexity of the relationship). While the Russian sentence employs a formal and rhetorically sophisticated structure, the English *telling of existing difficulties* sounds more colloquial and direct. The phrase *clearly telling of* could slightly alter the way the political message is perceived by an English-speaking audience. The English version still conveys the intended meaning, but it leans more towards straightforwardness, potentially making the statement feel less diplomatic and more candid.

4. Conclusion

The speech of RA Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan delivered on 26 October 2023 at the Tbilisi International Forum was entitled "Crossroads of Peace." The title itself may be regarded as a conceptual metaphor, as it conveys the idea of stabilizing the geopolitical situation in the region. In fact, it calls for open borders, peaceful dialogue, and long-term cooperation. Geographically this crossroads is located in the territory of the Silk Road, a symbol of economic prosperity, peace, and cooperation. This is why, the speaker refers to the rhetorical unit "Silk Road," which acquires metaphorical value, to ensure the historical and symbolic associations with the period, when cultural, spiritual, economic and political interaction together with trade relations developed among the people who inhabited the territories along the Silk Road. The transformation of the historically established unit "Silk Road" into a metaphorical device creates the conceptual structure of the speech. The device consequently becomes an integrity core, which determines the correlation in between the rhetorical elements, employed in the speech. Simultaneously, it ensures the coherence and interdependence of extra-textual socio-cultural environment and intra-textual linguistic elements, which shape the rhetorical value of the speech.

A comparative trilingual analysis of the speech revealed the need of pre-translation discourse analysis in order to specify the communicative function of rhetorical units in RA Prime-minister's speech and to identify the techniques of their translation into different languages.

It should be noted that both Russian and English translations successfully retain the core message of the original Armenian text, though the Russian version stays closer in terms of rhetorical style and formal parameters. The English version, while effective, introduces a slight tonal shift, reflecting the language's preference for clarity and directness over the more elaborate rhetorical structures found in Armenian and Russian. This difference in tone could subtly affect how the political nuances of the speech are perceived and interpreted by the two different audiences. English tends to favor a less emotional, more laconic and explicit style in political discourse, which can sometimes lead to a slight loss of the poetic expressiveness and rhetorical elegance found in Armenian and Russian.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

Ethical Standards

The author affirms this research did not involve human subjects.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.46991/TSTP/2025.5.1.058

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CONCEPTS AND THEIR DESIGNATIONS: THE LATVIAN TERMS *GRĀMATVEDĪBA* (‘ACCOUNTING’) AND *GRĀMATVEDIS* (‘ACCOUNTANT’)

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Abstract: Identification of the heritage of Latvian terminology and past processes. Detailed research is important for documenting the history of language development and standardization and successful terminological work today. This article examines the relationship between two important accounting concepts and concept designations in Latvian – *grāmatvedība* (‘accounting’) and *grāmatvedis* (‘accountant’), which are characterized by attempts to Latvianize and the obvious influence of contact languages. The influence of the Latvian contact languages, German and Russian, also plays a role in the variation and change of terms. The study uses about 75 excerpts (microtexts) from 18th- to 20th-century Latvian written sources (dictionaries, books, and periodicals) collected by Juris Baldunčiks (1950–2022). The onomasiological approach was used to analyze the material. The material under study shows that by 1918, a considerable range of economic and financial terms had already been established in the Latvian language. Still, the most significant changes occurred in the 1870s.

Keywords: Latvian terminology; terminology history; onomasiological approach; linguistic borrowing; language contact

1. Introduction

Terminology is an essential part of language, ensuring precision and unambiguous understanding in different scientific and professional fields. One field in which

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Received: 30.03.2025
Revised: 04.05.2025
Accepted: 02.06.2025

terminological clarity is particularly important is accounting, a discipline that covers financial accounting, analysis, and reporting. Accounting, a crucial aspect of financial management, plays a vital role in any nation's economic landscape. The Latvian language, like many others, has two basic terms to describe the concepts 'accounting' and 'accountant' and their designations in Latvian *grāmatvedība* and *grāmatvedis*.
The terms used to name new scientific and technical concepts are often borrowed from other languages that already have terms for them (Cabre 1999: 89). A *linguistic borrowing* or *loan word* is "a word adopted, often with some modification of its form, from one language into another" (Collins Dictionary, s.v. "linguistic borrowing"). *Borrowing*, according to Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet, is "the simplest of all translation methods" (Vinay and Darbelnet 1999: 86) but *calque* (or *loan translation*) is "a special kind of borrowing whereby a language borrows an expression form of another, but then translates literally each of its elements (Vinay & Darbelnet 1999: 90). Valentīna Skujiņa researches the issue of Latvian term formation, particularly, on the borrowing of terms from other languages and states that these borrowings are adjusted to the systems of Latvian phonetics, morphology and lexis (Skujiņa 2002: 134). However unfamiliar the borrowing may seem to people who are not acquainted with its respective concept, this condition at least helps society to adapt to such kind of terms. Considering time constraints within which translators frequently are forced to work, borrowing, probably, is also the most convenient solution in respect of time. Well-established borrowings after a period may become a part of a target language's vocabulary and terminology, but this is not always the best solution. Sometimes this path of borrowing is complex and requires analysis of the terms used in the contact languages as well as in Latvian. This also requires a collection of all the possible variants of the designation to see how the term has evolved if one of several possible terms has become established.

The relevance of the study is determined by several aspects: the analysis of the origin and development of Latvian terms provides an insight into the development of the Latvian language as an instrument of scientific and professional communication. The comparison of Latvian terms with their analogues in other languages allows us to identify the peculiarities of Latvian terminology and its integration into the international context. Historical studies of terminology are essential for the standardization of terms, especially in light of changes in legislation and accounting practice. The results of the study can serve as a basis for further discussions on the development of Latvian terminology and its place in global science and finance communication. Understanding the nuances and implications of these terms is essential for effective communication and harmonization within the international accounting community.

2. Methodological Background

Changes in general vocabulary as well as in specialized lexis, including terminology, are often influenced by language contact. Language contact is one of the most explored fields of linguistics, studied by many linguists such as Uriel Weinreich (1979), Sarah

G. Thomason (2005), Rudolf Filipović (1996), and others. The Latvian language is not an exception, as over the centuries, the Latvian language has been subject to the strong influence of language contact, for example its development has been determined by language contact. The Latvian language has left traces of German, Russian, and English, as well as (regionally) Estonian, Lithuanian, and other languages, and this influence has been of a lasting or temporal nature. It should be noted that the most comprehensive systematic source of lexis in Latvian linguistics is still the monograph *Latviešu leksikoloģija* (*Latvian Lexicology* – in English) by Alīse Laua, published in Riga in 1969 and supplemented in 1981. This work classifies the vocabulary borrowed from other languages into Latvian, but recent contact linguistic research attempts to classify borrowings based on current knowledge, accompanied by a wide range of examples (see, for example, Juris Baldunčiks (1989, 2005, 2014)). In recent years, there has been a tendency in the study of lexical borrowings of languages to collect the results of contact between historical languages and Latvian and to investigate how borrowings and calques are added to terminology (see, for example, some of the studies published by Juris Baldunčíks (2013, 2024), Anita Butāne (2016, 2024), Iveta Pūtele (2024), etc.). However, the aim of this study is not to go into the classification of borrowings or loan words, which would be the subject of another study, but to provide an insight into the historical development of accounting terms in Latvian.

Juris Baldunčiks, referring to Alain Rey, Valentīna Skujiņa and others, points out that the onomasiological aspect is considered to be the primary one in the studies of the development of term microsystems, since the naming (nominalization) of a concept is, however, the most important issue (Baldunčiks 2024: 73). "When several different designations exist for a single concept, either one is chosen and all the others are discarded, or more than one is accepted, but one form is given priority over the others" (Cabre 1999: 38). Onomasiology is centered on the concept, and it is the naming or nomination of the concept that is the most important issue in terminology. If this was not the case and the concept was so dependent on the name, terminology as a discipline might as well be subsumed under general lexicology (Rey 1995: 35). The onomasiological approach reveals the mechanism and process of naming a concept by providing and evaluating all the names used to denote the concept. This method plays a key role in tracing the historical development of terminology. Onomasiology focuses on the nomination process, which is influenced by cognitive and extra-linguistic factors, and the nomination process, or naming, reflects the perception of the denotation. The phenomenon to be named is one, but its perception can vary, and nomination can also be influenced by various external factors, such as significant language contact. The naming of nouns should be seen as a complex process with different levels.

Although the onomasiological aspect is recognized as the most important term in historical studies, this study also documents the opposite of it – the semasiological aspect where necessary (it examines the lexical meaning of linguistic units in the direction from the word to the named concept). Different circumstances, such as the influence of contact languages or other extra-linguistic factors, can lead to changes in the semantics of a term as well as of a common word or phrase.

As far as possible, an objective and broad coverage of the historical development of terms can only be achieved if all possible parallel terms or synonyms are included in the study. To achieve the most complete picture of the history of the expression of a given concept in the Latvian language, it is necessary to consult a wide variety of sources. The excerpts of the most illustrative examples (microtexts) analyzed in this study are collected from dictionaries and encyclopaedias, as well as textbooks, popular science books, and periodicals. The material is organized in tables and analyzed diachronically from oldest to newest.

3. An Insight into the History of Accounting and the World and in Latvia

Before looking at the history, it is also necessary to give some insight into the use of the English terms *bookkeeping* and *accounting* in this study. *Bookkeeping* refers to the basic recording of financial transactions, such as receipts, invoices, and expenditures (Cambridge Dictionary. s.v. "Bookkeeping."). It is a fundamental practice that dates back to medieval times, with the term first attested in English in the late 15th century (Oxford English Dictionary. s.v. "Bookkeeping."). Accounting is a broader concept that includes financial analysis and reporting (Cambridge Dictionary. s.v. "Accounting."). Accounting encompasses not only bookkeeping but also the analysis, classification, interpretation, and reporting of financial data. The concept of accounting as a structured profession emerged much later, gaining momentum during the 18th and 19th centuries alongside the rise of modern economics and corporate governance (Oxford English Dictionary. s.v. "Accounting."). Thus, bookkeeping is considered the precursor of modern accounting, serving as its essential foundation.

According to the first Latvian encyclopaedia (*Latviešu konversācijas vārdnīca*), the first records of bookkeeping are from the Babylonian ruler Hammurabi (2123–2081 BC), a time when it was even a legal obligation; the same is true of Egypt (Ptolemaic times) (Švābe 1931: 10474–10475). Cornelia Wunsch's work on the business records of Iddin-Marduk provides a glimpse into private economic activities, including taxation related to trade in the 6th century BC (Wunsch 1993). Furthermore, Matthew W. Stolper's research on Achaemenid records indicates the existence of a royal tax office that registered and taxed slave sales, reflecting the bureaucratic evolution in tax administration (Stolper 1989). Receipts on clay tablets were found around 4,000 years ago, while Ancient Egypt had a book-keeping and record-keeping system around 400 BC, and the Arabs developed the decimal system in the 9th century (Švābe 1931: 10474–10475).

The earliest double-entry bookkeeping system was recorded in Genoa in 1340, while a similar system to modern bookkeeping developed in Italy in the early 15th century. At the end of the 5th century, the Italian monk and mathematician Luca Pacioli published a textbook (*Summa de arithmetica* etc.) containing a chapter on bookkeeping. In 1581, the first association of accountants was founded in Italy. By the 16th century, double-entry bookkeeping was already common in many countries. The first book on bookkeeping in England was published by Hugh Oldcastle in 1543, and at the end of the 18th century, the Edinburgh Address Book listed 7 accountants (Švābe 1931: 10474–10477).

There is no doubt that any large farm or organization needs to keep records of its financial resources and tangible assets. Economic life has been recording income and expenditure, the purchase of raw materials, and the sale of finished products for several centuries, and in the second half of the 19th century, the Latvians began to understand the usefulness of such records (Millere 2011: 31–56).

The set of rules governing the legal obligation of traders to keep books in their shops is called the Bookkeeping Law (*Buchführungsrecht* in German). In Latvia, historical accounting law can be found in the Riga Trade Customs (Riga Castle, Statute 1673, Book 2), civil procedure laws and their appendices, some tax laws and special laws (e. g. the Medicine Law on Pharmacy Accounting), as well as in the Russian Trade Regulations (Švābe 1931: 10475). Nowadays, accounting regulations in Latvia are primarily governed by the Law on Accounting. This law sets out the requirements for the preparation and presentation of financial statements. Additionally, the Law on the Annual Financial Statements and Consolidated Financial Statements provides further guidelines on financial reporting.[1] Article 34 of the Accounting Law of the Republic of Latvia defines Latvian *grāmatvedis* ('accountant') and *ārpakalpojumu grāmatvedis* ('outsourced accountant'), as well as other definitions of modern accounting terms, such as, *grāmatvedības dokumenti* ('accounting documents') *grāmatvedības kontu plāns* ('chart of accounts').

4. Analysis of Latvian Designations for 'Accounting'

The modern Latvian term for bookkeeping is *grāmatvedība*. The contemporary form of *grāmatvedība* was first recorded at the very end of the 19th century (in such dictionaries as *Krievu-latviešu vārdnīca* (Eng.: *The Russian-Latvian Dictionary*) (KLV 1913: 49), (*бухгалтерія – grahmatu weşchana, grahmatwediba*). The term only became dominant after it was approved by the Economic Section of the Terminology Commission in 1920. However, the word *grāmatvešana*, especially in the practical sense of recording transactions, was also quite common until the late 1930s (see Table 1).

In Latvian, the word *vest* (meaning 'to arrange in a certain way') has quite a long tradition. In the 19th century, company books and invoices were arranged or kept (in Latvian – *vest*), as seen in the modern Latvian words *grāmatvedība* – 'book-keeping' (*grāmata* – 'book' + *vedība* from the verb *vest* – 'keep') and *rēķinvedība* (*rēķins* – 'invoice' + *vedība* from the verb *vest* ['keep']) 'invoicing.' Lawyers have also long used the word *vest* in Latvian in – *vest lietu* ('to bring cases') (e. g. civil cases, criminal cases, etc.). Although the phrase *vest grāmatvedību* exists in the Latvian language, information from the modern balanced corpus shows that *kārtot grāmatvedību* is used three times more often (LVK2022). Of course, this usage was influenced by Russian,

[1] Both laws are accessible through Latvia's official legal information portal (https://likumi.lv/).

for example, *вести дело,* and German, *Verhandlungen führen*. The influence of these languages on the Latvian language has been very diverse and wide-ranging.

Table 1. Latvian designations for 'accountant': grāmatvedis, grāmatvedība, grāmatu vešana

*[..] pee kahrtibas un riktigas **grahmatu weşchanas** peeturreta [..]*	BV 1869: 72, 568
*Бухгалтерія – **rakſtu, grahmatu weschana** – Buchhalterei*	KLVV 1872: 29
*Palihgu, kam tahs darişchanas pee pagaſta waldişchanas un **grahmatu weşchanas** ir paſihſtamas, mekle riterşchaftes pagaſtu şkrihweris J. Traumanis.*	LA 1875: 4, 32
*Semkopiga **grahmatu weşchana**: tahs noluhks un labums.*	Darbs 1875: 7, 85
*Ʒaur şawu itin teiʒamu **grahmatu=weşchan**u Uhrenholds eeşpehj wişu şcho rehķinu ar şkaitļeem peerahdiht..*	BZ 1875: 32, 265
*Buchhaltung – **grahmatu** od. **rehķeniņu weşchana***	VLV 1880: 163
*Semkohpibas **grahmatu=weşchana**. [..] Un to war panahkt tikai ʒaur kahrtigu ſemkohpibas grahmatu= un rehķinumu weşchanu.*	LA 1880: 45p, 41
Grahmatu weſchana.	B 1883: 15, 2
*Ja Rundales kaşes grahmatu wedejs pateeşi buhtu mahʒijees **grahmatu weşchanâ**..*	B 1885: 16, 2
*Şaimneeʒibas **grahmatu weſchana**.*	B 1885: 20, 1
*[..] **grahmatu weşchanas** kurşu uſşahkşchu 10. Oktobrî [..]*	B 1889
*[..] mahʒibas preekſchmeti ir: [..] **grahmatweſchana**, mechanika, planu ſihmeſchana [..]*	BV 1900: 222, 2
*Buchhaltung – **grahmatweşchana**; einfache ~ weenkahrşcha grahmatweşchana; doppelte od. italienische ~ dubulta od. Italişka grahmatweşchana*	VLV 1910: 230
*Rechnungführung – **rehķinu weşchana, grahmatweşchana***	VLV 1910: 885
*бухгалтерія – **grahmatu weſchana, grahmatwediba**.*	KLV 1913: 49
*Ari fiktiwi bankroti eeşpehjami dehļ **grahmatweşchanas** truhkuma.*	DzV 1913: 163, 5
*Pehʒ jaunà projekta no **grahmatu weşchanas** neteek atşwabinats neweens tirgotajs.*	Siks 1923: 14, 2

Accounting (*grāmatvedība* – in Latvian) is related to invoicing (*rēķinvedība* – in Latvian) (see Vol. IV of *Tautsaimniecības vārdnīca*, (*The Dictionary of National Economy* – in English) Editor-in-Chief Edgars Dunsdorfs 1944: 530). In the 1920s and 1930s there was no strict conceptual boundary between *grāmatvedība* ('accounting') and *rēķinvedība* ('invoicing'):

> "*[..] [rēķinvedību] bieži lieto grāmatvedības (sk.) vietā vai arī saprot to šaurāk, kā darījumu grāmatošanu atsevišķos kontos, kādēļ grāmatvedībā nodarbinātos darbiniekus dala gāmatvežos un rēķinvežos. Tomēr šāds dalījums ir nepamatots, jo starp rēķinvežu un grāmatvežu darbu nav būtiskas atšķirības [..]*" (Švābe 1938: 35308)

As the material summarized in Table 2 shows, *rēķinvedība* as a phrase *rēķinu* (*rēķinumu*) *vešana* has been included in sources as early as the 1860s. A compound *rēķinvešana* registered at the end of the 19th century, but the phrase *rēķinu vedējs* blends in a compound *rēķinvedējs*, while at the beginning of the 20th century, a parallel form *rēķinvedis* was coined for *rēķinvedējs*. In the 1920s, the term *rēķinvešana* became *rēķinvedība*, which could be directly due to the influence of the form *grāmatvedība*. Although the Terminology Commission recommended the new word *lēsvedība* instead, this was not universally accepted and quickly became inactive after the Second World War. The new word *lēsvedis* was also not supported by the speakers.

Table 2. Rēķinvedība ('invoicing')

*[..] ſaimneeks, kas **rehķinumu wedd**.*	SDP II 1860: 119
*Bet ikkatram, kas grib grahmatu turretaja weetâ tikt, japarahd ʒaur ekſamu, ka tas proht labbi **rehķinumu weſchanu**.*	PAv 1862: 1, 2
*[..] usdohd **rehķinuma weſchan**u pahr kuģģa eenahkſchanahm un isdohſchanahm.*	PAv 1862: 18, 196
***Rehķenu=weſchanas** grahmatas preekſch laukſaimneekeem – Freyberg (firma A. Lyra), Rihgâ.*	BV 1871: 28, 220
*Счетоводство – **rehķinumu weſchana** – Rechnungsführung*	KLVV 1872: 595
*[..] katrs darba dewejs par wiſahm ſawahm ſtrahdneeku lonehm **wed rehķinumu**, ʒeeſchi pehʒ rehķinumu weſchanas likumeem.*	BZ 1877: 49, 393
*Un to war panahkt tikai ʒaur kahrtigu ſemkohpibas grahmatu= un **rehķinumu weſchanu**.*	LA 1880: 45p, 41
***Rehķinu weſchana** muhſu ſaimneeʒibâs ir tik wajadſiga leeta [..]*	BV 1889: 88, 1
*[..] ſewiſchku grupu – ſwehrinatus rehķinwedejus no leetpratejeem un uſtiʒamàm perſonàm, kuŗas ar leetpraſchanu iſpilditu **rehķinweſchanas** rewideſchanu, ekſpertiſi un rehķinweſchanas eerihkoſchanu [..]*	BV 1899: 260, 2
*Rechnungsführung – **rehķinu weſchana, grahmatweſchana***	VLV 1910: 895
*Ta naw panahkama nodibinot ʒeļu eeʒirkņus ar preekſchneekeem, kanʒlejam, **reķinwedibam** un leelo ſarakſtiſchanos [..]*	LS 1921: 223, 1
*[..] konflikta gadijumos wiņeem buhtu jauſrahda iſmekleſchanas komiſijai uſņehmumu **rehķinwediba**.*	DBalss 1922: 271, 4
*[..] dſelſʒeļa buhwei projekteta ſewiſchķa pahrwalde, kurâ paredſeta ari **rehķinwedibas** nodaļa.*	Ltv 1925: 1052, 3
*[..] inſtruktori leelu daļu ſawa laika ſeedo fermu apſaimneekoſchanas nokahrtoſchanai, ſaimneeʒibas **rehķinwediba**i, raſchoſchanas iſmakſas noſkaidroſchanai, laukſaimneeʒibas produktu ſtandardiſeſchanai [..]*	Mazs 1925: 10, 154
***Rēķinvedība**, sk. grāmatvedība*	LL 1939: 1946
*счетоводство – **rēķinvedība***	KLV 1959: 787

5. Analysis of Latvian Designations for 'Accountant'

Accounting is carried out by a specialist called *grāmatvedis* in Latvian ('accountant'). The German words *Buchhaltung* and *Buchhalter,* as well as *Buchführung* and *Buchführer,* are taken as a model for naming this specialist in Latvian. The first pair of words were borrowed from Russian, so it had a double influence on Latvian, manifesting itself both as the identical borrowing *buhhalters* and calque – *grāmatu turētājs* (see examples in Old Latvian in Table 3 and Table 4). The material summarized in Table 1 shows that the terms *grāmatu turētājs* and *buhhalters* are used synonymously in the same source, with the two-word phrase in Latvian origin given first in the newspaper example. It should be noted that in the *Deutsch-lettisches Wörterbuch* (1880) example, the Latvian equivalents of the German *Buchhalter* are also given – *rēķeniņu vedējs* and *skrīveris* (see Table 3). It can be seen that Jēkabs Dravnieks' German-Latvian Dictionary (*Vācu-latviešu vārdnīca*, 1910) also includes the German word *Rechnungsführer*, the first Latin equivalent of which is *rēķinu vedējs*, and the second is *grāmatvedis*. Although the first meaning of *Rechnungsführer* is 'the person in charge of the cash and treasury in a company or other organisation' (Cambridge German–English Dictionary. s.v. "Kassenwart."). The other meaning of German *Rechnungsführer* is 'accountant' (especially in agriculture) (DWDS. s.v. "Rechnungsführer."), which means that it is also included in this dictionary. The examples in Table 5 show that the two-word form *rēķinu vedējs*, which in other sources has already been combined into the compound – *rēķinvedējs*, is used, but a variant of the word with a shorter form – *rēķinvedis* – is also used, but in parallel, *rēķinvedējs* is also used.

Table 3. Latvian designations for 'accountant': grāmatvedis, grāmatu vedējs, grāmatu turētājs

[..] brihw ***grahmatu turretaja*** *jeb* ***buchhaltera*** *ammatu ir teem peeņemt, kam naw nekahdas rangas. Bet ikkatram, kas grib grahmatu turretaja weetâ tikt, japarahd ʒaur ekşamu, ka tas proht labbi rehķinumu weşchanu.*	PAv 1862: 1, 2
*Baggatam kohpmannim şawâ kantorî bij nomirris leelakais şkrihweris, ko wahʒişki şauʒ "Buchhalter" – kas buhtu pa latwişki: "****grahmatu=turretajs****."*	MV 1866: 41, 326
Grahmatu weddeji*, kà arri kaşşeeri un korreşpondenti tohp eeşkattiti par 1. klaşşes kommijeem.*	VLA 1870: 20, 539
[..] preekşch tam pa wişşam nebij wajadſigs ihpaşchu ***grahmatu=weddeju*** *turreht.*	BV 1871: 43, 341
Бухгалтеръ – ***rakſtu, grahmatu wedejs*** *– Buchhalter*	KLVV 1872: 29
[..] F. Pauls par ***grahmatu wedeju****.*	MV 1875: 5, 33
[..] F. Pauls – par ***grahmatu wedeju****.*	BV 1875: 6, 41
[..] F. Pauls – par ***grahmatu wedeju****.*	BZ 1876: 5, 40
[..] birſchas komitejas ***grahmatu wedejs*** *un politeknikas rendants Eecks.*	MV 1876: 17, 130
[..] par ***grahmatu=wedeju*** *eewehlejuşe.*	BZ 1879: 5, 40
Buchhalter – ***grahmatu wedejs****, rehķeniņu wedejs, şkrihweris*	VLV 1880: 163
[..] par ***grahmatu wedeju*** *– P. Martinşonu.*	BZ 1884: 6, 23
Ja Rundales kaşes ***grahmatu wedejs*** *pateeşi buhtu mahʒijees grahmatu weşchanâ [..]*	B 1885: 16, 2
[..] ***grahmatwedis*** *A. Prehns [..]*	MV 1885: 19, 3
J. Kruhma kgam, ***grahmatu wedejam*** *Rigâ.*	B 1885: 20, 1
Ar nahkoşchu gadu atklahşchot grahmatu weşchanas şkolu priekşch şeeweetehm, kur tahm iſdewiba şagatawoties par ***grahmatwedejahm*** *un kantoru şekretareem.*	DL 1886: 33, 3
Konkurşu ***grahmatwedim****..*	DL 1887: 150, 3
[..] kahda maklera kantorî par ***grahmatwedejeem****.*	DLft 1889: 5, 1
J. Kruhm, ***grahmatwedis****.*	B 1889
Buchhalter – ***grahmatwedis***	VLV 1910: 230
Rechnungführer – rehķinu wedejs, ***grahmatwedis***	VLV 1910: 885
бухгалтеръ – ***grahmatwedis****.*	KLV 1913: 49

The Latvian word *buhhalters* was used in the newspaper *Pēterburgas Avīzes*, then also in the newspaper *Latviešu Avīzes* (in the second half of the 1960s and 1970s). However, from about 1870 onwards, the second type of Latvian responses began to prevail more and more decisively: *grāmatu vešana* and *grāmatu vedējs*. As can be seen from the material summarised in Table 3, in the second half of the 1980s, compound words developed alongside *grāmatvešana*, *grāmatvedējs,* and *grāmatvedis*. The use of designation variants is well illustrated by an excerpt from an article on the work of accountants at the turn of the century:

> "[..] grahmatweſchu amats ir tirdſneeȝibâ un ruhpneeȝibâ leels un şwarigs amats. [..] No grahmatwedeja iſweiȝibas daſchkahrt atkarajas wişa weikala paſtahweşchana waj bojâ eeşchana. Grahmatu wedeju amats ir şwarigs uſtiȝibas amats. [..] Labs grahmatwedejs ir weikala dwehşele." (BV 1900: 169, 3)

Table 4. Buhhalters

***Buchhaltera** weetneeks, Deyer.*	LA 1856: 4, 16
*[..] weetâs, kas finanȝu miniſterijai peeşkaititas, no schi laika brihw grahmatu turretaja jeb **buchhaltera** ammatu ir teem peeņemt, kam naw nekahdas rangas. Bet ikkatram, kas gribb grahmatu turretaja weetâ tikt, japarahd ȝaur ekşamu, ka tas proht labbi rehķinumu weschanu.*	PAv 1862: 1, 2
*Waktneeku usraugam 250 rubļ., **buchhalteram** 120 rubļ.*	PAv 1864: 48, 383
*Baggatam kohpmannim şawâ kantorî bij nomirris leelakais şkrihweris, ko wahȝişki şauȝ "Buchhalter" – kas buhtu pa latwişki: "**grahmatu=turretajs**."*	MV 1866: 41, 326
*[..] kas tur bij par **buchhalteri** [..]*	LA 1868: 35, 275
*[..] tam **buchhalterim** Oſtromentzki [..]*	LA 1868: 38, 299
*[..] un par kaşşihreri to **buchhalteri** Tiedemann.*	LA 1868: 48, 379
*Brahlis wişşu andeli **buchhalterim** atdewis [..]*	LA 1869: 27, 212
***Buchhalters**: Riemer.*	LA 1871: 10, 80
*Kas to kuņņu nodohd Bauſkâ pee **buchhalter** Beckmaņņa kunga [..]*	LA 1872: 7, 136
*[..] pee guberņas rentejas **buchhaltera** k. Koll. Reg. Fr. Unger [..]*	LA 1873: 44, 351
***Buchhalters**: J. Beckmann.*	LA 1875: 34, 271
*Pee abeem "labdaŗeem" pilnâ ſaſkaņâ ſihmets wiņu "**buchhalters**" (**grahmatu, rakſtu wedejs**), kuŗſch laikam pahrdomà [..]*	BZ 1879: 9, 66
*Būchhalters (vāc.) – **grāmatvedis.***	KV 1928: 3159

Table 5. Rēķinvedis ('invoice clerk')

*[..] mums truhkſt **rehķinu wedeju** [..]*	BV 1889: 88, 1
*Ari nodomato ſwehrinatu grahmatweſchu un **rehķinwedeju** inſtitutu ir şchi beedriba projektejuşi.*	BV 1897: 76, 1
*[..] şewişchku grupu – ſwehrinatus **rehķinwedejus** no leetpratejeem un uſtiȝamàm perşonàm, kuŗas ar leetpraşchanu iſpilditu rehķinweşchanas rewideşchanu, ekşpertiſi un rehķinweşchanas eerihkoşchanu [..]*	BV 1899: 260, 2
*[..] Şibirijas dſelſsȝeļa materialwaldes **rehķinwedis** Karlis Bankewitşch [..]*	DzV 1909: 77, 5

[..] Rigas=Orlas dſelſsʒeļa kontroles ***rehķinwedis*** *Graşche [..]*	DzV 1910: 96, 5
[..] Rigas=Orlas dſelſsʒeļa ***rehķinwedeji*** *Jahnis Buķis un Edgars Şchulʒs [..]*	DzV 1914: 128, 3p

6. Conclusion

Although several words related to money, payments, and fees are quite old in Latvian, a broader and more detailed development of terminology began after the abolition of serfdom in the early 19th century.

The development of terminology accelerated in the second half of the 19th century, when, alongside more active participation in economic life, Latvians began to discuss and analyze economic processes and problems in periodicals, popular science, and educational literature.

By 1918, the Latvian language had already developed a relatively large set of terms, and the synonymic diversity had diminished considerably.

The Terminology Commission of the Ministry of Education was mainly responsible for identifying terms and, where possible, standardizing them. The creativity was limited, one of the most important adjustments being the suggestion of the words *lēse* and *lēst* to replace the words *rēķins* (‘invoice’) and *rēķināt* (‘to count’) borrowed from German.

Linguistically, the most significant changes have taken place since the 19th century. The linguistic changes have been more significant since the 1970s, when the derivatives with the ending -*šana*, which did not comply with the Latvian word-formation laws, were replaced by semantically more suitable derivatives.

List of Abbreviated Sources

B – *Balss* (newspaper)
BV – *Baltijas Vēstnesis* (newspaper)
BZ – *Baltijas Zemkopis* (newspaper)
Darbs – *Darbs* (newspaper)
DL – *Dienas Lapa* (newspaper)
DLft – *Dienas Lapas feļetona turpinājums*
DBalss – *Darba Balss* (newspaper)
DzV – *Dzimtenes Vēstnesis* (newspaper)
KLV 1913 – Dravnieks, Jēkabs. 1913. *Krievu-latviešu vārdnīca*. Rīga: J. Brigaderes apgādībā.
KLV 1959 – *Krievu-latviešu vārdnīca*. 1. sēj. Rīga: Latvijas Valsts izdevniecība, 1959.
KLVV 1872 – *Krievu-latviešu-vācu vārdnīce*. Maskava: Tautas apgaismošanas ministrija, 1872.
KV 1927–1933 – *Latviešu konversācijas vārdnīca*. 1.–21. sēj. Rīga: A. Gulbja apgādībā, 1927–1940.

LA – *Latviešu Avīzes* (newspaper)
LL 1939 – *Lauksaimniecības leksikons*. III sēj. Rīga: Zelta grauds, 1939.
LS – *Latvijas Sargs* (newspaper)
Ltv – *Latvis* (newspaper)
Mazs – *Mazsaimnieks* (magazine)
MV – *Mājas Viesis* (newspaper)
PAv – *Pēterburgas Avīzes* (newspaper)
SDP II 1860 – *Sēta, daba, pasaule.* I-III.
Siks – *Sikspārni*s (newspaper)
VLA – *Vidzemes Latviešu Avīzes* (newspaper)
VLV 1880 – *Deutsch-lettisches Wörterbuch*. 1880. Bearb. von G. Brasche. Rīga: Leipzig.
VLV 1910 – Dravnieks, Jēkabs. 1910. *Vācu-latviešu vārdnīca*. Rīga: K. J. Zihmaņa izdevums.

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Conflict of Interests
The author declares no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

Ethical Standards
The author affirms this research did not involve human subjects.

ESSAYS

DOI: https://doi.org/10.46991/TSTP/2025.5.1.073

PARADIGM SHIFTS FOR LITERARY TRANSLATION[1]

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My career as a translator of Arabic literature has coincided with five paradigm shifts in Arabic and Islamic studies.[2] The first was from Orientalism to a social science approach for Middle Eastern studies. The second was the award of the Nobel Prize for Literature to Naguib Mahfouz in 1988. The third was the internet. The fourth has been conflict in the Middle East and the flight of people – including authors and scholars - from their homelands. The fifth is the popularity (or resurgence) of the "Global" novel (see Washington 2017).

Younger scholars may discuss Orientalism in the abstract, and there is a vast literature on it, but I write and speak from personal experience. I began my career in the late 1960s with an Orientalist training in the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute, which was established in 1919, but regularly crossed the street to converse with other students in the lounge of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, which was founded in 1965. In the Oriental Institute there was also a distinction back then between students deemed "ancients" and the others termed "moderns."[3]

This first paradigm shift was exemplified by the establishment of an "Islamic Civ" course at the University of Chicago in 1956 by Marshall Hodgson (Boyer 2015), the founding of Centers for Middle Eastern Studies at multiple American universities, and the offering of NDEA Title VI critical language fellowships starting in 1958. These last two initiatives became part of the federal government's Great Society programs in 1965. I served as a graduate assistant for a year for the University of Chicago's Islamic Civ course, which was based on the epic, three-volume work by Marshall Hodgson: *The Venture of Islam*. In that seminal work, Hodgson introduced the concept of "The Great Western Transmutation," which occurred:

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[1] An earlier version of this essay appeared in: Dorroll, Courtney M. (ed.). 2019. *Teaching Islamic Studies in the Age of Isis, Islamophobia, and the Internet*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. See also, https://newlinesmag.com/podcast/a-life-in-translation-with-william-hutchins/

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Received: 13.01.2025
Revised: 08.06.2025
Accepted: 10.06.2025

[2] My first publication of a translation from Arabic literature appeared in *Playboy Magazine* in 1975. It was an excerpt from al-Jahiz (d. 868/869 CE), "Boasting Match over Maids and Youths."

[3] Eventually, in 2024, "The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations" was "renamed the Department of Middle Eastern Studies." See, The Division of the Humanities at the University of Chicago, *Tableau*, Fall 2024, p. 10.

> when specialized technical development transformed the presuppositions of human production, and the French Revolution . . . established . . . unprecedented norms in human social relations. (Hodgson 1974: 176)

Hodgson thus safely navigated between the rival theories of Western Exceptionalism and that of mean-spirited Western Exploitation.

I began studying Arabic at the Gerard Institute in Sidon, Lebanon, where I taught Secondary English in the Boys School for the school year 1964-1965. The Gerard Institute prided itself on attracting students from all of Lebanon's communities including Sidon's two Palestinian refugee camps as well as some students from Saudi Arabia. I am certain that I learned more from my students than they did from me. They had a lot to say about their lives and hopes and told me whenever they were planning a school walkout. One of my fellow instructors that year disappeared for political reasons, possibly to prison. I started learning French when I was eight and assumed that Arabic is a language like French, but of course it is much more complicated than that.

I eventually enrolled at the University of Chicago, where I earned an M.A. in Philosophy. After a couple of terms that I paid for, my Ph.D. program was funded by several NDEA Title VI fellowships for Arabic, and I could not have afforded graduate school otherwise – even at the bargain-basement prices of the 1960s. I earned my Ph.D. from the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago in the Arabic and Islam section. While I was a student there, the department hired a philologist to teach Arabic and then a graduate of a modern linguistics program, also to teach Arabic. That shift from Orientalism and philology to Islamic Civ and linguistics occurred in less than a decade.

The philologist, however, was himself part of a transitional generation and introduced me to al-Jahiz from the ninth century CE and Tawfiq al-Hakim from the twentieth century. Those authors became two of my literary heroes.[4] When this scholar gave a talk on contemporary Arabic literature, I remember that he stressed the importance of recent Iraqi novels without mentioning a single author by name. That omission struck me as odd.

The website of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Chicago states:

> The educational aims of the Center are to assist students in acquiring: 1) firm grounding in an academic discipline or a professional field; and 2) specialist knowledge of the languages and civilizations of the Middle East. (Center for Middle Eastern Studies n.d.)

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[4] "Established in 1965, the CMES has been supported by the Divisions of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Chicago and by grants from the U.S. Department of Education and the Mellon Foundation for more than forty years." Available at https://cmes.uchicago.edu/page/about-us
"The University of Texas at Austin has a long history of academic focus on the Middle East. The Center for Middle Eastern Studies, established in 1960, offers some 300 Middle East language and area studies courses each year. The Center provides a supportive environment for faculty researching and teaching on the Middle East throughout the University, which are carried out by 150 scholars with faculty appointments in 22 departments. The Center offers an interdisciplinary program in Middle Eastern Studies at both the undergraduate and graduate levels." Available at http://www.utexas.edu/cola/mes/center/cmes.php

The first aim clearly supports an Islamic Civ approach, while the second seems compatible with both Orientalism and Islamic Civ.

One assumption of the Orientalist tradition was that only classics should be translated and then only after a Western scholar had produced a definitive edition of the work. I wrote my dissertation on the theory of knowledge of Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, and at my defense one examiner did ask which text by Razi I planned to edit. As part of my graduate program, though, I spent a year in the Center for Arabic Studies at the American University in Cairo, where I studied with excellent Egyptian professors. My dissertation advisor was the South Asian Muslim scholar Fazlur Rahman and his predecessor at the University of Chicago was the Iraqi philosopher Muhsin Mahdi (Mahdi 2011). Both men, now deceased, had their feet firmly planted in the twentieth century and its intellectual controversies.

Professor Rahman arrived at the University of Chicago when I needed a dissertation advisor and topic. I met him in the garden of the residential hall where he was staying and asked if Fakhr al-Din al-Razi would be a suitable author for me to research for my dissertation, since the snippet I had read by him had struck me as a sophisticated, challenging philosophical text. Professor Rahman replied that a doctrine closely associated with Razi was that "knowledge is a relation" and recommended Razi's epistemology as my dissertation topic.

Once I succeeded in tracing Razi's hallmark doctrine back through earlier Islamic and Hellenistic philosophers to Aristotle's "Categories," Professor Rahman seemed disappointed and suggested, to my chagrin, that I shelve my dissertation and write a new one. I argued that, even if my findings were negative, they were of interest in a more than trivial way, since they demonstrated how a major, medieval Muslim theologian's key doctrine harked back to both Aristotle's *Categories* and the Qur'an. This, I thought, revealed Razi's sophisticated interaction with Greek philosophy even as he reasoned about a key doctrine for Abrahamic religions: God's knowledge of particulars: whether God does or does not know, for example, when Zayd is (or is not) in his house (or sins). What I have realized, fifty years later, is that, while Razi's theory can be traced back to Aristotle's categories, it also echoes sections of al-Ghazali's *Tahafut al-Falasifa* (*The Incoherence of the Philosophers*), which, as its name implies, lambasted philosophers. One maxim that applies here is that nothing is as complicated as what seems, at first glance to be simple.

In addition to editing medieval Arabic texts, some Euro-centric neo-Orientalists thought that the adventures of Europeans in the Middle East or Africa merited scholarly attention. This was exemplified by an African history course I audited at the London School of Economics in 1965; it was devoted to the European penetration of Africa. Two years earlier, though, at Yale University, I had taken Harry R. Rudin's African Civ course. At that time, I did not realize how groundbreaking his course was, that I would teach Arabic at the University of Ghana for three years in the 1970s while the pioneering British scholar John Hunwick taught African history there, or that I would eventually teach an "African Thought" course at Appalachian State University in North Carolina for several decades.

One small but important shift away from Orientalism in my translation practice has been use of an author's own spelling of her name in English - instead of the "correct" (library catalogue/Orientalist) transliteration.

At one time, American library cataloguers defaced title pages of translated Arabic novels by changing the spelling of the author's name if it did not match the Western, "scholarly" spelling. Back then, this seemed a sufficient reason for me (especially after several years of Orientalist training) to change an author's spelling of his name. I regret doing that. Today Arab authors commonly move between cultures and alphabets, but Tewfik El Hakim did that decades ago.

It is not uncommon for cross-disciplinary Islamic Civ courses to assign translations of contemporary novels or short stories. To meet this need, the Center for Middle Eastern Studies of the University of Texas at Austin started a Modern Middle East Literatures in Translation series, and Donald Herdeck launched Three Continents Press. The Texas Center referred me to Herdeck when it temporarily closed its translation series. At approximately the same time, Professor M. M. Badawi began lecturing on contemporary Arabic literature in the United Kingdom,[5] Denys Johnson-Davies began publishing excellent English translations of works of contemporary Arabic literature, like *Modern Arabic Short Stories* in 1967, and in 1966, Khayats, in Beirut, published Trevor Le Gassick's translation of *Midaq Alley, Cairo* by Naguib Mahfouz.

The paradigm shift from Orientalism to Area Civ Studies did not, however, eliminate Western hubris. Scholars of my generation no longer aspired to edit yet another medieval text better than an Egyptian scholar; some still hoped to write the definitive history of, say, Yemen or the definitive biography of an Arab luminary. A friend of mine in graduate school considered anyone who attempted to write Middle East history based primarily on an ability to read original texts in Arabic or Farsi to be an Orientalist; in fact, that was virtually his definition of Orientalism. Even so, he aspired to write the definitive history of an Arab country.

I propose as a Golden Rule of Cross-cultural Studies this maxim: do not conduct research overseas that you would not pursue at home, and vice versa. Why study the argot of prostitutes in Sana'a, for example, if you would **not** do a comparable study in, say, London, **because** the latter project would be "**too dangerous**"? A foreigner may write the definitive biography of Naguib Mahfouz, but that, I think, would be an interesting exception rather than inevitable.

My appointment to the languages department of the University of Ghana was arguably an Orientalist posting, and I continued there with my attempt to translate some essays by the incredible medieval author al-Jahiz. I had begun that project after another graduate student at the University of Chicago told me at a party that I should not study Arabic, "because nothing was written in it." I did not finish my Jahiz project for decades, although *Playboy* published a selection from it in 1975. Instead, in Ghana, I read and translated plays by Tawfiq al-Hakim, the father of the Egyptian theater, with two of my top Ghanaian students. My idea was that the three of us would publish a collection of translations of his plays, but we were separated when I resigned from the University of Ghana and returned to the United States, after a military government temporarily closed our university.

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[5] "He [Roger Allen] obtained his doctoral degree in modern Arabic literature from Oxford University in 1968, the first student to obtain a doctoral degree in that field at Oxford, under the supervision of Dr. M.M. Badawi." Available at http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~rallen/

Donald Herdeck at Three Continents Press published the two volumes of my *Plays, Prefaces, and Postscripts of Tawfiq al-Hakim* in 1981 and 1984, respectively. My translation of essays by al-Jahiz was finally published in 1989, by, arguably, an Orientalist publisher. That work received two reviews. One was by a British scholar who trashed it and wrote that I should have waited for a senior scholar, like him, to edit those essays. The other was by an equally eminent American scholar, who praised my work.

To obtain a fellowship to conduct research in Egypt, I admittedly applied for and received a grant to write a biography of Tawfiq al-Hakim. That year, though, multiple issues, including the hubris of the project, proved too much for me, and instead I selected and translated all but one of the stories included in *Egyptian Tales and Short Stories of the 1970s and the 1980s*, which was published by the American University in Cairo Press in 1987. (The other story had been written in English by an Egyptian.) I, of course, asked for suggestions from authors and experts in Cairo when selecting stories for that book but also bought a copy of every single-author short story collection I could find on sale in Cairo bookstores that year. This resembled an open-casting call and may be one reason that I included eight women authors—more than was usual in those days. Another woman author whose work I wanted to include refused to grant me permission to use either of the two sample stories that I had translated. She served me tea but gave no reason for that refusal and obviously wished to have a story of hers included the book. My guess is that those two stories were examples of *iqtibas*, the adaptation of a foreign story.

After Lynne Rienner Publishing purchased Three Continents Press, I finally wrote *Tawfiq al-Hakim: A Reader's Guide*, with excellent guidance from editors of that firm. This book includes biographical and bibliographical sections but is mainly literary criticism combined with discussion of al-Hakim's use of religious and spiritual themes. It was published in 2003.

The second paradigm shift, in addition to the transformation of Orientalism into Islamic Civ, was, in my admittedly biased opinion, the announcement of Naguib Mahfouz as the Nobel Laureate for Literature in 1988. Donald Herdeck, various editors at the American University in Cairo Press, Professor Roger Allen, and others had struggled for years to interest major Western publishers in Arabic-language authors like Naguib Mahfouz. The award of the Nobel Prize for Literature to him inspired the purchase of fourteen of his titles by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis for the American commercial publisher Doubleday and subsequently led to favorable reception for his works in English translation, notably for *The Cairo Trilogy*, which was published in individual volumes, one a year, starting with *Palace Walk* in 1990. Mrs. Onassis was, at that time, Doubleday's celebrity editor, having edited Michael Jackson's autobiography, for example. She did the line-by-line, pencil editing for all three volumes of my translation of *The Cairo Trilogy* in a perceptive, polite, and professional manner. She read along in the excellent French translations by Philipe Vigreux of the volumes of the Trilogy. Her edited pages can be examined today at the Lilly, Rare Books, Library of Indiana University, Bloomington (Indiana University Bloomington Libraries n.d.). The same is true for typescripts of an unpublished English translation of the Trilogy by three other individuals. I consider my apprenticeship with Mrs. Onassis to have been a turning point in my career as a translator; I learned a lot from her penciled comments. Doubleday executives may have suspected that Mrs. Onassis would not complete this project and therefore assigned a junior editor to shadow us.

The Cairo Trilogy is itself **about paradigm shifts in Egyptian society** during the first decades of the twentieth century: from patriarchy mimicking colonial rule in *Palace Walk*, to undisciplined liberalism in *Palace of Desire*, and then, in the final volume, *Sugar Street*, to modernity and a neo-Kantian, game-theory approach to life: that individuals may choose to play different games in life but should obey the rules of whichever game they select. By the third volume, which was deliberately written in a zippier, more modern style than the first, the fortunes of the family rest squarely on the shoulders of the patriarch's gay grandson, who is respectfully portrayed.

The Nobel Prize for Mahfouz and the success of *The Cairo Trilogy* have, I claim, meant that major publishers no longer reject submissions **merely** on the once popular excuse that a novel has been translated **from Arabic**. Responses to such a submission used to be: "Who would be the audience for that?" or "What American readers are interested in Iraqi refugees in Denmark?" or "Why does this Iraqi novel end with an apocalypse?" Nowadays, though, access to major publishing houses is effectively blocked for most translators from Arabic by the common requirement to submit manuscripts through a literary agent. Moreover, even today, accountants at major publishing houses reportedly wince at translations from any foreign language, because they assume: "American don't read translations."

Income from the Doubleday deal allowed the American University in Cairo Press to offer the Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature (AUC Press n.d.) starting in 1996 to the best, untranslated Arabic-language novel of the year and to increase the quantity and quality of its publications of Arabic literature in translation. In November and December 2010, I was a member of a delegation from Appalachian State University to Egypt, where we met with the Chancellor of the University of Fayoum and signed an exchange agreement between our two institutions. I then took my two companions from Appalachian to the American University in Cairo campus for the ceremony during which Dr. Miral al-Tahawy was presented the Naguib Mahfouz Award on December 1, 2010. At that time, she taught Arabic at Appalachian State University, but previously she had taught at Fayoum University.

Although my translation of *The Cairo Trilogy* was well received, a now deceased head of the AUC Press told me years ago, while figuratively and physically patting me on the back at a party on a rooftop terrace in Cairo, that I would never translate Mahfouz again. (In retrospect, I assume that he was punishing me for asking for a share of the royalties.) The AUC Press, instead, offered me a chance to translate the memoirs of an Egyptian general, but I declined.

I had to wait several years for another opportunity to serve as a translator of Arabic literature. An editor at an American publishing house eventually offered me a contract to translate an Egyptian author's memoir, which she had commissioned, a work that was still being written. After the author came to New York and blew up her contract, and mine, the editor admitted that she had hired me, because I was "cheaper than the author's husband." I had also made less progress on that translation than I would have liked, because the **outgoing** chair of my academic department had warned the **incoming** chair not to allow me to "buy out" one of my four mandatory courses per semester to work on that translation – on the grounds that I was running a "cottage industry" from the department. Robert Wechsler in his excellent book *Performing Without a Stage: The Art of Literary Translation* wrote memorably: "The translator is the monkey in the middle, with loyalties divided not only between languages and cultures, but also between author and publisher" (Wechsler 1998: 217).

The third paradigm shift has been open internet access for the general public from approximately 1995. When Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis edited the volumes of *The Cairo Trilogy*, sections of the manuscript, in approximately eighty-page packets, were sent back and forth between Boone, North Carolina, New York City, **and** Cairo by postal service and courier, because the American University in Cairo Press had brokered the deal. The internet has made it possible for a translator to correspond, even several times a day, with an Arab author or a publisher almost anywhere in the world, including Oman. It has also facilitated the research necessary for translation. Think Google. Think the Wikipedia and now artificial intelligence. The internet has brought new publication venues too – sites like *Words Without Borders* and *In Translation* [now closed for submissions] of *The Brooklyn Rail*.

Banipal Magazine of Modern Arab Literature, although a print journal, also had a major online presence and influence. Its regular publication would hardly have been possible without the internet. Samuel Shimon, Margaret Obank, and their publication *Banipal* were extremely important for me and introduced me to a stream of Arab authors whose work they asked me to translate. These included Mahmoud al-Rahbi from Oman.[6] They have, however, recently embraced a richly deserved retirement.

All these venues have helped me by publishing my translations of short stories or excerpts from novels by Arab authors and/or by introducing me to new authors. They are still important resources for instructors who wish to assign translated works of Middle Eastern literature to their students. My translation of Bahraini author Munira al-Fadhel's elegant novella *For the Voice, For the Fragile Echo*, for example, was serialized in *The Brooklyn Rail* and may be read online there.

Before the internet widened my horizons, I confined my translation efforts to my comfort zone, which is Egypt, where I have lived for four nonconsecutive years. Even so, to obtain an author's permission to translate a work, before access to the internet, I had to visit her in Cairo, only to have her refuse me permission, leave a note beneath a deceased author's son's apartment door, or send a friend as an emissary to Tawfiq al-Hakim. There is a direct correlation between access to the internet and my ability and willingness to translate non-Egyptian authors.

I now also hear occasionally from Arab graduate students who are interested in an author I have translated or in one of my translations, because they are pursuing translation studies. For example, for my 2012 revision of my translation of *Return of the Spirit* by Tawfiq al-Hakim, I benefited from access to portions of the M.A. thesis of Amira Salah El-Deen Askar of Zagazig University in Egypt after she contacted me online.

Translating Arabic has become easier with the publication of more dictionaries, especially those of various dialects of Arabic. I keep hoping to fall in love with an internet Arabic dictionary, but perhaps my own ignorance is to blame for my failure to

[6] Banipal (UK) Magazine of Modern Arab Literature. Contributors: Mahmoud al-Rahbi. "Six Short Stories," pp. 100-111, Banipal 68 (Summer 2020).

date in this regard. I do occasionally Google words in Arabic to see what information or image pops up.

I am tired, though, of hearing, in the locker room, from friends who brag about their connoisseurship of artisanal beer, artisanal cheese, and artisanal bread, that Google and artificial intelligence will translate my texts for me. My response is: "Literary translation is by definition **artisanal**, Guys" (Oliver 2023).

Too many people fail to acknowledge the connotative – rather than denotative – aspects of literary translation (see Taneja 2018: 156). Most words in any language have more than one meaning. They are not capsules that contain meaning powder. The sentence and context in which a word appears are crucial for understanding its meaning and thus for making an informed choice of an English equivalent. In *Performing Without a Stage*, Robert Wechsler pointed out: 'translators work in the realm of alternatives, there are always other ways it could have been done" (Wechsler 1998: 146).

Moreover, if I wept in my university office while translating a chapter about the death of a minor character in *Palace of Desire*, I hope some readers will also shed a tear. If the conclusion of *Palace Walk* made me relive the assassination of President Kennedy in Dallas and slammed me back to 1963 and Timothy Dwight College at Yale University, I hope some readers will experience a similar jolt back in time.

Between 1968 and 1985, Arthur Wormhoudt published twelve translations from Arabic literature (DAL n.d.). My understanding is that his approach was to have students who were native speakers of Arabic translate into English works that he then polished. While I applaud his audacity and enterprise, I will quickly add that his approach has not worked for me, even though at least two native speakers of Arabic have volunteered to perform a similar service for me. One attempt I made with an Arab scholar convinced me to quit the experiment as quickly as I could politely. If I, myself, do not feel firsthand the emotion in an Arabic-language novel, how can I season my translations with it? When I was translating *The Cairo Trilogy*, one prominent Arabic-to-English translation-expert advocated such a two-person approach for the translation of Arabic literature, with a native speaker of Arabic teaming up with a native speaker of English. In my opinion, such initiatives ignore the importance of connotative and emotive factors in literary translation.

Andrew Benjamin, in his challenging book *Translation and the Nature of Philosophy* (1989), included an English translation of this quotation from the German philosopher Walter Benjamin: "Translation is a model." Without addressing the work of that important German philosopher or the context of this quote in1 Andrew Benjamin's book, I wish to appropriate this thought in its simplest reading and agree that **translations are models**, that they are alternative versions of a source text. If they were not, they would be useless. Philosopher Max Black endorsed the use of metaphors and models and pointed out that models are only useful when they **differ** from what they are modeling. (If you need a map, you do not want someone to hand you a paving stone from that street or have a forklift present you with an entire block of it.) In his essay "Models and Archetypes," Max Black pointed out that models assume metaphors (Black 1962: 219). Models work only when they are *not* precise replicas of the modeled entity: "only by being unfaithful in *some* respect can a model represent its original" (ibid., 220). He approvingly quoted E.H. Hutten:

> We are forced to employ models when . . . we cannot give a direct and complete description in the language we normally use. Ordinarily, when words fail us, we have recourse to analogy and metaphor. (ibid., 236)

In other words, English translations by definition differ from the original text of, say, an Arabic novel. My understanding of translations as models of the original work may also explain why I care so strongly about the selection of cover art for my publications. I now typically begin translating a book by selecting cover art for it, even though I know that one of the first things a publisher will do is to change the cover. Of course, the fact that I majored in art history at Yale may help to explain my fascination with cover art.

The fourth paradigm shift, by my calculations, has come with political and military disasters of many varieties and the subsequent dispersal of refugees, including authors, to other areas of the world. Some of those erupted when governments in the Middle East crashed into the Arab Spring. Clyde Edgerton, who is known as a "North Carolina author" and who has fittingly been inducted into the North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame, has complained of the difficulty he has had dealing with New York editors, who do not, for example, know that a "doublewide" is, in North Carolina, a pair of house-trailers welded together, to form a prefab home. How does a translator explain literature reflecting the Arab Spring to an American editor?

Many Arab authors, especially Arab women authors, I contend, have struggled for decades to find a publisher if they do not have ready access to Cairo, Beirut, or some similar publishing hub, and to the "right" literary elites. Starting, as mentioned above, with *Egyptian Tales and Short Stories of the 1970s and 1980s*, I have translated and do still translate quite a few Arab women authors, but my attempts to find publishers for **their** works, beyond literary journals and websites, have proved challenging.

Now that many Arab authors are either in external or internal exile, in prison, and/or under some type of threat, translators should offer them the flimsy lifeline or megaphone represented by an English translation of their works. One author's repeated attempts to attend university or to publish in Iraq, for example, reportedly led to repeated incarcerations for him. At least four of the authors I have translated have been imprisoned. At least two have sought refuge on occasion **in** Syria. Another is now in exile **from** Syria. Some Arab authors also reportedly have a larger audience in their country of origin after finding an international audience for their works through translation—or by writing in English or German, for example.

The liberating influence of the area-studies, Islamic Civ approach for translation from Arabic has limitations here, because a novel by an author who has lived for decades in exile in Europe may be regarded as "inauthentic," especially if her novel is set in Europe or was written in a European language. Some **Arab authors** also, mistakenly I believe, assume that an American audience will want a novel with American themes or one that is dedicated, for example, to Chelsea Manning (formerly Bradley Manning).

In short: **The selection of works to be translated into English remains chaotic, and there are lapses of communication between interested parties on both sides of the Arabic/English language divide and the publisher/translator chasm.**

A fifth and final *paradigm shift* is evident in a new interest in Arabic literature, whether written in English or in translation (or renewed – think of Kahlil Gibran (Gibran Khalil Gibran) and the success of *The Prophet*, published in 1923). This shift also parallels the success of literature written in English by Middle Eastern authors.

For one thing, "Publication in English," including in English translation, is becoming comparable to "Written in English" for some awards. (This goes a step beyond the eligibility requirement for the Nobel Prize for Literature that "enough" works by an author should be available in some Western language or languages – either originally or by translation.) The Tuareg author Ibrahim al-Koni, who publishes in Modern Standard Arabic, was, for example, shortlisted for the Man Booker International Prize in 2015 on the basis of English translations of some of his many works. English translations are being judged, by some, not merely as translations (for translation awards) but as an alternative transcription – like a cello composition transcribed for the bassoon – for the U.S. National Book Award, for example, – and at times even by an author. The Iranian writer Amir Hassan Cheheltan, for example, has written:

> The new collection of stories is the first of my books to appear in Persian since 2005. In the intervening nine years, four new novels of mine have been translated and published in German, English, and Norwegian without first having had a chance to appear in Persian, their original language. (Cheheltan 2015: 38-40)

I, even though I am a translator, although not from Farsi, felt sad when I read this comment. I doubt that my own two novels will ever be published, and it might be better for everyone concerned, including me, if they were published in Arabic translation rather than English. When I met once with a group of writers in Bahrain, they informed me gleefully that: "translators are failed authors."

The trend of some Arab or Iranian authors who choose to write and publish in a European language, whether because they are bilingual, trilingual, or more comfortable in English than their "native tongue" is arguably related to the phenomenon of the **global novel** written in English by Arab, Iranian, South Asian, or East Asian authors, for example (Deb 2017). The success of some Arab authors who write global novels in English, though, has, I contend, done little to promote awareness of all the Arab authors who write primarily in Arabic.

One American editorial committee for a Middle East publication series was reported to have become "more and more anxious about book sales" by 2016[7]. Is it appropriate to wonder whether competition for a reader's attention from global novels written by Arab authors in English, French, or German has played a part in that alleged decline in sales?

An anonymous and perceptive professional (**third**) reader for one of my translations wrote:

> If there is an audience looking for "news" from "there," this novel requires too much work in between the fast-moving sections. . . . The novel also would be a difficult teach . . . and the whole text would make a long read for students.

[7] Email, March 22, 2016.

This reader said the quiet part out loud by remarking that the novel "would be a difficult teach." Would the translation of an Italian or Spanish novel be evaluated for its potential use in a European Civ course? I think not. The reader appealed, I think, to the Islamic Civ paradigm, which acted here as a hindrance. I wonder as well whether the reader was comparing that submission to a Global novel when remarking:

> Although it creates an interesting composite portrait, and is a compelling innovation in Arabic literature, it would be difficult to open this book up to English-language audiences—not in its referents, but its form. [8]

For years before and after 9/11, I deplored the contrast between the frequent, front-page coverage of turmoil in the Middle East and the minimal coverage of the region on arts and lifestyle pages. A novelist from Georgia suggested astutely some years ago to me and Clyde Edgerton that, if there were more coverage of the Middle East on the culture pages, there might be less Middle Eastern violence to report on the news pages. In 2015, though, *The New York Times*, for example, ran a big spread, in color, about eating dates and another on yummy foods for Ramadan *iftar*s and four months later published a signed, laudatory obituary for the courageous and distinguished Egyptian author Gamal El Ghitani (Moskin 2015). By February 2024 and thereafter, however, there has been far too much excruciating Middle Eastern violence to report.

I conclude my discussion of changing paradigms for Arabic translation with a reminder for translators and authors alike that there is an American Literary Translators Association, which has an informative website,[9] holds translation conferences, hosts programs for emerging translators, presents a variety of awards for translations, lists literary translators, and provides a database of publishers.

I have supported myself for years by teaching philosophy and religious studies courses and have usually worked on more than one translation at a time. When people ask me how long it took me to translate a certain novel, I usually do not know. I was, however, allowed one year to complete my translation for each of the three volumes of *The Cairo Trilogy*. The other time span I remember is spending four months in my university's loft in New York while I served as its loft-master, checking in and out groups of students visiting from Appalachian State. Much of the time, though, I sat by a window with a view of the Hudson River while translating *Return of the Spirit* by Tawfiq al-Hakim. In short, I may be looking for a publisher at any one time for as many as eight completed translations of Arabic novels. [My university has since then leased a different space for its "loft."]

Appendix: Paradigm Shifts for Teaching

The first, third, and fourth paradigm shifts discussed above have also affected Western instruction about Islam and Islamic culture. Oddly enough, after teaching for years in the Religious Studies section of the joint Philosophy-Religion Department at

[8] An editor's email containing the anonymous reader's report, May 20, 2016.
[9] The website is available at https://www.literarytranslators.org/

Appalachian State University, I feel that I have stumbled upon a comparable shift in religious studies. In a hyphenated department like ours, there are predictable tensions between philosophers and theologians and, also, in religious studies, **between** modernists **and** scholars of ancient texts and historic religions.

Some of my now former "modern" colleagues in Religious Studies have, also, insisted that a modern Religious Studies Department needs a sociologist of religion, an anthropologist of religion, a psychologist of religion, etc. to explain [away?] **religion**, considered as a single, complex entity. Such scholars, despite their wide assortment of specialties, might all come from the same divinity school and do not need to have enrolled in a course in a department bearing the name of their specialization. Their students can be sent back to the mother (secular) divinity school to become a sociologist (etc.) of religion. The key thing is that they **know religion**. I wonder whether the rejection of Orientalism in religious studies and the embrace of a more civilizational approach carries with it some of the hubris of an American student of the history of the Islamic world who aspires to write a definitive history of Oman, for example, especially when such a modern religious-studies scholar is exploring a religion they did not grow up with.

To the three paradigm shifts mentioned above regarding translation, I would add two additional, paradoxical paradigm shifts I have experienced while teaching. First, the American invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq brought to my classroom soldiers training for deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan and veterans of those wars. Their genuine interest in the subject matter – whether prompted by a desire to stay alive or puzzlement about: "Why are they shooting at us?" – counterintuitively helped to calm Islamophobia in the classroom. With them have come, even to the mountains of North Carolina, Muslim students and professors, who contribute to social harmony by their very presence and their need for a place to pray, for example. (Boone, North Carolina, now has its own mosque.)

Wikipedia and YouTube – so the internet again – also changed the way I taught a "content" class. Instead of arriving in the classroom with a power-point or list of notes to write on the blackboard, at times I pulled up a series of Wikipedia articles on the people and ideas I planned to discuss, so that together we could debate the accuracy of those articles. Then I could spice up our debates with music and interviews from YouTube, etc. This approach, I hope, allowed me to interact more spontaneously with students in the classroom. It obviously should never become a crutch.

The death of the printed textbook should be considered here but arrived after I retired from teaching. One (former) acting dean of Arts & Sciences at Appalachian, though, once told members of my department he thought that many of the out-of-class essays submitted to him for a course he taught were **plagiarized**. I was shocked that he did not seem concerned.

I prioritized in-class essays (written on paper) based on reading assignments and class discussions. These essays could be rewritten out of class for extra credit or a better grade. This approach seems even more important now with students' ready access to artificial intelligence. My former colleagues who prided themselves on assigning long research essays due at the end of the semester (and then complained about grading stacks of them) may now be reconsidering their options.

As a teacher, though, I was also a consumer of translated literature, using either printed texts I assigned or works archived online by language and country, for example at www.wordswithoutborders.org. Whether as a translator or a teacher, I have looked for works of Arabic, Turkish, and Farsi literature I hope will engage a reader/student emotionally rather than simply works that bring "news from over there." I have often paired a novel with a film to heighten the emotional impact and balance Islamophobia's appeal. Admittedly, the use of fiction as a reality check seems as paradoxical as benefiting from the presence of soldiers and veterans in a classroom to assuage free-floating prejudice against Islam, but translated literature brings to the classroom an everyday-life approach that focuses "on what is going on in ordinary people's lives rather than on abstract theories of social action" (Bowen, Early & Schulthies 2014).

Marwa al-Sabouni in her elegant and engrossing book *The Battle for Home* writes that Western scholars who study Islamic architecture have "overlooked discussion of the *architectural experience*" (al-Sabouni 2016). In that same chapter she provides the example of a tree:

> You can enhance your experience and take it to a deeper level if you wish: you can focus on its bark, on the insects that march on it . . . On each level of experience there is a new world of 'design' to be discovered and enjoyed. It is exactly that effect at which the old Islamic architecture aimed. (al-Sabouni 2016: 168)

She suggests turning architectural instruction: "in a new direction, so as to study the small things, the real things, the things that people relate to in their daily lives" (al-Sabouni 2016: 176).

I hope that my work as a translator of Arabic literature and teacher of Islamic Culture has moved in the direction that Marwa al-Sabouni recommends. A novel or short story written for a Middle Eastern readership and translated from a Middle Eastern language into English (or French, or German, etc.) can provide readers, including students, the vicarious experience of things Middle Eastern people encounter in daily life, even if the characters live in Denmark.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

Ethical Standards

The authors affirm this research did not involve human subjects.

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These instructions should, wherever there is doubt about the standard to be used in issues not considered here, be supplemented by the Chicago Manual of Style, available at http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html.

Please supply the files in Word format. In the case of photographs/figures/tables that need to be placed in a separate section please include these in a separate file, ensuring that images are labelled with captions that are consistently positioned and formatted (see more details below). All in-text material must be included in the main files of the manuscript.

Key Formatting Issues

1. Document Margins
Header: 15mm, Top of main body: 25mm Bottom: 15mm Left: 21mm Right: 21mm, Footer: 0.

2. Styles

a. **Title:** Times New Roman, 16 pt., centred, single-spaced, small capitals. Leave one blank line (TNR 10 pt., single-spaced) after the title (before the author's name).
b. **Author's Name:** Times New Roman, 16 pt., centred, single-spaced, small capitals. Leave 3 blank lines (TNR 10 pt., single-spaced) after the author's name (before the beginning of the text).
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d. **Main text:** Times New Roman, 12 pt., justified, single-spaced. Indent the first line of each paragraph by 5mm (left).
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