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**TRANSLATION OF OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE IN
ANTHONY BURGESS' *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*
BA thesis**

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ABSTRACT

Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange*, first published in 1962, is a novel written in an artificial slang Nadsat, which largely comprises elements of Russian and Cockney rhyming slang. This thesis aims to analyse a specific aspect of Nadsat, offensive language, in connection with the protagonist Alex, and the translation of it since it can be a challenging task, especially when dealing with constructed slang, for translators to render impolite expressions that may appear stronger in written than oral form. The question this thesis seeks to answer is how Udo Uibo, the Estonian translator of *A Clockwork Orange*, has translated offensive Nadsat expressions and what implications his translation techniques could have on the portrayal of Alex in the Estonian version.

The thesis consists of two parts, the first presents an overview of Nadsat and why the author has made Alex use this slang, continues with the discussion of the translation techniques used for rendering offensive language, and introduces previous works on the translation of Nadsat. The second part examines the translation techniques the Estonian translator has applied by comparing the English and Estonian texts as well as Nadsat glossaries. Additionally, the second part suggests the implications Uibo's choices might have on the portrayal of Alex in the Estonian translation.

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INTRODUCTION

Language can be a powerful tool and a characteristic of its user, as it shows, for instance, whether a person respects their partner or desires to be superior to them. One way to belittle others through the choice of words is using offensive language. Jay and Janschewitz (2008: 268–269) maintain that swearing is a means to express emotions, both negative and positive. Additionally, Eco (2004: 39) claims that offensive language is used differently in various cultures and, thus, the impact of obscenities varies from culture to culture and language to language. He deliberates that while Catholic countries, such as Italy and Spain, frequently associate the name of God, the Virgin, and the saints with offensive expressions, the insults in many other cultures consist of curses relating to sex and scatological matters. For example, a popular formula for cursing in Estonian is “go to X”, often combined with references to genitalia and a similar formula is characteristic of Slavic languages, such as Slovenian, as well (Babič and Voolaid 2019: 201). Language is also an important feature of dystopian novels, in which a futuristic language, which sometimes includes swearing, can be constructed to reflect a future dystopian world (Beauchamp 1974: 463).

The cultural differences in the use of offensive language and the societal norms that dictate to what extent such language use is tolerated can make the translation of offensive language a task that requires careful consideration. Santaemilia (2008: 222–223) maintains that while external factors, including dictators and certain institutions in power, can impose censorship on translations, it is more common than not for the translators also to apply “self-censorship”, that is, they choose to omit, mitigate, or distort offensive words or minimise the amount of them in a text to have the translation conform to their own moral and ethical views. What could additionally contribute to the offensive language being avoided or manipulated with in translations, may be the fact that the written word can have a stronger

impact on people than the spoken word, as, for example, Reid (1978: 425) and Luyken et al (1991: 57) argue. Therefore, it is possible that the translators of novels opt for such translation techniques that allow them to tone down the offensive expressions when rendering them into the target language or eliminate them altogether.

Offensive language or “offensiveness”, according to Jay (1992: 160–161), is “a term used to denote the degree to which a certain word or concept possesses negative or aversive properties”. He adds that the word is the more likely to be taboo the more offensive it is. O’Driscoll (2020: 16) provides a similar definition that the effect of offensive language can vary from mild to extreme and that such language is meant to insult or hurt someone and cause feelings of discomfort. Stollznaw (2020: 2) claims that offensive language is something that is “morally repulsive” and “personally insulting” and affects someone’s beliefs and identity. Consequently, offensive language can be defined as something that serves the purpose of insulting others, causing strong negative emotions regarding self-image.

Anthony Burgess’, a British writer and linguist’s, dystopian novel *A Clockwork Orange*, first published in 1962, contains a creative application of offensive language, namely, most of the offensive words are not in standard English but in an artificial slang called Nadsat, in which a significant part of the novel is narrated. Having to deal with an artificial slang may, in turn, require creativity from the translators, yet it might also provide a challenge for them. Nadsat is a mixture of Russian, Cockney rhyming slang, Shakespearean and Elizabethan English, and some other elements. The origin of the name is derived from the Russian suffix *-надуать*, which is the equivalent of *-teen*, as in the word *fifteen*. Burgess’ interest in pre-revolutionary Russian literature, intention to write a travel book, and desire to avoid Soviet propaganda and speak directly with the locals motivated him to learn the basics of Russian. Being a keen linguist, he eventually saw the opportunity to use the language as

a basis for Nadsat in *A Clockwork Orange* for he had been struggling to create a slang that would suit his futuristic delinquents. Burgess realised that in *A Clockwork Orange*, the partly Russian-based Nadsat would “brainwash”, much like the protagonist Alex is stripped of free will, the English readers to attain an elementary competency of Russian subconsciously. (IABF 2024a: para. 5)

In 1963, however, Stanley Edgar Hyman compiled a Nadsat glossary as he deemed it necessary for facilitating the reading of the novel (Burgess 1986), and the glossary was added to the Norton edition of *A Clockwork Orange* of the same year (IABF 2024b: para. 7–8). Burgess himself was against such practice because, as mentioned, his aim was to “brainwash” and “programme” the readers to understand Russian without any aid as this (*ibid.*). Still, in addition to the Norton edition, for instance, the Penguin Classics edition contains a glossary as well as many translations of the novel, including Estonian, Finnish (see, e.g., Mäkelä 2015: 85–88), Czech (see, e.g., Janák 2015: 58), German (*ibid.*), French (see, e.g., Vincent & Clarke 2020: 651), and Spanish (see, e.g., Maher 2010: 47), among others. Nevertheless, for example, the translation into Italian does not include one since the translator had tried to replace Nadsat vocabulary with archaic and little-known Italian words (Maher 2010: 40, 48).

The setting and characters of the novel stand out no less than the language. *A Clockwork Orange* is set in a near-future society where delinquency and violence, both physical and verbal, are rampant. The book is rather precisely composed; it consists of three parts, each divided into seven chapters, thus making up 21 chapters in total, symbolising coming of age. In the first part of the three, readers get acquainted with the protagonist and narrator, Alex, a 15-year-old gang leader who commits various crimes, including rape, murder, and looting, with his *droogs* or friends named Georgie, Pete, and Dim. Georgie is Alex’s right-hand man who, at times, tries to outshine him. Pete is more calm and collected

and usually follows orders. On the contrary, Dim is portrayed as the dullest of the group, thus often getting bullied by the others. The intelligent and witty Alex is used to dominating his friends and is annoyed when they start questioning his leading role. The young thugs like spending time in the Korova milk bar in the evenings, drinking milk with drugs and planning their next dreadful deeds. These dreadful deeds, or “ultra-violence”, in Alex’s words, are precisely what the first part, in rather disturbing detail, introduces. The second part deals with Alex being sentenced to prison for murder and the experiments carried out with him through a behaviour modification treatment, the Ludovico Technique, whose aim is to reform the young man. Since the treatment seems to be working, having stripped Alex of free will, he is released from prison, and his life after the penal institution is described in the third part.

Burgess’ novel was translated into Estonian in 2001 by Udo Uibo, who received the Annual Award of the Cultural Endowment of Estonia in literature for the masterful translation (Cultural Endowment of Estonia n.d.). What is more, Urmet (2005: para. 2) writes that Uibo found, in fact, the generation of Nadsat words in Estonian fun rather than challenging for the translator tried to play with language as he deemed the author had done.

This thesis aims to analyse Udo Uibo’s translation of the Nadsat slang in Anthony Burgess’ dystopian novel *A Clockwork Orange* with a more specific focus on how the main character, Alex, applies it, for he is the narrator of the novel. Since discourtesy is one of the main characteristics of the violent Alex and his language use, a narrower aspect, that is, offensive language in Nadsat, will be examined. Thus, the research question is: How has Udo Uibo, the Estonian translator of *A Clockwork Orange*, translated offensive Nadsat expressions and what implications could his translation techniques have on the portrayal of Alex in the Estonian version?

The thesis consists of two main sections. The first part reviews previous studies regarding the linguistic definition of Nadsat and its characteristics as well as the purposes of Nadsat for the construction of Alex's character. Moreover, it tackles the research on the translation techniques found to be applied in the case of offensive language and continues with the deliberation of the translation of Nadsat. The purpose of the second part is to describe the methodology used in the thesis and to investigate and categorise the offensive terms present in Alex's use of Nadsat, as well as determine the translation techniques Uibo has applied in the text to render these Nadsat items. In addition, Nadsat glossaries will be studied, since the Estonian version contains a glossary, to analyse the implications Uibo's translation of the text, which the Estonian glossary supplements, might have regarding the portrayal of Alex in the Estonian version.

1 NADSAT IN A *CLOCKWORK ORANGE* AND THE APPROACHES TO THE TRANSLATION OF OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE

The first section of the thesis will provide insight into previous research regarding Alex and Nadsat in *A Clockwork Orange* and the translation of the novel. The section is divided into three subtopics: the first will focus on Nadsat and the reasons why Alex uses this slang, the second will give a more general overview of the approaches to the translation of offensive language, and the third will discuss the previous studies on the translation of offensive language in *A Clockwork Orange*.

1.1 Alex and Nadsat

Before discussing the connection between Alex and Nadsat, it should be clarified what Nadsat is considered as in this thesis since there seem to be some disagreements regarding the definition of Nadsat from a linguistic perspective. It appears that many scholars and students (Kohn 2008; Bogic 2010; Kuip, 2013; Vincent & Clarke 2017; Suciu & Culea 2020; Simonlatser 2021) determine it according to the purpose of their research. For example, Kohn (2008: 1, 8) regards Nadsat as a **register**, the style of language used for particular situations, **of teen anti-language** (a language excluding outsiders), as his study focuses on the socio-linguistic aspects of Nadsat. Suciu and Culea (2020: 2) partly agree with Kohn's (2008) classification of Nadsat as an anti-language, however, they mostly use the term **code** or **language** in their work since their aim is to analyse the semantic functions of Nadsat. On the contrary, Vincent and Clarke (2017: 248, 260) deem Nadsat a **constructed language** (artificially created language for a specific purpose) to categorise Nadsat items, that is, words that deviate from standard English. Bogic (2010: 4), Kuip (2013: 35), and Simonlatser (2021: 10), whose works tackle the translation of Nadsat, agree that Nadsat is **slang** (informal spoken language). As the works that deal with translation regard Nadsat as

slang, the thesis will follow suit but mentions that it is artificially constructed from several natural colloquial languages. Moreover, Dumas and Lighter (1978: 14–15) emphasise that slang is often accompanied by contempt for conventionally accepted use of language and societal norms, and the use of slang can be considered taboo in the context of ordinary discourse with people of higher social positions, which characterise Alex's use of Nadsat.

Having established what Nadsat is, bearing in mind the focus of this thesis on Alex's use of offensive or taboo language through Nadsat and the translation of it, it is fitting to continue with the reasons behind Alex's use of such language since language use plays a significant role in the portrayal of characters, especially the ones who are commonly seen as impolite, such as anti-heroes and villains (Darta 2020). Researchers, in general, seem to agree that using the Nadsat slang serves three main purposes for the construction of Alex's character. First, as Clarke (2017: 102) states, language use makes Alex memorable for the reader because the "gentleman's goloss", or standard English that the adults speak, appears dull in comparison. The same idea is supported by Goh (2000: 265), who finds Alex's language use creative, unlike the "repetitive" and "dehumanising" language of adult figures. Booker (1994: 97–98) agrees that using the Nadsat slang is a means for Alex to **express his individuality** and makes the delinquent "more vivid as a character". A second purpose for using Nadsat, according to Booker (1994: 95–96), is that it allows Alex to **rebel against authority** as it provides Alex and his friends with a language only they can understand within their gang, which reinforces the sense of belonging in this small social group and also means that they can communicate about their violent plans undisturbed. In addition, Booker (*ibid.*) mentions Alex's ability to switch between registers, that is, Nadsat and standard English, which gives him an advantage over the representatives of authority as they lack the knowledge of Alex's teenage slang. Kohn (2008) investigates the change of registers as well, but in connection to Alex's victims and gang members whom the protagonist tries to

manipulate and dominate. This introduces the third reason why Alex uses Nadsat – **to control the ones weaker than him**. McEntee (2023: 223) maintains that Alex is granted the powerful role of the group leader due to being the most fluent in Nadsat out of the four friends. Though she does not give any specific examples of Alex’s fluency, it can be seen in the novel that Alex, for instance, uses the words *deng*, *pretty polly*, and *cutter* to mean money, whilst Georgie from his friend group refers to it solely as *deng*. Furthermore, when Georgie uses the word *money*, Alex taunts his vocabulary by asking, “with the big big big deng or money as you so highfaluting call it?” (Burgess 2019: 57). However, not only does Alex dominate others through the masterful use of Nadsat but also offends and intimidates them. There are at least nine generic offensive expressions, such as *merzky get* “filthy bastard” and *gloopy* “stupid”, which Alex uses to belittle people outside his group (actually also within the group) who are perceived as weak, in addition to the terms he uses for women, especially older women, such as *soomka* “bag”, to humiliate them with reference to their appearance, sex-appeal, and age (Suciu & Culea 2020: 14–15). What is more, Alex tends to apply Nadsat in more violent situations, resulting from which Fairchild (2014: 46) concludes that the delinquent romanticises violence through the use of Nadsat. Wallace (2020: 31, 45) adds that, in addition to the other, weaker characters, Alex, as a Nadsat-speaker, also intimidates the readers as they soon realise that by having taught them Nadsat, Alex has manipulated them into thinking that they are his friends who should feel sympathy for him despite the crimes he has committed. Thus, there is a significant connection between Alex and his use of the Nadsat slang, which, however, appears not to have been considered to a greater extent in the research focusing on the translation of *A Clockwork Orange*. These types of studies have rather focused on the functions of Nadsat, which are similar from some aspects but do not make a specific connection to Alex. It is also necessary to better understand the connotations behind the words Alex uses.

1.2 Translation of Offensive Language

According to Allan and Burrige (2006: 237), taboos, on the one hand, refer to objects, actions, or vocabulary which are forbidden for religious or social reasons, whilst they also denote something distasteful or impolite within certain social contexts which should, therefore, be avoided. In contemporary Western society, culturally sensitive social parameters, such as age, sex, education, and social status, could become taboo when the rules of etiquette are not followed. Silzer (2005: 1073–1074) also explains that some words were considered taboo in Polynesian cultures, where the term originates from because the use of such words was thought to have physically harmful or supernatural consequences. Still, in today's Western world, taboo language marks the terms that are avoided due to cultural and social norms rather than the ones that are strictly forbidden owing to supernatural beliefs or social etiquette. Taboo language, according to Silzer (*ibid.*), is offensive and includes cursing and swearing, which Allan (2019: 2) agrees with. Similarly, slang can be offensive in nature, as Allan and Burrige (2006: 74–75) hold that it also often includes swearing because both, slang and swearing, are colloquial varieties of language. Though the meaning of the word *taboo* has changed and expanded over time, thus, it does not necessarily denote something strictly forbidden anymore, it may still have the connotation of referring to something that is prohibited due to the meaning and etymology of the concept, accordingly, this thesis will use a broader term *offensive language*, that is defined in the introduction, to refer to insults and also swearing that sometimes accompany them.

Allan and Burrige (1991) argue that words can be used either in a dysphemistic, orthophemistic, or euphemistic way and emphasise, thereby, that context is significant since, in essence, words are not, for instance, dysphemistic. Dysphemisms are what the authors term colloquial language, which is harsh or even taboo, and that can be applied to insult people through comparisons with animals. For example, *cow* could denote a woman disliked

and has connotations of being fat since it is commonly used in the phrase *fat cow*. Moreover, epithets, remarks of mental or physical inadequacy, such as *idiot*, and disrespectful terms about the target's character, such as *crone*, *hag*, or *bag*, are considered dysphemistic. However, orthophemisms, a term coined by Allan and Burrige (2006), are neutral, straightforward expressions that are neither as harsh as dysphemisms nor as mild as euphemisms. Euphemisms, as already stated, are alternatively used in place of typically taboo expressions to avoid "possible loss of face". This includes replacing the word *shit* with *shoot*, for example. At the same time, the term being softened might not necessarily be taboo, yet may have more negative connotations, such as *lodger* instead of, for instance, *paying guest*. Allan and Burrige (1991: 18) point out that cultures can have different norms, thus, it seems reasonable to regard offensive and taboo terms as culture-specific items when studying what kind of translation techniques have been applied to this kind of language.

Baker (1992) lists various translation techniques used by professional translators to tackle the problems of rendering words that have no equivalent in the target culture or language. She mentions that a common strategy is to translate by a more general word, whilst it is also possible to translate by a more neutral or less expressive word. Baker (1992: 28–29) gives an example of the word *mumble*, which suggests confusion or embarrassment in English. She explains that it was translated into Italian using the word *suggerisce* "suggest", not the nearest equivalent *mugugnare*, which rather refers to dissatisfaction, and believes the translator did so to avoid conveying the wrong expressive meaning. Another technique Baker (1992: 31–32) handles is cultural substitution. She describes that, in this case, a culture-specific item is translated into the target language via a term that does not have the same meaning but is likely to have a similar impact on the target reader due to being familiar to them. For example, the word *porca* in Italian is an offence for a woman with the literal meaning "swine", but by translating it into English using the word *bitch*, it is expected to

have a similar impact on the English reader, though the literal meaning is not the same. Then, Baker (1992: 34–40) points out that the omission technique can be used when a word does not contribute to the text enough. She continues by explaining techniques, such as using a loan word, paraphrase, or illustration, which are, however, not as relevant to this thesis and, thus, not described further.

Davoodi (2009: para. 8–12) has explored methods specific for rendering taboo language. They include *censorship, substitution, translating taboo for taboo, and applying euphemism*. The methods are, in some ways, similar to the ones proposed by Baker (1992), nevertheless, Davoodi (2009: para. 8–12) directs attention to certain aspects that should be regarded. To begin with, she writes that omitting a taboo term is the simplest way, whilst, on certain occasions, it could distort the meaning of the text, so this technique is not to be favoured. Regarding *substitution*, Davoodi's (*ibid.*) notion differs from what Baker (1992: 31–32) defines as *cultural substitution* because the *substitution* Davoodi (2009: para. 8–12) describes, includes changing the word completely, for example, *wine* would be translated as *fruit juice* to avoid a taboo term in Islamic cultures, which would, however, often lead to a confusing and unfaithful translation. What Davoodi (*ibid.*), as well as Allan and Burridge (1991), describe as *applying a euphemism* has parallels with what Baker (1992: 28–29) considers *translating by a more neutral or less expressive word* since a euphemism is used to replace an offensive term with something more agreeable. Thus, it could be argued that applying a euphemism is less expressive in the context of translating taboo items as it moderates the emotional load of a dysphemistic expression.

Brownlie's (2007) research on taboo translation appears to be the most comprehensive, combining the techniques suggested by Baker (1992) and Davoodi (2009: para. 8–12) since the methods she suggests are *omission, addition, substitution, toning down, literal translation, and keeping a word from the source text in the source language* (in the

target text). The omission technique overlaps with what has been suggested by Baker (1992) and Davoodi (2009: para. 8–12). By *addition*, Brownlie (2007) means that a word, such as *almost*, is added to make a text less expressive. A word is sometimes also borrowed from the target text, which is a similar method to the one suggested by Davoodi (2009: para. 8–12), translating taboo for taboo, however, its meaning must be derived from context, as could be the case with Nadsat. The difference between *substitution* and *toning down* is that in the case of *substitution*, a different word than a taboo expression is chosen, whilst by applying the *toning down* technique, a less expressive word is preferred. What is more, Brownlie's (2007) concept of *toning down* is similar to Allan and Burridge's (1991) concept of *euphemism*. Consequently, it is also possible that the opposite of euphemism, dysphemism, is applied to translation to make the text even more offensive by, for example, translating a neutral term in the source text into an offensive one, or one with offensive connotations, in the target text.

1.3 Studies on Offensive Language in the Translations of *A Clockwork Orange*

Regarding the previous studies on the translation of Nadsat, more specifically, the research that includes the analysis of offensive language, it has been identified that the use of Nadsat mitigates the harshness of the narrative, both in the original and translated versions. Bogic (2010: 5), who examines the French translation of the novel, maintains that “[t]he language of *A Clockwork Orange* [sic] wraps the novel like a fog” and explains that it spares the reader from the graphic details of violence, which Lodge (1992: 200) also agrees with by claiming that this rather alien language distances the reader from the horrors Alex practices. Suciu and Culea (2020: 6) quite cleverly put it, “Nadsat functions as a filtering screen, or a downtoning tuning fork, a sieve through which the larger pieces of verbal and

physical violence are granulated into digestible bits.” Therefore, the Nadsat slang might already mitigate the violent and impolite content of the original.

Mäkelä (2015) and Simonlatser (2021), who studied in their works the functions of Nadsat in the Finnish and Estonian translations, respectively, indeed did discover that Nadsat, in some cases, has the properties to mitigate violence in the translated versions of *A Clockwork Orange* as well, however, the Finnish translation also saw some opposite tendencies. Simonlatser (2021: 30, 70–71) finds that the taboo expressions relating to violence and sex in Nadsat can be considered euphemistic in the original as well as in the Estonian translation, in which the slang items have been preserved through naturalisation (a translation technique, in which a source text word is first adapted to fit the target text pronunciation and then morphology) since the readers are not likely to grasp the exact meanings of words even though they can be deduced from the context. She argues that the fact that Uiibo has decided to translate the phrases *grahzny bratchnies* and *vonny sods* as “grjaasnod bratšnood” and “vonnist haisvad pedrod” in the text means that these expressions will not sound as directly offensive to the readers without the command of the Russian language as the more direct equivalents, “räpased värdjad” and “haisvad pederastid” (the author of the work probably means the translations in the Estonian Nadsat glossary here [my addition]), would. While she mentions the Estonian Nadsat glossary when analysing another function or effect of Nadsat, the brainwashing effect, and claims that the presence of such glossary decreases the possibility of Nadsat having the brainwashing function in the Estonian version, she fails to conclude that the function of Nadsat as a mitigating factor of violence and insult may similarly be minor owing to the existence of the glossary. This means that it is not difficult for even the non-Russian speakers to look up in the glossary that “grjaasnod bratšnood” indeed means “räpased värdjad”, and, thus eventually, be exposed to, at least in the case of these specific example words, the offensive vocabulary of Nadsat. Mäkelä (2015:

56), however, comes across a somewhat different tendency in the Finnish translation, particularly so, in the case of offensive words towards people. Namely, he realises that while the Nadsat terms related to violence and sex can be considered euphemistic in the Finnish version, there are, in contrast, some words that appear even more vulgar since, instead of maintaining the Nadsat slang, the translator has decided to apply Finnish colloquial phrases. For instance, *vonny sods* has been translated into “sontamulkkuhomot” or “shit-dicked homos”, and *yarbles*, which is euphemistic in the original because it replaces the more direct word *balls*, has been rendered to a non-Nadsat equivalent, thus, losing the euphemistic factor. (Mäkelä 2015: 52–56)

Janák’s (2015: 37, 80–81) research on Czech and German versions also claims that Nadsat has mitigating functions, and reading the book without a glossary (however, he points out that all the Czech versions and some German versions have a glossary) saves the reader from direct exposure to violent and, it could be added, offensive content. Nevertheless, the author finds that, especially the German translation, uses German and German slang instead of “Nadsatsprache” or German Nadsat, thus, the softening factor is lost as the reader understands the content immediately without the need to guess or look up the words if they were in Nadsat. It is possible that the same effect, that is, the loss of the mitigating factor, is present in the Estonian translation, although it uses Estonian Nadsat in the text, since a glossary is added to the Estonian version, which a reader who wants to understand the text better, is likely to use.

2 TRANSLATION OF OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE IN A *CLOCKWORK ORANGE*

The following analysis will identify the offensive language in both the original version as well as the Estonian translation of *A Clockwork Orange* and the corresponding Nadsat glossaries and categorise the offensive expressions according to towards whom the protagonist Alex directs the verbal assault. Then, in the case of each offensive expression, it will be studied what kind of translation techniques discovered by Brownlie (2007) to be used for the translation of offensive language Udo Uiibo, the translator of *A Clockwork Orange* into Estonian, has applied and what these choices may imply about the portrayal of Alex, whose language use is characteristic of him, as a discourteous character, in the Estonian translation. The analysis first presents the methodology, then categorises the offensive language into two larger categories, explores the translation techniques applied to the words in these categories, and finally offers findings and discussion.

2.1 Methodology

I identified the examples of offensive language by reading both the English and Estonian versions of *A Clockwork Orange*, which would first provide context for these expressions in different languages and also help better understand the negative connotations of seemingly inoffensive words and phrases. In addition, I looked up the Nadsat words in the Estonian version of the Nadsat glossary at the end of Uiibo's translation and compared it with several English Nadsat glossaries to illustrate the attempts of translating Nadsat into English and indicate the differences between the English and Estonian, presumably more familiar with the Russian language, context. Since the edition of *A Clockwork Orange* published by W. W. Norton & Company in 2019, I own respects Burgess' wish and does not include a glossary, I consulted an online version of the 1986 Norton edition, which contains

an early Nadsat glossary by Stanley Edgar Hyman compiled in 1963 (Glossary 1). As the early glossary has been renewed over time, I also used an online Wiktionary (2024) (Glossary 2), Vincent and Clarke's (2017) Nadsat corpus (Glossary 3), and Suciu and Culea's (2020) list of Nadsat vocabulary (Glossary 4) to supplement my findings. However, it should be mentioned that the way people perceive language changes over time, and the translation of *A Clockwork Orange* was published some decades ago; thus, the differences in glossaries and dictionaries must be considered with care. I categorise the offensive expressions into two larger groups according to the content of the novel or, more specifically, the purposes for which Alex uses the insults. The categories are as follows: "Offensive misogynistic language" and "Power and language", which, in turn, are divided into "Offensive expressions against power" (police officers and other authorities) and "Offensive expressions to assert power" (over friends and victims). I will analyse what translation techniques Brownlie (2007) has found to be used when rendering offensive language, Udo Uibo has applied to translate offensive words in Nadsat and deliberate on the implications the techniques might have when supported by the translations of the Nadsat words in the Estonian Nadsat glossary. However, since these techniques are mainly focused on avoiding offensive expressions or making them less expressive, and it is possible Udo Uibo has amplified certain phrases, I will additionally use Allan and Burridge's (1991) term *dysphemism* and, thus, its counterpart *euphemism* as a replacement of Brownlie's (2007) term *toning down*. I have coined the term *insult for insult*, following the example of Davoodi's (2009: para. 8–12) term *taboo for taboo*, to cover Brownlie's (2007) concepts of *keeping a word from the source text in the source language* and *literal translation* as well as to sort of replace the concept of *literal translation* by a term that would more precisely describe an artificial slang that Nadsat is. I am doing so because it appears that Uibo has kept some Nadsat words from the English original as Nadsat words in the Estonian translation as

well, while in the Estonian Nadsat glossary, the denotational meanings of the Estonian translations match the English translations in the English Nadsat glossaries, thus, when compared, they could be considered literal translations. My expectation is that the presence of the Estonian Nadsat glossary reduces the mitigating effects of Nadsat in the text, however, based on previous research about “self-censorship” (Santaemilia 2008), I also assume Uibo has applied euphemisms to make the insults milder.

2.2 Offensive Misogynistic Language

Alex has a wide vocabulary for degrading women, both young and old. The insulting expressions in Nadsat by which he addresses or describes women are *ptitsa*, *soomka*, *baboochka*, *sharp*, and *sophisto*, often modified by an adjective marking age either in Nadsat or English/Estonian.

One of the most commonly used offensive phrases for women by Alex is *ptitsa*, which he applies to women of all ages, but especially old women by calling them *starry ptitsas* (“starad ptitsad” in Estonian from Russian *старый нмуца* “staryj ptitsa” – literally “old bird”). In the source text, it appears in the sentence “/.../ nor to do the ultra-violent on some shivering **starry** grey-haired **ptitsa** in a shop /.../” (Burgess 2019: 4). Uibo (1962/2021: 8) has rendered it as “/.../ polnud ka tarvis panna mõnele tudisevale hallipäisele **starale ptitsale** kaupluses ultravägivalda, /.../”. At first, it could only be apparent from the context, if the reader has no or little command of Russian, that this is an offensive expression because Uibo has kept the Nadsat item in the translated version and not given a direct translation. Nevertheless, in the Estonian Nadsat glossary, Uibo has translated the word *ptitsa* as “tibi” (he uses inverted commas as well), and it can also be looked up from there that *stara* means old. In the English versions of the Nadsat glossaries, however, *ptitsa* has been rendered as “chick” (Glossary 1), “girl” (Glossaries 2 & 4), and “woman” (Glossary

4). In Russian, *ptitsa* means “bird”, and in certain contexts, it is an offensive term when used for a lady. In English, the word also has negative connotations, as Allan and Burrige (1991: 16, 40) describe in their research, among other offensive comparisons of people with animals, such as pigs or cows, and certain behaviours or appearances ascribed to them. Similarly, in Estonian, the word *lind* (“bird”) may be insulting when used to describe a woman, but, perhaps, even more so is the word *linnuke* (“birdie”), which, according to *Sõnaveeb* (2024), is used to refer to a shameless woman and its synonym is mentioned to be *a whore*. Though the word *tibi* is a colloquial word that describes an attractive woman, it has the negative connotation that the woman is silly, and the fact that Alex uses the term frequently for old women makes it unlikely that he deems them attractive since he uses Nadsat to degrade women (see Suciú & Culea 2020: 14–15), especially older women. Thus, it becomes clear that Alex uses it for offensive purposes. The fact that Uibo has kept the Nadsat word in the text and translated the word in the glossary as “tibi” and not “linnuke”, for instance, which has a more derogatory meaning and synonyms, makes it possible to argue that his translation technique is applying a euphemism. Nevertheless, by using a Nadsat term in the text and a euphemism in the glossary, Uibo makes Alex’s insult somewhat less clear, although it can be guessed from the context, or the adjective *starry* might help disclose the affront.

Another insult by which Alex describes and addresses older women is (*filthy old soomka*): “So then I screeched: ‘You **filthy old soomka**,’ /.../” (Burgess 2019: 69), which is translated into Estonian as “Ma kritšaivaitasin: ‘Sina **roojane vana sumka**,’ /.../” (Uibo 1962/2021: 72). As in the case with the word *ptitsa*, it can be guessed from the context, even more so as the word is modified by the adjectives *filthy* and *old*, that the term is offensive, although Uibo has rendered it in the text as a Nadsat word, which somewhat prevents direct exposure to the insult. In the Estonian Nadsat glossary, the word is translated as “moor”,

while the English glossaries, more specifically Glossary 1 and Glossary 2, also point out the Russian meaning “bag” and state that it is English slang for an old and ugly woman as well, as in the phrase *old bag*. Glossary 4 (2020: 9), however, additionally includes the term *hag*, which in 1992, Ray Puxley, an expert on Cockney rhyming slang, has suggested to be a base for the rhyming slang *old bag* (Partridge Dictionary of Slang 2015: 1984). Additionally, both *hag* and *bag* are disparaging terms in English for an old woman deemed to be unattractive, unpleasant, and immoral, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) (2024), in which they are specifically marked to be offensive. However, in neither *Sõnaveeb* (2024) nor *Eesti keele seletav sõnaraamat* (EKSS) (2009), the translation *moor* that Uiibo used is marked as offensive, having a more neutral meaning of “old woman” and also “mother”. Furthermore, in *Esimene eesti slängi sõnaraamat* (EESS) (1989), the word *moor* refers to a “regular colloquial phrase” denoting an “old woman” while, in contrast, a synonym *mutt* is considered to be “not a very polite word”, though one of its meanings is also “mother”. It can be observed that while the English glossaries include an English slang term for the word *soomka/sumka*, the Estonian equivalent is rather a colloquial phrase, which might make it a more commonly used word and that among different groups (while slang is a narrower term and covers only certain groups, bound by age, for instance). The wider user population of the word may, in turn, have an influence on the fact that the Estonian word *moor* does not have as negative a connotation as its English counterpart, *old bag* or *hag*. Resulting from that, Uiibo’s translation technique could be regarded as using a euphemism since, in the text, he has used a Nadsat word, whose translation in the Estonian Nadsat glossary is, due to it being a colloquial word instead of a slang term, somewhat more neutral than the corresponding English translation of the same Nadsat item.

One more term Alex degrades old women by is (*old*) *baboochka*, as in the sentence “/.../ there were three or four **old baboochkas** petting (“drinking”) their black suds on SA

(State Aid).” (Burgess 2019: 11) The Estonian version is the following: “/.../ seal õdusas nurgakeses kükitasid kolm-neli **vana baabušk**at ja peetisid oma rahvapensioni eest mingit musta laket.” (Uibo 1962/2021: 14) In Glossary 1, the Nadsat word is rendered as “old woman”, Glossary 2 including the same variant but also a clarification that it means “grandmother” in Russian. In Glossary 4 (2020: 9), the meaning is also “grandma” or “granny”, while Uibo’s Estonian glossary includes the term *vanamutt*. As mentioned above, EESS (1989) considers the word *mutt* “not a very polite word”. Since the English Nadsat glossaries use more neutral words, it appears Uibo has applied a dysphemism by attaching a negative connotation to the Nadsat word *baabuška* and, thus, making Alex’s offensive vocabulary denoting old women more rude. That is because, although Alex naturally also uses the term in the original to degrade the old women, the insult is less clear for, firstly, there are English versions of *A Clockwork Orange* that do not include a glossary and, additionally, the English Nadsat glossaries and lists that exist, mostly bring out a literal meaning of the Russian word.

The younger women, Alex prefers to refer to as *sharps*, which is rendered as “vobla” in the Estonian translation and stated in the glossary that it means “naine”. The word is included in the English versions of Nadsat glossaries as well and has also been translated as “female”, “woman”, or “lady”. Looking at the word in context, in the original, it appears, for example, in the sentence “These **sharps** were dressed in the height of fashion too, /.../” (Burgess 2019: 5), the corresponding passage in Estonian being “Ka **voblade** riietus oli moe kõrgusel, /.../” (Uibo 1962/2021: 8). Initially, it may seem that Uibo has coined another Nadsat word, however, the word appears in *Sõnaveeb* (2024) and means a certain roach-like fish, which indicates that Alex insults women by comparing them to fish. Despite that, Uibo has replaced with a more neutral term (since in the glossary, it is rendered as “naine” and the word *vobla* might only have negative connotations for people who are familiar that it is a

certain fish), a vulgarity originating from Cockney rhyming slang, namely, because *sharp*, is short for *sharp and blunt* meaning “cunt” in the late 19th – 20th-century rhyming slang (Partridge 1937: 751). Thus, although the word *vobla* might bear the negative connotation that women are compared to fish, Uiibo’s choice to translate it as such and as “naine” in the glossary indicates that he has used the substitution translation technique because the vulgar expression *sharp*, which is a part of the rhyming slang marking an explicitly derogatory term *cunt*, or a similar expression to it is not used in the Estonian version. This translation technique, again, makes one of Alex’s commonly exploited addresses for women sound milder as, to begin with, women are not referred to by a vulgarity in the Estonian version and, furthermore, it may go unnoticed altogether that the word *vobla* is an insult because the meaning in the Estonian glossary is “naine” and no reference to a fish is made.

Finally, Alex calls the teen girls younger than him that he later rapes *sophistoes*, or *elueided* in Estonian, in the following sentence: “Then they viddied (“saw”) themselves as real **sophistoes**, which was like pathetic, and started talking in big-lady golosses (“voices”) about the Ritz and the Bristol /.../” (Burgess 2019: 49) In Glossary 4 (2020: 10) *sophisto* is “sophisticated person” and, in Glossary 2, “sophisticated people”, due to which, it could be assumed that it is a slang term, that is, in some ways, invented by clipping. Uiibo’s (1962/2021: 51) version is the following: “Nad vaatasid teineteist nagu tõelised **elueided**, mis nägi kuidagi hale välja, ja kukkusid suurilmadaamide koolosega kudrutama Ritzist ja Bristolist /.../” For the word *sophisto* does not seem to be a slang term in English, it is most possible that Burgess coined the term for Nadsat as it is included in Nadsat word lists. The word *sophisticated* in English describes a person who is cultured and experienced but also something that is not honest or straightforward (OED 2024). According to *Sõnaveeb* (2024), *elueit* is a woman who is “a sybarite and a man-eater”. Thus, for in both Estonian and English, the terms suggest that a woman or a person has no morals, it seems that Uiibo has

applied the translation technique insult for insult by managing to include a similar offence in the translation and, consequently, portrayed Alex as the same ruthless rapist as Burgess describes him in the source text.

2.3 Power and Language

In addition to women, Alex degrades authorities, such as police officers, ministers, and his Post-Corrective Adviser, P. R. Deltoid, as well as his friends and male victims (however, he has less vocabulary for them than women). As can be seen in the case of the first group, Alex uses offensive expressions in the Nadsat slang, not regular colloquial English, presumably to emphasise the superiority of his language compared to standard English as well as to rebel against the authorities by demonstrating his greater command of different registers, and, in the case of the second group to belittle them and assert dominance, it is reasonable to divide these groups further, into subcategories “Offensive expressions against power” and “Offensive expressions to assert power”, when analysing the translation of these insults.

2.3.1 Offensive Expressions Against Power

Alex uses an offensive expression in the Estonian translation to refer to his Post-Corrective Adviser, P. R. Deltoid. In the original, he describes his adviser as “a real **gloopy nazz** that one” (Burgess 2019: 41), using the phrase *gloopy nazz*, *gloopy* being Russian for “stupid”, and *nazz* meaning “fool”, according to Glossary 1 and Glossary 2; and “name”, according to Glossary 4 (2020: 14). Since the meanings of *nazz* in the English glossaries do not match, it is difficult to guess the word’s Russian origin. Still, the word from which *nazz* is derived seems to be either *nazad* “backwards”, as Glossary 2 suggests, or *nazvanie* “name, title”, which would fit the variant in Glossary 4. Uibo (1962/2021: 43), however, translates it as “mätas” in the only phrase that the word appears in the book: “tõeliselt **gluupo mätas**”.

It is possible that Uiibo has tried to avoid using the word *stupid* twice. In EESS (1989), the meaning of the word *mätas* is “a fat person”. Since Uiibo has not decided to use a Nadsat word in the Estonian translation, he opts for a more offensive phrase as Alex in the Estonian version, notably not speaking Nadsat, now describes his adviser as not only stupid but also fat, consequently, Uiibo applies the translation technique using a dysphemism.

Alex uses the word *cal* or the adjectival form *cally* to express his dissatisfaction with the police officers: “Where do you want it taken from, you **cally** vonning (“stinking”) animals?” (Burgess 2019: 78), which Uiibo (1962/2021: 79) has rendered into Estonian as “Millest ma pean alustama, **kallikotid** ja vonnielukad?” In Glossary 2, the meaning of *cal* is “crap”, in Glossary 1, it is “feces”, and in both Glossary 3 as well as Glossary 4 (2020: 11), it is “excrement” or “shit”, while in the Estonian Nadsat glossary, the meaning is “roe”. In *Sõnaveeb* (2024) as well as EKSS (2009), the term *roe* is marked as obsolete or rare and Uiibo’s choice to keep the Nadsat word in the text, once again, mitigates the direct exposure to the insult. Since Uiibo has chosen the obsolete and rare word *roe* as opposed to its more common synonym *sitt* or *sitane*, and in the English Nadsat glossaries, the more explicitly offensive terms *crap* or *shit* are included among others, it is possible that Uiibo has used a euphemism. By doing so, however, it could be argued that he has made Alex appear somewhat less impolite for the delinquent’s choice of words in the Estonian version seems, as a result, less derogatory.

There is another phrase by which Alex affronts police officers, which is not entirely in Nadsat (though still a slang term in English) but appears together with a Nadsat adjective that is used only once in the whole novel and as a modifier of the non-Nadsat item, thus, it is worth analysing. Moreover, Glossary 4 (2020: 10) considers it a Nadsat phrase. The phrase is *merzky gets*, as in the sentence: “I’m not going to crawl around on my brooko (“belly”) any more, you **merzky gets**” (Burgess 2019: 78) The word *merzky* (“мерзкий”) is derived

from Russian and means “filthy” according to all the English Nadsat glossaries. The meaning of the whole phrase in Glossary 4 (2020: 10) is “filthy bastard”. The OED (2024) confirms that *get* or *git* means “bastard” or “idiot” in colloquial use. The Estonian translation is the following: “Ma ei kavatse enam brjuukol roomata, **merskod litakutsikad**” (Uibo 1962/2021: 79) Uibo has rendered the word *mersko* as “nurjatu” in the glossary. The phrase *nurjatud litakutsikad* (literally: *slut’s puppies*, which is similar to the phrase *son of a bitch*) may appear more offensive since the officers, as well as their mothers, though indirectly, are degraded. Furthermore, in EESS (1989), it can be observed that *lita* carries the meaning of a prostitute, while in the case of the English term *bastard*, it is implied that the child is illegitimate but not necessarily that the mother is a “slut/bitch” or “prostitute”. If it was the case, there could have been a modifier, such as in the phrase *bitch’s bastard*, to specify the word *bastard*. Since no such modifier was used in English, it can be argued that Uibo has used a dysphemism in the translation so that Alex can demonstrate his arrogance towards the police officers in an even more jarring manner.

There is a third expression Alex uses to degrade police officers, which is the phrase *grahzny bratchny*. The meaning of *bratchny* is marked as “bastard” in all the English Nadsat glossaries. To put the word in context, in the source text, it is written as follows “‘All right,’ I said to them, ‘you **grahzny bratchnies** as you are, you vonny sods. /.../’” (Burgess 2019: 77–78). The Estonian translation is “‘Hea küll,’ ütlesin ma neile, ‘te **grjaasnod bratšnood**, nagu te olete, te vonnist haisvad pedrod. /.../’” (Uibo 1962/2021: 79) The word is also translated by Uibo as “värdjas”, meaning “bastard”, in the Estonian Nadsat glossary. It can be claimed that Uibo has first borrowed the offensive Nadsat word, although modified it to fit the Estonian pronunciation and morphology, and then translated it with a word that has the same denotational meaning since the meaning of the word in the English Nadsat dictionaries overlaps with the translated counterpart in the Estonian glossary and has neither

been substituted by another word that is not offensive, nor made euphemistic, thus the translation technique can be claimed to be insult for insult.

The protagonist uses the name of God to insult the authorities and occasionally his friends. While the term appears in the neutral sense in the novel as well, it becomes a swear word in Alex's vocabulary to express his distaste towards the police officers and his dissatisfaction with his friends when they betray him. The word *Bog* (Russian "Бог") is "God" according to all the English Nadsat glossaries, and Burgess also emphasises that in the text multiple times by using it in the phrase *Bog or God* ("Bosse ehk Jumal" in Uibo's translation (e.g., Uibo 1962/2021: 10)). He includes the expletive in four different phrases, "**Bog** bust and bleed you", "**Bog** murder you", "**Bog** butcher you", and "**Bog** blast you to hell" (Burgess 2019: 71–72), the Estonian equivalents being "[E]t **Bosse** teid tükkideks rebiks ja veristaks", "Et **Bosse** teid maha notiks", "[Et] **Bosse** teil naha maha nüliks", and "Et **Bosse** sind põrgusse tassiks" (Uibo 1962/2021: 73–74). Since Burgess clarifies in the text that *Bog* means God, and in the glossaries in both languages, it is translated as such as well, it is evident that Uibo has applied the technique insult for insult in this case for he uses the same Nadsat term consistently in each example, the term is translated consistently as "God" in the English Nadsat glossaries, and it also appears in the Estonian one. By using the name of God as a profanity in both the source and, due to Uibo's choice to use the translation technique insult for insult, the target text, Alex appears equally rude in each.

There is one more term that Alex uses first to offend the authorities and sometimes also to assert power over those he considers weaker than him, including his parents. That word is *yarbles*, and its variants *yarblockos* and *sharries*. Uibo has translated all these variants as "bulloksid" in the text and "munandid" in the glossary. The examples in the context are the following:

'**Yarbles**,' I said, like snarling like a doggie. 'Bolshy great **yarblockos** to thee and thine.' (Burgess 2019: 197) – '**Bulloksid**,' vastasin ma urinal nagu koer. 'Suured bolšoid **bulloksid** teile kõigile.' (Uibo 1962/2021: 195)

And my mum kept on going boohoo and looking ugly as kiss-my-**sharries** (Burgess 2019: 193). – Ja ema lasi muudkui buuhuuuul tulla, ta nägi nii kole välja nagu lakkuge-mu-**bullokseid** (Uibo 1962/2021: 191).

In the first case, Alex addresses the Interior Minister, who has come to visit him in the hospital after Alex's suicide attempt, and in the second, Alex describes his mother, who has also come to see him at the hospital but who Alex is displeased with because he feels betrayed by her for having rented out Alex's room while he was in prison and treating the tenant like a new and better son. What makes the translation of the word as solely "bulloksid" confusing, is the fact that the English Nadsat glossaries differentiate between *yarbles/yarblocos* and *sharries*. Namely, Glossary 1 claims that *sharries* are "buttocks" and *yarbles* are "testicles". The same claim is made in Glossary 2. Glossary 4 (2020: 11) agrees with the definition of *sharries* and adds the meaning "bollocks" to "testicles". However, *Sõnaveeb* (2024) confirms that the Russian word *шары* ("shary", which *sharries* seems to be derived from), when used as a slang word, means "testicles", thus, Uibo's translation seems more accurate. Still, he has opted for the English slang term *bulloksid* ("bollocks") in the text, which indicates he has applied a substitution technique. However, he has not substituted the word with a non-offensive term, thus it cannot be concluded that he has used the substitution technique Brownlie (2007) has suggested, for in the case of this technique, an offensive term is replaced with a term that is neutral. What is more, as Uibo uses the word *munandid* in the glossary, it indicates that he has, to a degree, also used the technique insult for insult as the English vulgarity is rendered into Estonian literally. Consequently, it seems that Uibo has first substituted the Nadsat derogatory term of the source text with an English derogatory term in the target text and then applied the technique insult for insult since the meanings, at least the meaning of *yarbles/yarblockos*, in the English Nadsat dictionaries overlap with *munandid* in the Estonian Nadsat glossary.

2.3.2 Offensive Expressions to Assert Power

Alex often humiliates his friend Dim, especially his mental abilities as well as his attempts to act as an equal to Alex in the friend group. Burgess (2019: 12) has wittily made Alex use Dim's name as an insult: "You could viddy ("see") that poor old **Dim the dim** didn't quite pony ("understand") all that, but he said nothing for fear of being called gloopy ("stupid") and a domeless wonderboy." Uibo (1962/2021: 16) has rendered it as: "Võis selgelt tšekata, et vaene vana **Dim dum dum** ei poonjanud maad ega mütsi, aga ta ei lausunud slovotki, kartes, et teda peetakse gluupoks ja peast pool kuueks." Though the word *dim*, meaning "not very clever", is used in informal English, that is, it is not strictly a Nadsat word in the source text, in the Estonian translation, the phrase *dum dum* is included in the Nadsat glossary, thus this thesis considers it a Nadsat item. In the glossary, it is stated that *dum dum* stands for "loll" (= "stupid"), which ascertains that Uibo has applied the technique insult for insult as the terms in both languages indicate that Dim is not the sharpest tool in the shed.

Alex also makes a more explicit reference to Dim being stupid by declaring: "For being a bastard with no manners and not the **dook** of an idea how to comport yourself publicwise, O my brother." (Burgess 2019: 32) or in Estonian: "See on selle eest, oo mu vend, et sa oled vördjas, kellel puuduvad kombes ja kes ei jaga mitte **kottigi** sellest, kuidas avalikus kohas käituda" (Uibo 1962/2021: 35). The word *dook*, which seems to be derived from Russian *дых*, means "spirit" (as in "the person's sense of something", "aimdus" in Estonian). In Glossary 1 as well as Glossary 2, *dook* is rendered as "trace" or "ghost", Glossary 2 claiming that the literal meaning in Russian is "spirit". The Estonian version, which denotes that Dim is in the dark or does not understand anything has a similar meaning, therefore, it could be argued that Uibo's translation technique in this case, is applying insult for insult.

However, a line is not drawn by only using Dim's name and referring to mental abilities to affront him, which means Alex also degrades, for example, his friend's appearance by applying expressions, such as *hound-and-horny* and *shoot*. The delinquent describes Dim's clothing as follows: “/.../ Dim had a very **hound-and-horny** one of a clown's litso (face, that is), /.../” (Burgess 2019: 4) and his behaviour as “The four of us then went roaring in, old Dim playing the **shoot** as usual with his jumping up and down /.../” (Burgess 2019: 24) Uibo's (1962/2021: 27–28) Estonian translation is: “Dimil [oli] ilgelt **matslik** klouni mord (see tähendab nägu), /.../” (Uibo 1962/2021: 8) and “Tormasime neljakesi möirates sisse, vana Dim mängis nagu ikka **klouni**, hüpates üles-alla /.../” In Glossary 3, it is assumed that the term *hound-and-horny* is rhyming slang for *corny*, which is also pointed out in Glossary 2. According to the OED (2024), *corny* is something “unsophisticated”, and in Estonian, the word *matslik* carries the same meaning, thus it could be maintained that Uibo has used the technique insult for insult in this case. The word *shoot*, however, comes from Russian again (literal meaning: “clown”). In Glossary 1, as well as in Glossary 2, the translation is “fool”. As *playing a clown* (“mängima klouni”) and *playing a fool* indicate the same insult that a person is acting in a stupid manner, Uibo has again used the technique insult for insult.

In addition to friends, Alex disparages and manipulates his victims to control them and get what he wants. For instance, Alex's gang calls their beating victim, an elderly teacher, *skitebird*, which seems to have been coined for Nadsat by Burgess, by declaring: “you're nothing but a filthy-minded old **skitebird**.” (Burgess 2019: 8) The Estonian translation is: “sa pole ju muud kui ainult üks kiimaline **pihkutaguja**.” (Uibo 1962/2021: 12) In Glossary 4 (2020: 10), it is maintained that *skitebird* is “some sort of offensive term” and, in Glossary 2, it is suggested that it means “shithead” as it is supposedly a dialectal word for seagulls “known for their loose bowels”. Since according to the OED (2024), *skite*

as a verb originates from Scottish and means “to void excrement”, it could be true. In English, *shithead* denotes a stupid or despicable person. The compound *pihikutaguja* in Estonian indicates a man who masturbates. Though the meanings of these words differ, it seems more reasonable that Uibo has used the insult for insult technique instead of applying a dysphemism owing to the vagueness of the meaning of the word *skitebird* in the English Nadsat glossaries.

Additionally, a drunkard falls victim to Alex’s bitterness. In the source text, Burgess (2019: 17) has written, “/.../ it used to interest me sometimes to slooshy (“listen to”) what some of these **starry decreps** had to say about life and the world.” and Uibo (1962/2021: 20) has translated it as “/.../ mõnikord pakkus mulle huvi slõõšata, mida neil **staradel jobudel** on elu ja maailma kohta ütelda.” The expression (*starry*) *decrep* does not appear in Glossary 1 nor is it included in the Estonian Nadsat glossary since Uibo has used an Estonian word in the text. However, it is included in Glossary 3 as well as Glossary 4 (2020: 10). Since *decrep* does not appear to be a word in English, including colloquial English, it could be considered a Nadsat word, which seems to have been formed by clipping from the word *decrepit*. Glossary 4 (*ibid.*) also claims that *decrep* means “decrepit person”, whose definition in the OED (2024) is a person who is “old and feeble”. Though perhaps not offensive in essence, the word has a negative connotation that being old goes hand in hand with being weak. What is more, Alex uses it to describe an older man he considers weaker than him. Uibo, however, has translated the word so that it acts even more offensive since the “starry” or old “decrep” also acquires the quality of being stupid, which is suggested by the Estonian word *jobu* that is used to refer to a foolish person. Therefore, the translation technique Uibo has applied is the use of a dysphemism because by choosing the term *jobu* instead of a milder term, such as *väetike*, which would carry the meaning of a weak person,

he has provided the Nadsat word with an additional negative connotation, being stupid, in the translation to make the old man even more worthless compared to Alex.

2.4 Findings and Discussion

The analysis identified and categorised 17 different offensive Nadsat words and phrases, in whose case Udo Uiho, the Estonian translator of Anthony Burgess' dystopian novel *A Clockwork Orange*, has applied four distinctive translation techniques that Brownlie (2007) has found to be used for the translation of offensive language. While the techniques Brownlie (*ibid.*) has suggested are *omission*, *addition*, *substitution*, *toning down*, *literal translation*, and *keeping a word from the source text in the source language*, only some of these techniques were applied by Uiho. Since the Estonian translator did not only use the techniques that help avoid offensive language, which is the case with Brownlie's (*ibid.*) suggested techniques, a concept, the use of *dysphemisms*, by Burrige and Allan (1991) was included to describe and analyse a technique that amplifies the offensive items. As the notion of *dysphemism* was used, Brownlie's (2007) term *toning down* was replaced with *euphemism*, as both terms denote the same technique, so that it would be clearer that it is the opposite technique of *using a dysphemism*. Moreover, Brownlie's (*ibid.*) concepts of *literal translation* and *keeping a word from the source text in the source language* were slightly modified for the purposes of the thesis, as it deals with artificial slang, thus, a single notion of *insult for insult* was coined to, in a way, cover both techniques, based on Davoodi's (2009: para. 8–12) term *taboo for taboo*, which includes keeping the offensive term as offensive in the target text.

The protagonist Alex's language use was categorised into two wider classes, based on other characters towards whom the delinquent addresses the insults: "Offensive misogynistic language" and "Language and power", which was further divided into

“Offensive expressions against power” and “Offensive expressions to assert power”. In the case of the first category, “Offensive misogynistic language”, five offensive Nadsat expressions, (*starry*) *ptitsa*, (*filthy old*) *soomka*, (*old*) *baboochka*, *sharp*, and *sophisto*, were observed, and in the case of the latter categories, six offensive expressions, 1) (*gloopy*) *nazz*, *cally*, *merzky get*, (*grahzny*) *bratchny*, *Bog*, *yarbles/yarblockos/sharries* and 2) *Dim (the dim)*, *dook (of an idea)*, *hound-and-horny*, *shoot*, (*filthy-minded old*) *skitebird*, (*starry*) *decrep*, were analysed in each.

Concerning “Offensive misogynistic language”, it appears Uibo has used the translation technique of *applying a euphemism* twice, for the phrases *starry ptitsa* and *filthy old soomka*, and the other techniques of *applying a dysphemism*, *substitution*, and *insult for insult* once, to, respectively, render the expressions *old baboochka*, *sharps*, and *sophistoes*. In contrast, in the case of the category “Offensive expressions against power”, it can be seen that the Estonian translator has only once applied a euphemism (for the word *cally*) while preferring the techniques *applying a dysphemism* and *insult for insult*, using each twice, respectively, in the case of *gloopy nazz* and *merzky gets* and *grahzny bratchny* and *Bog*. In addition, there was also one miscellaneous technique regarding the words *yarbles/yarblockos/sharries*, which included the combination of a kind of *substitution* and translating *insult for insult*. Regarding the class “Offensive expressions to assert power”, Uibo has mostly opted for the technique *insult for insult* (for *Dim the dim*, *dook (of an idea)*, *hound-and-horny*, *shoot*, *filthy-minded old skitebird*) while also applying a dysphemism once in the case of the phrase *starry decrep*. Accordingly, a slight tendency towards using the techniques, *applying a euphemism* and *substitution*, that mitigate the insult can be observed in the case of “Offensive misogynistic language” whilst the techniques that preserve a direct affront or amplify a more neutral term, that is, *applying a dysphemism* and *insult for insult*, seem to be predominant in the categories “Offensive expressions against

power” and “Offensive expressions to assert power”. From the techniques that Brownlie (2007) has identified, this thesis found that the Estonian translator did not use *omission* and *addition* in the translation of *A Clockwork Orange* and its Nadsat slang.

The abovementioned findings suggest that Uibo has, in the translation, managed to portray Alex as rude a character as Burgess depicts him in the original, especially when considering the offensive language Alex uses against power and to assert power, for the translation technique the Estonian translator appears to have preferred the most is *insult for insult*, which is used to render eight different offensive Nadsat phrases. The findings, therefore, contradict some of the previous studies that discuss the mitigating effects of Nadsat in the translation yet do not consider the impact of the glossary. Moreover, it could be claimed that Uibo even makes Alex slightly more impolite in the Estonian translation as the next technique he seems to have used the most is *applying a dysphemism* for four offensive Nadsat terms. Thus, only the offensive factor of four Nadsat words has been mitigated by using either the technique of *applying a euphemism* or *substitution* in contrast to the four terms, whose insulting meaning is amplified and eight terms, whose meaning is as offensive as the original. Still, regarding the two larger categories, it appears that while the Estonian translator has translated most of the insults as insults in the case of the category “Power and language”, he has applied techniques that mitigate the direct affront for rendering the disparaging phrases Alex uses for women, thus creating the Alex for the Estonian readers that has slightly more respect towards women than his other victims and enemies.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to analyse the translation of Anthony Burgess' dystopian novel *A Clockwork Orange* into Estonian by Udo Uibo with a specific focus on the protagonist Alex and his use of offensive language. The first part of the thesis defined Nadsat, presented the reasons the author has made Alex use Nadsat, and discussed previous research on the topic of translating offensive language in general as well as in the novel. In the second part, the examples of Alex's use of offensive language were identified and categorised based on the content of the novel. The English and Estonian texts, as well as Nadsat glossaries, were compared to ascertain the translation techniques the Estonian translator has applied and discover what implications Uibo's choices might have on the portrayal of Alex in the Estonian version.

The analysis showed that the Estonian translator mostly applied techniques, such as using a dysphemism and translating insult for insult, that did not conceal Alex's offensive language use, which was unexpected and contradicts some of the previous studies about Nadsat having mitigating effects in translations. This was especially the case with the insults Alex directs at authorities, his friends, and male victims, that is, the people that were grouped under the category "Power and language" and its subcategories "Offensive expressions against power" and "Offensive expressions to assert power". The presence of the glossary is also significant for it contributes to the recognition of the seemingly inoffensive words in the text. Thus, it appears that, concerning these categories, Uibo's translation techniques might help to portray Alex as rude a character as he is depicted in Burgess' original work. Nevertheless, it was discovered that in the case of disparaging phrases Alex uses for women, Uibo has opted for the techniques *applying a euphemism* and *substitution* when rendering some expressions, which may indicate that he has made Alex slightly less rude towards women in the Estonian version.

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RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL
ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

Birgit Ületoa

Translation of Offensive Language in Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange* / Solvava keelekasutuse tõlkimine Anthony Burgessi „Kellavärgiga apelsinis“

Bakalaureusetöö

2024

Lehekülgede arv: 42

Annotatsioon:

Bakalaureusetöö eesmärk on analüüsida solvava keelekasutuse tõlkimist Anthony Burgessi düstoopilises romaanis „Kellavärgiga apelsin“ (*A Clockwork Orange*), täpsemalt, kuidas ning mis tehnikaid kasutades, Udo Uibo, kes on teose eesti keelde tõlkinud, annab edasi solvavaid väljendeid. Lisaks uuritakse, mismoodi võivad Uibo tõlketehnikad mõjutada peategelase Alexi kujutamist eestikeelses versioonis.

Töö koosneb kahest osast, millest esimeses antakse ülevaade väljamõeldud slängist nadsatist ja põhjustest, miks romaani autor on Alexi sellist keelt kõnelema pannud. Arutletakse ka solvava keele tõlkimiseks kasutatavate üldiste tõlketehnikate üle ning tutvustatakse eelnevaid uurimistöid nadsati tõlkimise kohta. Teises osas analüüsitakse, mis tõlketehnikaid Uibo on kasutanud, võrreldes eesti- ja ingliskeelset teksti ning nadsati sõnastikke. Peale selle püütakse teises osas välja selgitada, milline mõju võib olla Uibo rakendatud tõlketehnikatel Alexi kujutamisele eestikeelses tõlkes.

Analüüsi tulemusena leiti, et erinevalt varasematest uurimustest, millest mõned on leidnud, et nadsat oma eripärasuse tõttu pehmenab teose vägivaldset ja solvavat sisu, on Uibo Alexit tõlkes siiski ebaviisakana kujutanud, sest tõlkija kasutab tehnikaid, mille kaudu solvang jääb solvanguks või kellegi halvustamisest saab düsfemismi kasutamise kaudu veelgi rängem solvang. Siinkohal mängib rolli ka eestikeelsele tõlkele lisatud nadsati sõnastik, mis panustab sellesse, et esmapilgul ehk neutraalsena näivate nadsati sõnade tähendus, mis kontekstist välja ei pruugi tulla, saab selgeks. Tehti kindlaks, et solvavaid väljendeid, mida Alex kasutab võimude, oma sõprade ning meesohvrite poole pöördumiseks, ei olnud tõlkija pehmenanud samas selgus, et veidi leebemalt on ta tõlkinud naiste kohta käivaid ebaviisakaid väljendeid, kasutades eufemismi või asendamist.

Märksõnad: Tõlkimine, tõlkeanalüüs, düstopia, Anthony Burgess, solvav keelekasutus

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