AUI, secţiunea III e, Lingvistică, tomul LV, 2009

Translating Wellerisms in the Romanian Versions of Charles Dickens' *The Pickwick Papers*

by
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Il suffit parfois de faire un sondage pour souligner les mérites et surtout les défauts d'une traduction. Nous avons essayé d'en faire, se référant aux versions Roumaines du roman de Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers*, faites par Ion Pas, en nous basant seulement sur la traduction des *wellerisms* – formules proverbiales (*Dutch proverbs*) générateurs de comique, qui sont utilisées dans tout le monde, mais qui sont devenues fameuses grâce au personnage de Dickens, Sam Weller, qui les emploie fréquemment.

0. Hegel used to say about Aristotle that he was a man able to see the whole universe in a shell, that is by looking at a shell, he saw all the universals. Eugeniu Coşeriu adapted this idea to linguistics, stating that "You can also see the whole man in a phoneme. You can study a single linguistic fact and see in this very fact the whole language, and in language you will see the whole man and all his creative possibilities." (Coşeriu 2004: 50 – our translation).

Next, we aim to particularize Coşeriu's reflections mentioned above with reference to the Romanian translations of Charles Dickens' *The Pickwick Papers*. Thus, we think that by looking only at the way the wellerisms from the respective novel were rendered into Romanian is enough to characterize the versions in question. In other words, this survey (similar to a poll) allows us to observe both the strengths and the weaknesses of such versions.

1. In general, speaking correctly or adequately, applying the rules of language is not impressive, this thing is never "awarded" (see Coşeriu 1994: 169, but also Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, VIII, 3, 1). Correctness is "0", since it is something normal. However, the mistakes are immediately noticed and the other speakers usually react with retorts such as: *You should not speak to a woman like that!*, or *People do not talk like that in the Parliament / Academy!*, or *You are talking nonsense!*, etc. Or at least they can think in these terms in such situations.

So is the case of translations. Mistakes, inadequacies, imperfections – that is what draws our attention. This is the reason why we will point them out in what follows. At the same time, given the restricted space, we will make observations

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concerning the rendition of wellerisms into Romanian, referring mainly to the lexical and phraseological equivalence (and only in the case of some examples)[1].

2. First of all, we should explain what a *wellerism* is. According to G.L. Permyakov, they are "elementary scenes comprising a remark and response" (1979: 149). More often than not, a proverbial saying can become a wellerism by adding some words "capable of serving as a remark" (*ibid.*): *Everyone to his taste → "Everyone to his taste", said the old woman as she kissed the cow.* The procedure is also applicable to famous phrases: *"To err is human", said the housewife and shook pepper in the coffee*; *"All's well that ends well", said the peacock when he looked at his tail.* (cf. Avădanei 2000: 44).

Eugeniu Coşeriu included the wellerisms within the *repeated discourse*[2], considering that they should be studied more than they really are (Coşeriu 2000: 261), and rather by the text linguistics than by paremiology. Introduced by phrases such as: it. *come diceva quello che, come disse colui che*, sp. *como decía (dijo) aquel que*, etc., the wellerisms "pretend to refer to somebody's verbal reaction in a certain situation (although they frequently point to imaginary reactions and situations, such as: «*Non è una cosa piacevole*», *come diceva quello che si faceva schiacciare le noci in testa* – '«*Nu este plăcut*», *cum spunea cineva cuiva spărgîndu-i nucile de cap*')." (*ibid.*).

The term *wellerism*, given to these forms (also known as *apologetic* or *Dutch proverbs*) comes from the name of the character Sam Weller[3] from Dickens' novel *The Pickwick Papers*, who used them quite frequently. This novel and the above mentioned character ensured celebrity to this form of repeated

[1] Interesting observations can also be made with reference to the phonetic level (the spelling, the phonetic symbolism, the play upon words based on sonority, etc.), the grammatical level (morphological and syntactic), topic etc. I [Silvia Munteanu] have dealt with all these aspects by looking at the Romanian versions of the whole inventory of wellerisms (almost 50) from Charles Dickens' novel in my master dissertation, defended in 2009 at the University "Dunărea de Jos", Galaţi.

[2] The *repeated discourse* – opposed to the *free technique of discourse* – is defined by Coşeriu as "everything that is repeated in a more or less identical form in the speech of a community as discourse already made or more or less fixed combination, as fragment, either long or short, of what has already been said" (2000: 258-259).

[3] It is not the only case. There are other terms which come from a proper name + the suffix *–ism*. Take, for example, *malapropism* (< Fr. *mal à propos* 'not to the purpose'), "so called after Mrs. Malaprop, a character in Sheridan's *The Rivals* (1775), who had a habit of using polysyllabic words incorrectly": *I've always been thin. When I was a girl I had infantile paraphernalia.* Another case in point is *spoonerism*, "so called after the Rev. W.A. Spooner (1844-1930), dean and warden of New College, Oxford. It consists of a transposition between the consonant sounds (especially the initial sounds) of two words; a practice to which Spooner was addicted". *The queer old dean* for *the dear old queen* is a famous example attributed to him. (Cuddon 1999: 489, 852). A special form of *wellerism* is *Tom Swifty*, in which an adverb relates both properly and punningly to a sentence of reported speech: "*The doctor had to remove my left ventricle*", *said Tom* ***half-heartedly***. The name comes from Tom Swift, a young scientist hero from Victor Appleton's series of books.

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discourse. As a matter of fact, the typical wellerism (or its variants) dates back to Antiquity and is found in different parts of the world (cf. Ulrich 1997: 160)[4].

3. With reference to the theory of translation or to the translation as science, Coşeriu's distinctions and observations suffice for what we aim to prove here. Thus, even from the beginning, one should assume the fact that the issue of translation is "fundamentally something dealing with the text linguistics" (Coşeriu 2000: 244), since, when translating, we wonder how and what would be said in the same situation in another language or linguistic community – just as competent translators intuitively do (Coseriu 1976: 215-216).

As shown before, Coşeriu was interested in studying wellerisms, too. That is why the Romanian scholar guided Miorita Ulrich's doctoral dissertation, *Die Sprache als Sache: Primärsprache, Metasprache, Übersetzung*. In a chapter of her book (*"Bref", comme disait Pépin – Zur Hierarchie der Übersetzungsnormen am Beispiel der Wellerismen*) she proved that the wellerism in itself is an interesting aspect for the science of translation (see Ulrich 1997: 158-168). Among other things, she drew a comparison between the different translations of Charles Dickens' wellerisms in various languages (German, Italian, Spanish, Romanian and French)[5].

4. Before dealing with the translation of wellerisms, we should make a brief presentation of the Romanian versions of Charles Dickens' novel *The Pickwick Papers*.

All of them are connected with the name of Ion Pas. There are four editions (but actually three versions) – that from 1939, the one from 1954 (in collaboration with Nicolae Popescu), which is republished in 1970, and that of 1961[6]. Ion Pas, pen name for Ion M. Pascu (1895-1974), was a writer, journalist and translator[7].

[4] Cf. Permyakov 1979: 149-152. He even quotes a Kurdish example: "«Hurry up, the herd is going away», said the wolf as they were reading the Gospel to him" (*ibid*.: 205). They are sometimes found in the Romanian folklore, as well: *'De cîte ori un cîine lătra, credeam că-i Sfînţia-ta', cum spunea o femeie care aştepta vizita unei feţe bisericeşti* (Eretescu 2004: 229). It can also be found in Latin: *Sunt munda mundi omnia, / Sus inquit in luta iacens* ('«Everything is clean in the world», says the pig wading in mud') - cf. Munteanu & Munteanu 1996.

[5] At the end of her book there is an annex which contains Dickens' wellerisms followed by their translations into different languages: German, Spanish (two versions), Italian (two versions), Romanian (I. Pas' version from 1961) and French.

[6] There is one more edition from 2005, translated and abridged for children by Dana Bărbulescu. With reference to this version, we should mention the fact that the translator left out all of the almost 50 wellerisms found in the original, which was a great mistake. Since this variant is made for children, she should have adapted at least some wellerisms, for they (as it was noticed by so many researchers) give flavour to Sam Weller's speech and charm to his character.

[7] He is a prolific translator mainly from French, but also from Russian and English. Here are some of his most important translations from English: *The Pickwick Papers* by Charles Dickens, *Vanity Fair* by Thackeray (1941), *The Medallion* by A.K. Green (1943), *Tom Jones* by Henry Fielding (1956) [together with Al. Iacobescu], *The Typhoon* by Joseph Conrad (s.a.), *The Self Murderer* by Rudyard Kipling (s.a.). Although he made many translations of very important writers,

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The evolution of the translations signed by Ion Pas is quite puzzling. The variant from 1939 is signed by Ion Pascu alone. The one from 1954 (republished in 1970) benefits from the help of an Anglicist, Nicolae Popescu. It is odd that in 1961 Ion Pas publishes another variant by himself, which is different than the previous two. And still, the text from 1954 is republished in 1970! Should the translator have become aware of the fact that the version of 1954 is the best?

The first edition is freer from the original, using a much more literary style. Although the later variants should be better (and they usually are), some parts of the translation of 1939 are better. Nevertheless, the author may have used a French translation, since *The Pickwick Papers* is his first translation from English. As we mentioned before, the edition from 1954 (1970) is done together with an Anglicist. In fact, the practice is old. Many books are translated by both a specialist and a writer (see Cervantes' *Don Quixote* translated by I. Frunzetti and Edgar Papu or Tolstoi's *Război şi pace* – by I. Frunzetti and N. Parocescu). The fact that the translator is also a writer can be seen in the way he chooses to embellish stylistically the original text, using over expressive, sometimes redundant words and phrases.

5. Drawing a parallel between the Romanian versions of wellerisms reveals, as we said before (see *supra*, **1.**), a lot of aspects which are worth discussing. However, we will only refer to some of them. Further observations (including those linked to the French, Italian, Spanish, etc. versions of these wellerisms) will be made in a footnote[8].

5.1. With reference to the issue of *adaptation*, the translator has to choose between making an exegetic translation or a literary one. Some things are known only to the English language community, that is why the Romanian translator can make footnotes in such cases to explain who Jack Ketch was („călăul din timpul revoluţiei engleze de la 1688 sub Iacob al II-lea") or what the name Tyburn refers to („pînă în anul 1783 exista în partea de vest a Londrei un loc de osîndă, numit Piaţa Tyburn, pentru execuţii publice"). However, if one is mainly interested in rendering the meaning[9] and not the designation, then he can give up that term, deciding on adaptation[10]. For example, in version [a] the name Tyburn is left out of the translation.

such as Jules Verne, Emile Zola, Knut Hamsum, Anatole France, Lev Tolstoi, Victor Hugo, Charles Dickens, he was mainly interested in journalism. His literary work is not of great value (see *Dicţionarul general al literaturii române*, vol. V [P-R], Editura Univers Enciclopedic, Bucureşti, 2006, p. 95-96).

[8] At the same time, we mention that writing some words in italics, in the Romanian translations, is our choice. Moreover, we left out the parts that were identical in the quoted versions.

[9] Or the *sense*, in Coşeriu's terms, that is the content of a speech act or text/discourse.

[10] For further discussion on adaptation and the metalanguage of translation, with proper examples, see Coseriu 1976: 227-234.

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> ***"No, no; reg'lar rotation, as Jack Ketch said wen he tied the men up."*** (Dickens 1994: 148);
> [a] „Nu! Nu! fiecare la rînd! cum zicea Jack Ketch unor indivizi pe care urma să-i spînzure." (Pas 1939: I, 127);
> [b] „Nu, nu, fiecare la rînd! cum zicea Jack Ketch cînd punea ştreangul de gîtul cuiva." (Pas & Popescu 1954: I, 151 / 1970: I, 139);
> [c] „Nu ţine! Fiecare la rînd! cum zicea Jack Ketch cînd îi punea cuiva ştreangul de gît." (Pas 1961: 146)[11].
> ***"If you walley my precious life, don't upset me, as the gen'lm'n said to the driver when they was a-carryin' him to Tyburn."*** (Dickens 1994: 289);
> [a] „Dacă apreciezi preţioasa mea viaţă, nu mă răsturna, cum spunea gentlemanul acela căruţaşului care îl ducea *la ştreang*." (Pas 1939: I, 260);
> [b] „Dacă preţuieşti scumpa mea viaţă, nu mă da peste cap, cum spunea gentelmanul ăla căruţaşului care-l ducea în Tyburn." (Pas & Popescu 1954: I, 307 / 1970: I, 285);
> [c] „Dacă preţuieşti scumpa mea viaţă, nu mă răsturna, cum spunea gentlemanul[12] ăla căruţaşului care-l ducea la Tyburn." (Pas 1961: I, 300).

Some explanations are sometimes given within the text, not in footnotes. *Heads!* is a short form of *Mind your head!*, used to draw smb's attention. [a] is an odd translation, while the addition *cînd juca rişca* is left out in [b]&[c]. The ambiguity is solved by the original context, the game *Head or tail?* '*cap şi pajură*' = *rişca*.

> **"Heads,** ***as the pieman says."*** (Dickens 1994: 338);
> [a] „*Păzea capul*! cum zicea vînzătorul de plăcinte *cînd juca rişca*." (Pas 1939: I, 304);
> [b]&[c] „*Păzea capul*! cum zicea plăcintarul[13]." (Pas & Popescu 1954: I, 360 / 1970: I, 334 & Pas 1961: I, 353).

What is more, Ion Pas adapted the English term *to confine* in the first version (*confinat*), since the pun or the "simultaneous double designation" (cf. Coseriu 1976: 232) cannot be rendered. He explained the term and the pun in a footnote ["1) a fi în stare de lehuzie şi 2) a fi în închisoare"]. In the other variants, however, he gave up this method.

> ***"I'm a pris'ner, gen'lm'n.*** **Con-fined,** ***as the lady said."*** (Dickens 1994: 676)
> [a] „Iată-mă *confinat*, cum zicea femeiuşca." (Pas 1939: II, 216);

[11] The [a] variant is closer to the original meaning; however, the verbal form of posteriority *urma să-i spînzure* is not such a good choice since there is simultaneity in the original: *said when he tied the men up*. In [b], although the simultaneity is preserved, a verbal phrase is preferred (*a pune ştreangul de gîtul cuiva*), to render the phrasal verb *to tie up*. There are slight changes in the translation of [b] and [c]: the phrase *nu ţine!* is too far from the original.

[12] Ion Pas uses, in all cases, the variant *gentlemanul* in [a]&[c] and *gentelmanul* in [b] for *the gen'lm'n*.

[13] *A pieman* is someone both making and selling pies. The translator may have chosen *plăcintar* [b]&[c] instead of *vînzător de plăcinte* [a] because the warning refers to the process of making pies itself.

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[b]&[c] „Sînt întemniţat, domnilor; *închis*, cum zicea cocoana." (Pas & Popescu 1954: II, 261 / 1970, II, 246 & Pas 1961: II, 250)[14].

5.2. We deal with adaptation again when a character uses a certain dialect or style (Coseriu, *ibid*: 231). The translator has to look for an adequate dialect or style so as to render the same impression that a speaker in a certain language community creates. For example, Sam Weller speaks in the Cockney dialect, thus the translator is somehow forced to find something similar in the Romanian version. We have noticed that the translator opts for a style rather than a dialect, mainly for the colloquial one, although an influence of the Muntenian dialect should be taken into account, since, mainly in the following versions, Sam Weller's Romanian discourse abounds in grammatical disagreement.

Anyone who wants to translate adequately Sam Weller's speech should first notice that, in order to show off, he usually uses neologisms in his speech (although he does not always spell them correctly). This aspect should be reflected in translation, thing that was not consistently done by Ion Pas.

For example, since Sam uses the phrase *polar bear*, it should have been kept as such in his translation, i.e.: *ursul polar*, not *ursul alb*.

"Severe weather, Sam, observed Mr. Pickwick". "Fine time for them as is well wropped up, as the* polar bear *said to himself ven he was practising his skating, replied Mr. Weller." (Dickens 1994: 448);
[a] „- Straşnic anotimp, Sam!". „- Frumos pentru cine e îmbrăcat, domnule, cum zicea *ursul alb* învăţîndu-se să patineze." (Pas 1939: II, 7);
[b] „- Grozavă vreme, Sam.". „- Frumoasă pentru cine e bine înfofolit, cum îşi zicea *ursul alb* cînd învăţa să patineze." (Pas & Popescu 1954: II, 18 / 1970: II, 16);
[c] „~ cum zicea *ursul alb* cînd învăţa să patineze." (Pas 1961: II, 5)[15].

The same should happen in the case of *laudanum*, because there is such a word in Romanian[16]. Ion Pas opted for *băutură cu/de buruiană adormitoare*.

"There's nothin' so refreshin' as sleep, sir, as the servant-girl said afore she drank the egg-cupful o'* laudanum*." (Dickens 1994: 244);
[a] „Nimic nu înviorează mintea ca un somn bun, domnule, cum zice servitoarea înainte de a da peste cap păhăruţul de băutură cu *buruiană adormitoare*." (Pas 1939: I, 217);
[b] „Nimic nu înviorează mai bine decît somnul, dom'le, cum zicea servitoarea înainte de a da pe gît păhăruţul de băutură cu *buruiană adormitoare*." (Pas & Popescu 1954: I, 257 / 1970: I, 238);

[14] [b]&[c] do not render the pun, so the meaning of the wellerism is lost. *Femeiuşca* [a] is a more pejorative term than *cocoana* for *lady*, in [b]&[c].

[15] *Grozavă vreme*, in [b]&[c], is more apropriate for *severe weather* than *straşnic anotimp* [a], since *weather* refers to much more than *season.* [b]&[c], identical, better translate *well wropped up* by *înfofolit*, a more colloquial term than the neutral *îmbrăcat* [a] 'dressed'.

[16] All the other translations from French, German, Spanish, Italian, etc. preserved the term as such (cf. Ulrich 1997: 392).

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[c] „~ păhăruţul de băutură de *buruiană adormitoare*." (Pas 1961: I, 251)[17].

To remonstrate should have been rendered by *a reproşa* or *a imputa* rather than by the colloquial *a se răsti.*

> ***"…come, sir, this is rather too rich, as the young lady said wen she* remonstrated *with the pastry-cook arter he'd sold her a pork-pie as had got nothin' but fat inside."*** (Dickens 1994: 590);
> [a] „Asta-i straşnic! cum *zicea* tînăra lady plăcintarului care îi vînduse o plăcintă numai cu grăsimi înăuntru." (Pas 1939: II, 138);
> [b] „Asta-i culmea ridichilor [18], cum a zis o fată cînd *s-a răstit* la plăcintar după ce el i-a vîndut o plăcintă cu carne de porc care avea numai seu înăuntru." (Pas & Popescu 1954: II, 172 / 1970: II, 162);
> [c] „~ care îi vînduse o plăcintă cu carne de porc numai cu seu înăuntru." (Pas 1961: II, 159).

Also, for *fractious pennywinkle* (the latter[19] was hesitatingly translated by either *melc* or *stridie*) *melc refractar* would have been a better choice as compared to *melc încăpăţînat* or *stridie îndărătnică*.

> ***"…allow me to express a hope as you won't reduce me to ex-tremities; in saying wich, I merely quote wot the nobleman said to the* fractious pennywinkle *ven he wouldn't come out of his shell by means of a pin, and he consequently began to be affeered that he should be obliged to crack him in the parlour door."*** (Dickens 1994: 590-591);
> [a] „Daţi-mi vo[i]e să nădăjduiesc, însă, că n-o să mă obligaţi la măsuri extreme, cum spunea gentlemanul *melcului încăpăţînat* care nu vroia să iasă din găoacea lui, măcar că-l înţepa cu acul şi pe care se temea c-o să fie nevoit să-l strivească în uşă." (Pas 1939: II, 139);
> [b]&[c] „Da' daţi-mi voie să nădăjduiesc că n-o să mă siliţi să iau măsuri istreme, şi cînd spun asta mi-amintesc de un nobel domn care zicea odată unei *stridii îndărătnice* cînd nu vrea să iasă din scoică, măcar că o înţepa cu acul, aşa că el, în consecinţă, se temea c-o să fie nevoit s-o strivească în uşă." (Pas & Popescu 1954: II, 172 / 1970: II, 162 & Pas 1961: II, 159-160)[20].

5.3. Ion Pas is both a writer and a translator, that is why he sometimes exaggerates by using idioms, over expressive words and phrases where there is no

[17] In order to be more expressive, the translator preferred a verbal phrase: *a da peste cap* [a] and *a da pe gît* [b]&[c] to the more neutral verb *to drink*. *A da pe gît* is a better choice, since it implies a smaller quantity, *an egg-cupful*, adequately rendered by *păhăruţ.*

[18] The original *too rich* alludes to the *fats* in the pork-pie, so rendering it in Romanian is quite a challenge. Anyway, the equivalent *asta-i culmea ridichilor*, meaning *asta-i prea de tot* is exaggerate (this idiom does not appear in any Romanian dictionary, it may be a regional idiom, familiar to the translator).

[19] A *pennywinkle* (or perrywinkle) is 'a marine snail'.

[20] The word *istreme* [b]&[c] somehow renders the spelling *ex-tremities* rather than *extreme* [a]. To *express a hope* could have been translated by *să-mi exprim speranţa*, a more neological phrase than the familiar *a nădăjdui.*

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such thing in the original text[21]. For instance, in the following example the Romanian idiom *colac peste pupăză* ('on top of it all'), although it emphasizes the original, was not necessary. And still, in the later versions, Ion Pas' text is over expressive as compared to Dickens'.

> ***"Yes, but that ain't all, said Sam, again directing his master's attention to the coach-door; not content vith writin' up Pickwick, they puts "Moses" afore it, vich I call addin' insult to injury, as the parrot said ven they not only took him from his native land but made him talk the English langwidge arterwards."*** (Dickens 1994: 540);
>
> [a] „…nu s-au mulţumit să scrie Pickwick, au pus şi un Moise înainte, iată ce numesc eu a adăuga ocara la insultă, cum zicea papagalul cînd a fost învăţat să vorbească englezeşte, după ce l-au adus din ţara lui natală." (Pas 1939: II, 93);
>
> [b]&[c] „Adică, vorba aia, după moarte şi ruşine, cum zicea papagalul cînd nu numai că l-au luat din ţara lui de baştină, da' l-a mai şi pus, *colac peste pupăză*, să vorbească pe englezeşte." (Pas & Popescu 1954: II, 118 / 1970, II, p. 110-111 & Pas 1961: II, 105)[22].

Here is another case in point. In the first version, the fragment we are interested in is left out of translation (!). In the second version, the phrase *all in two minutes and a quarter* is rendered word for word and emphasized by *iute şi degrabă*. The latter is also found in the last version, but it precedes the adequate Romanian equivalent *în doi timpi şi trei mişcări*.

> ***„So I take the privilidge of the day, Mary, my dear – as the gen'lm'n in difficulties did ven he valked out of a Sunday to tell you that the first and only time I see you, your likeness was took on my heart in much quicker time and brighter colours than ever a likeness was took by the profeel macheen (wich p'raps you may have heerd on Mary my dear) altho it does finish a portrait and put the frame and glass on complete, with a hook on head to hang it up by, and all* in two minutes and a quarter."** (Dickens 1994: 498);
>
> [a] „Îmi iau curajul [,] dragă Mary [,] de ziua asta să-ţi spui că prima şi întîia oară de cînd te-am văzut potretul [sic!] Dumneatale e tipărit în inima mea în culoare mai viu şi mai repede decît un potret dălălaltu'. " (Pas 1939: II, 54);
>
> [b] „«Îmi iau corajul, dragă Mary, de ziua asta să-ţi spui – cum a zis un domn cînd a ieşit într-o duminică la plimbare – că de prima şi singura oară cînd te-am văzut, potretul [sic!] dumneatale s-a tipărit în inima mea în colori mai viu şi mai

[21] We should mention here the over expressive translation of W. Shakespeare's *Sonnets* that the poet Gheorghe Tomozei made, by introducing metaphors in his translation, although they are not found in the original (see Cr. Munteanu 2006: 454-455).

[22] In [a] *addin' insult to injury* is closely translated: *a adăuga ocară la insultă*. By choosing the term *ocară*, the translator used the term *insultă* in second position, since *ocara* denotes a higher way of "punishment". *Ţara natală* [a] is a better translation for *native land*, as compared to *ţara de baştină* [b]&[c], too expressive. An inadequate inversion in point of topic to the original is made in [a]: *cum zicea papagalul cînd a fost învăţat să vorbească englezeşte, după ce l-au adus din ţara lui natală.*

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repede decît un potret[23] făcut cu maşina de profir (de care pesemne că ai auzit [,] Mary dragă), aşa că potretul e gata cu ramă şi geam şi c-un clenci la capăt ca să-l atîrni *iute şi degrabă în două minute ş-un sfert*»." (Pas & Popescu 1954: II, 71 / 1970, II, 67-68);

[c] „«~ mai repede decît un potret făcut cu maşina de profir (de care pesemne ai auzit, Mary dragă), aşa că potretul e gata cu ramă şi geam şi cu un clenci la capăt, ca să-l atîrni *iute şi degrabă în doi timpi şi trei mişcări*.»" (Pas 1961: II, p. 60).

The same thing can be seen in another wellerism, where Ion Pas, in later versions, gave up the phrase *a se uita cruciş* (more adequate for the English *squintin'*) for a more expressive phrase, *a se uita c-un ochi la slănină şi* [*cu*] *altul la făină* ('to look nine ways').

***"There, now we look compact and comfortable, as the father said ven he cut his little boy's head off to cure him o'* squintin'."** (Dickens 1994: 425);

[a] „Acum avem aerul compact şi simpatic, cum zicea părintele tăind capul ţîncului său ca acesta *să nu se mai uite cruciş*." (Pas 1939: I, 387);

[b] „Aşa! Acum mai zic şi eu: halal! cum zice părintele cînd taie capul ţîncului ca să-l vindece *să se mai uite c-un ochi la slănină şi altul la făină*." (Pas & Popescu 1954: I, 453 / 1970: I, 423);

[c] „~ cum zice tatăl ~." (Pas 1961: I, 447-448)[24].

5.4. The last version is not always the closest to the original or the best one. For instance, in the following example, we notice that Ion Pas uses the verb *a înăbuşi* in the first two versions for the original *to smother*, while in the last one he prefers the verb *a gîtui*, which is far from the original text.

"Business first, pleasure arterwards, as King Richard the Third said wen he stabbed the t'other king in the Tower afore he* smothered *the babbies." (Dickens 1994: 378);

[a] „Afacerile mai întîi, plăcerile pe urmă, cum zicea regele Richard cînd înjunghia pe celalt în turn, înainte de-a *înnăbuşi* [sic!] pe ţînci." (Pas 1939: I, 343);

[b] „Afacerile mai întîi, plăcerile pe urmă, cum zicea Regele Richard al treilea cînd îl înjunghia în turn pe regele ălălalt, înainte să-i *înnăbuşe* [sic!] ţîncii." (Pas & Popescu 1954: I, 403 / 1970: I, 374);

[c] „~ cum zicea Regele Richard al III-lea ~ să-i *gîtuiască* ţîncii." (Pas 1961: I, 396)[25].

To fall on means '1) to attack fiercely or unexpectedly, 2) seize enthusiastically', so [a] *începeţi* is better than *înfulecarea* [b]&[c].

[23] In order to render the non-literary speech of the main character, the translator uses *corajul* [b]&[c] for the noun *privilidge*, and *potret* and *colori*, although the last two are correctly spelt in the original.

[24] Ion Pas has the tendency to add redundant words and phrases: *Acum mai zic şi eu: halal!*, in [b]&[c].

[25] *King Richard the Third* is rendered by *regele Richard* [a], *Regele Richard al treilea* [b] and *Regele Richard al III-lea* [c].

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> ***"Now, gen'lm'n,* "fall on", *as the English said to the French when they fixed bagginets."*** (Dickens 1994: 290);
> [a] „Şi acum, gentlemeni, *începeţi*, cum ziseră Englezii Franţujilor punîndu-şi baionetele." (Pas 1939: I, 261);
> [b] „Şi acum, domnilor, *înfulecarea*! cum zicea englezii franţujilor cînd îşi punea la puşcă baionetele." (Pas & Popescu 1954: I, 308 / 1970: I, 286);
> [c] „~ cînd îşi punea baionetele la armă." (Pas 1961: I, 301)[26].

5.5. We would like to end the series of examples by mentioning a few mistakes in translation (most of them are found in the first version) which may have come out, this time, of either lack of attention or of the fact that, at first, Ion Pas used a foreign edition (probably French) and not the English original.

For instance, in [a]&[b], although slightly changed, the phrase *he wos took with fits* is correctly translated by *l-a cuprins / l-a apucat un atac / atacul*, while in [c], probably because of a reading mistake, *fits* was interpreted as *fists*, so it came out as *tînărul gentleman (cînd) a fost luat la pumni.*

> ***"…nothin' less than a nat'ral conwulsion, as the young gen'lm'n observed ven he wos took with* fits."** (Dickens 1994: 564);
> [a] „Nici mai mult, nici mai puţin decît un cutremur de pămînt, cum a constatat tînărul gentleman cînd l-a cuprins un *atac*." (Pas 1939: II, 115);
> [b] „Nici mai mult, nici mai puţin decît vreo convulsie a naturii, cum a constatat tînărul gentelman cînd l-a apucat *atacul*." (Pas & Popescu 1954: II, 145 / 1970, II, 135);
> [c] „~ tînărul gentleman cînd a fost luat la *pumni*." (Pas 1961: II, 131-132)[27].

A mistake in translation can be found in [a]: *o sută cincizeci de bice* vs. *trei sute cincizeci de bice* [b]&[c] < *three hundred and fifty lashes*. The translator may have thought 150 lashes was more than enough!

> ***"Oh, quite enough to get, sir, as the soldier said ven they ordered him* three hundred and fifty lashes, *replied Sam."*** (Dickens 1994: 530);
> [a] „A, da [cîştig] deajuns, domnule, cum zicea soldatul cînd a fost condamnat la *o sută cincizeci de bice*." (Pas 1939: II, 83);
> [b] „A, da, capăt destul, dom'le, cum zicea soldatul cînd s-a poruncit să i se dea *trei sute cinzeci de bice*." (Pas & Popescu 1954: II, 107 / 1970: II, 100);
> [c] „A, da, mi-e de ajuns, dom'le ~" (Pas 1961, II, 94).

The noun *housebreaker* was wrongly translated in [a] by *fochistul* as compared to the term *spărgător* in [b]&[c]. The verbal phrase *to put somebody on fire* is figuratively used, meaning 'to annoy somebody, to cause personal inconvenience to somebody'. So the choice of *fochist* and *a pune pe grătar* is a mistake in translation.

[26] In order to be more explicit, the translator added to the phrase *a pune baionetele* [a] ~ *la puşcă* ~ [b] and inverted the form in [c]: *a pune baionetele la armă.*

[27] For *nat'ral conwulsion*, the translator prefers a word for word translation in [b]&[c], *o convulsie a naturii*, while in [a] he tries to be more explicit *cutremur de pămînt. Nothin' less* is more expressively translated in Romanian by *nici mai mult, nici mai puţin.*

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> ***"Wery sorry to 'casion any personal inconwenience, ma'am, as the* housebreaker *said to the old lady* when he put her on the fire..."** (Dickens 1994: 399);
> [a] „Îmi pare foarte rău că vă deranjez, doamnă, cum zicea *fochistul* bătrînei doamne punînd-o pe grătar." (Pas 1939: I, 363);
> [b] „~ – cum zicea bătrînei cocoane *spărgătorul*, băgînd-o în boli de spaimă." (Pas & Popescu 1954: I, 426 / 1970: I, 397);
> [c] „~ – cum îi zicea *un spărgător* unei cucoane bătrîne, pe care o băgase în boli, de spaimă." (Pas 1961: I, 420)[28].

6. We are convinced that our observations, based only on the translation of wellerisms, are confirmed for the versions made by Ion Pas as a whole, although an integral contrastive analysis would prove further aspects, be they good or bad[29]. At all events, we noticed that the least close to the original (even if not always) is Ion Pas' first version. However, our observations only referred to some fragments connected to the dialogued level of the novel, more expressive by definition. At the same time, the way the narrative level, that is the narrator's discourse, is reflected in the Romanian versions would be interesting to consider. With Dickens, this is much more sober, giving the impression of solemnity – a true "aristocratic" language (containing, for example, many elevated terms and neologisms from the learned Latin, old Greek or French)[30].

We think it proper to conclude by referring to Coşeriu's ideas, according to whom an ideal translation, one that is unique and universally valid, is a *contradictio in adiectio*. Just as in the case of speech, we can only consider certain norms, which are differentiated and motivated by purpose. That is why "the best translation" of a certain text does not simply exist. There can be only the best translation of a certain text for certain receivers, certain aims and in a certain historical situation (Coseriu 1976: 239).

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[28] The noun phrase *the old lady* was translated by [a] *bătrîna doamnă* and [b]&[c] *cucoană,* which has a depreciating meaning as compared to *doamnă.* A better equivalent for *a băga în boli de spaimă* is *a pune pe jar pe cineva*, a verbal phrase which is linked to the idea of fire from the original.

[29] We should take into account the fact that the so-called "law of compensation" is applied to translations, too (Ralph Waldo Emerson [1803-1882] explains compensation in clear terms: "For everything you have missed, you have gained something else; and for everything you gain, you lose something else.").

[30] See Tohăneanu 1969: 130, for the distinction between the narrative and dialogued level.

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