

PHILOLOGICAL SCIENCES

THE INTRICACIES OF SPEECH ACT TRANSLATION (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO “END-LESS NIGHT” BY AGATHA CHRISTIE)

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Abstract

The study is grounded in an interdisciplinary nature, when the cultural and psychological nuances of speech acts are revealed by examining the bridging links between pragmatics, translation, and communication. It explores how translation can effectively preserve speech tone, emotions, and cultural nuances while ensuring the faithful conveyance of the author's intended meaning and communicative completeness with a particular focus on Agatha Christie's *Endless Night*. Drawing upon speech act theory and cross-linguistic pragmatics, it analyzes how illocutionary and perlocutionary functions are preserved, adapted, or lost in translation. Through a comparative investigation of representative, expressive, directive, commissive, and declarative acts, the paper illustrates how linguistic, cultural, and stylistic differences between English and Armenian influence translation outcomes. The study highlights the challenges of maintaining pragmatic equivalence, especially in relation to implicit meaning, capitalization, repetition, and symbolic resonance. The findings underscore the translator's dual role as interpreter and communicator, emphasizing the importance of pragmatic competence in achieving communicative and cultural fidelity. Ultimately, the research affirms that effective translation transcends literal interpretation, requiring a deep understanding of contextual and stylistic nuance.

Keywords: Pragmatics, transdiscipline, speech act theory, context, illocutionary force, perlocutionary effect, translation and equivalence, cultural resonance, implicit and explicit layers, interpretive resemblance

1. Introduction

Throughout history, the movement of ideas, stories, and cultural values across linguistic boundaries has played a crucial role in shaping human understanding. Without translation, countless literary works, philosophical concepts, and cultural narratives would remain confined within the limits of their original languages, depriving societies of shared knowledge and mutual enrichment.

Imagine a world where no book, film, or idea ever crossed the borders of its native language — where W. Shakespeare spoke only to the English, F. Dostoevsky only to Russians, and the philosophies of Ancient Greece remained a secret known solely to those who shared his tongue. How narrow and isolated would our human experience be without the magic of translation?

At the core of translation lies the unspoken—the intention behind the words. Pragmatics, as the study of language in use, helps us understand how meaning is shaped by context and communication. The latter is intrinsically based in the theory of speech acts, where, as proposed by G. Yule, it is argued that the basic unit of communication is not a sentence or an expression, but rather specific acts through language.

The examination of cross-linguistic pragmatics reveals that the unspoken elements—those nuances left unsaid—can hold as much significance as the words themselves.

2. The Essence of the Unspoken Rules of Communication and Translation

2.1 Pragmatics: The Art of Speaking Beyond Words

Pragmatics is the study of ‘invisible’ meaning or how we recognize what is meant even when it is not

actually said (or written). In other words, pragmatics is the study of language according to contexts (G. Yule, 1996:127).

Although pragmatics is a relatively new branch of linguistics, its historical development dates back to ancient Greek and Roman academic works where the terms ‘*pragmaticus*’ is found in late Latin and ‘*pragmaticos*’ in Greek. The root is ‘*pragma*’ which means “deed” or “action”. This is credited to some great philosophers, who, at that time, had started discussing something related to pragmatics and, for this; it is often advocated that pragmatics developed from philosophy. Why?

First, the term “pragmatics” first appeared in linguistic philosophy in the 1930s, for then, western philosophers have begun to shift their focus on studies of language symbols, which developed into semiology later. Early pragmatics is just a branch of semiology under philosophers’ studies and this shows clearly that it originates from their study of language.

Second, the theoretic basis for pragmatics is from philosophy. To be more specific, pragmatics originates from the following aspects: the study of semiology, the study of linguistic philosophy in the 20th century and the study of functional linguistics on language forms.

Third, the main studies of pragmatics such as indexicality and presupposition also have philosophical background (U. Abraham, 2016:37).

At this juncture, it is necessary to mention some philosophers who have played very important roles in the development of pragmatics. They include C. Morris, L. Wittgenstein, J. Austin, J. Searle, S. Levinson,

G. Leech, R. Carnap, P. Grice, and so on. L. Wittgenstein and J. Austin discussed the origin of pragmatics in England, France and Germany in the 1930s.

C. Morris who has played the most important role in the first stage of the development of pragmatics holds an opinion that the study must involve the aspects of society, of psychology, of nerve and of culture that affect the symbols and their meanings. In linguistics, the term “pragmatics” was first used by Charles Morris. In fact, the most influential thing he did in pragmatics in 1938 was his division of semiology into three parts: syntax, semantics and pragmatics. According to Anglo-American analytical philosophy, pragmatics is derived from Morris’s semiotic theory.

The early studies of pragmatics were concerned with the problem of how listeners uncover speakers’ intentions. Philosopher Charles Morris outlined the general shape of a science of signs, or *semiotics* (or *semiotic* as Morris preferred). Within semiotics, Morris distinguished three distinct branches: *syntactics* (or *syntax*), being the study of “the formal relation of signs to one another”, *semantics*, the study of “the relations of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable” (their designata), and *pragmatics*, the study of “the relations of signs to interpreters” (C. Morris, 1938:6).

Within each branch of semiotics, one could make the distinction between *pure studies*, concerned with the elaboration of the relevant metalanguage, and *descriptive studies* which applied the metalanguage to the description of specific signs and their usage (S. Levinson, 1983:1).

In this three-part distinction, only pragmatics allows humans into the analysis. The advantage of studying language via pragmatics is that one can talk about people’s intended meanings, their assumptions, their purposes or goals, and the kinds of actions (for example, requests) that they are performing when they speak. The big disadvantage is that all these very human concepts are extremely difficult to analyze in a consistent and objective way.

Thus, pragmatics is appealing as it is about how people make sense of each other linguistically and requires us to make sense of people and what they have in mind (C. Morris, 1938).

C. Morris went on to expand the scope of pragmatics in accord with his particular *behaviouristic theory of semiotics*. It is a sufficiently accurate characterization of pragmatics to say that it deals with the biotic aspects of semiosis, that is, with all the psychological, biological, and sociological phenomena which occur in the functioning of signs. It encompasses aspects from psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, neurolinguistics and much besides.

Since C. Morris’s introduction of the trichotomy syntax, semantics and pragmatics, the latter term has come to be used in two very different ways. On the one hand, the very broad use intended by C. Morris has been retained, and this explains the usage of the term *pragmatics* in the titles of books that deal, for example, with matters as diverse as the psychopathology of communication and the evolution of symbol systems. This

broad usage of the term, covering sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics and more, is still the one generally used (C. Morris, 1938).

According to C. Morris, one of the central aims of pragmatics is to research how context contributes to meaning and understanding. Pragmatics studies language from the perspective of language users embedded in their situational, behavioral, cultural, societal, and political contexts, using a broad variety of methodologies and interdisciplinary approaches. This entry is based on several insights:

- Languages are used by their speakers in social interactions; they are first and foremost instruments for creating social bonds and accountability relations. The means with which languages create these bonds and relations vary across languages and cultures. Pragmatics studies these language- and culture-specific forms of language use.

- Speech is part of the context of the situation in which it is produced; language has an essentially pragmatic character, and meaning is constituted by the pragmatic function of an utterance. The speakers’ uses of language fulfill specific functions in and for these speakers’ communicative behaviour.

- Pragmatics understands and describes language as social action.

- Core domains of pragmatics reveal that it is a “transdiscipline” within the humanities (C. Morris, 1938:77).

Moreover, the famous philosopher, R. Carnap (1975), stands on C. Morris’s line, making some new touches on this issue. He advocated that the study of pragmatics should have a relationship between language users and words as well as the reference of words. By this, he makes the aims of pragmatics more specific.

Within analytical philosophy, the philosopher and logician R. Carnap was particularly influential. After an initial Morrisian usage, he adopted the trichotomy that if in an investigation explicit reference is made to the speaker, or to put it in more general terms, to the user of the language, then we assign it [the investigation] to the field of pragmatics... If we abstract from the user of the language and analyze only the expressions and their designata, we are in the field of semantics. And, finally, if we abstract from the designata also and analyze only the relations between the expressions, we are in (logical) syntax (S. Levinson, 1983, pp. 2-3).

P. Grice (1981) is famous for his conversational implicature. Furthermore, the writings and publications of many linguists such as *Pragmatics and Principles of Pragmatics* by S. Levinson and G. Leech in 1983 and the establishment of International Pragmatic Association in 1987 in Belgium, are considered the most important issues for the development of pragmatics and these indicate that pragmatics has become an independent discipline in linguistics. On their part, J. Austin and J. Searle put forward the Speech Act Theory, which is the most influential topic in the study of speech act theory (U. Abraham, 2016:38).

Within the framework of pragmatics, speech act theory examines how language is used not merely to

convey information but to perform actions in which utterances play a crucial role (G. Yule, 1996).

J. L. Austin (1962) classified speech acts into three types: **the locutionary act** (the act of producing a meaningful utterance), **the illocutionary act** (the intended communicative function, such as advising or warning), and **the perlocutionary act** (the effect the utterance has on the listener), the illocutionary force being the most discussed.

Furthermore, J. Searle (1969) classified speech acts into five types: **declarations**, which bring about change through utterance; **representatives**, which convey the speaker's beliefs; **expressives**, which reveal the speaker's psychological state; **directives**, which aim to influence the listener's actions; and **commissives**, which commit the speaker to a future course of action.

Eventually, G. Yule (1996) adds that speech acts can be **direct** or **indirect**, depending on whether the form matches the speaker's communicative intent.

Thus, pragmatics can be defined as the study of how language functions in real-life contexts, with particular attention to its role in communication, interaction, and interpretation within specific social and cultural frameworks. It is a well acknowledged fact that pragmatics has run into translation, moulding translation as an act of communication.

2.2 Pragmatics in Translation: Historical Perspective

Translation plays a vital role across various disciplines, including linguistics, cultural studies, comparative etymology, sociology, and a variety of other disciplines. Its profound relationship with linguistics often leads to the misconception that translation is merely an aspect of linguistic analysis. However, translation encompasses context, situation and the complexities of meaning, making it a rich field of study of its own.

"A translation theory cannot draw on a linguistic theory alone. What it needs is a theory of culture to explain the specificity of communicative situations and the relationship between verbalized and non-verbalized situational elements" (C. Nord, 1997:11).

Translation undoubtedly represents a part of many spheres. One such area is pragmatics. The link between translation and pragmatics may be incomprehensible, but a closer look at these two areas reveals important aspects of them.

With the advent of pragmatic and functional theories of language, linguistics was able to offer a broader framework that views translation as an act of communication. Therefore, translators were able to move outside the rigid circle of linguistic meaning and textual equivalence to contextual meaning and the set of extralinguistic factors enveloping the text. Given that translation is an act of communication, the translator has to make sure effective communication is achieved in terms of situationality, intentionality and acceptability. In other words, the translator has to use an appropriate context to express the intentions of the original text and produce an effect on the receptor (R. Bell, 1991).

Pragmatics is often described along the lines of two traditions. The first is the Anglo-American one, closely related to the philosophy of language and preoccupied with theorizing implicature, presupposition,

speech acts, etc. The second is the European tradition, which takes a broad view of what communicating meaning in context entails, and also includes the study of language in use from a social and cultural vantage point. In translation studies, the interest has slowly shifted from the Anglo-American view to the broader Continental-European approach. Historically, translation studies have had little interest in pragmatics and pragmatics, similarly, has not regarded translation as a type of situated language use that needs to be studied. Translation studies has only recently begun to incorporate macroscopic views of context as research (D. Dayter, M. Locher & T. Messerli, 2023, pp. 7-9).

S. Blum-Kalka establishes that the translatability of indirect speech acts depends on whether the relevant felicity conditions are universal or culture-specific. The translator is a communicator reader, who takes into account the sociocultural context of the source context of the source text to identify presuppositions and implicatures and arrive at a coherent understanding of what the text means, before communicating in the target language (S. Blum-Kalka, 1981).

As any reader who perceives real events as information, the translator also has a personal relationship with them. As a medium of interlingual communication, the translator must take a pragmatic neutral position towards those events, trying not to compromise the authenticity of the events that are expressed. If the translation is a re-creation of the text in the foreign language based on the materials of the translator's language, the pragmatic essence is the delivery of the original meaning of the re-created text. The meaning expressed in the context is used and analyzed to reveal the "true" meaning through pragmatic features (N. Soybnazarov, 2022).

The influence of pragmatics on translation studies and its considerable role was huge to the extent that by 1985 we began to talk about communicative approaches to translation. B. Hatim and I. Mason's influential work stressed the interdependence of pragmatics and semiotics in helping translators to grasp the "full communicative thrust" of an utterance in the text analysis (B. Hatim & I. Mason, 1990:101).

Knowledge of literary pragmatics helps the translator include elements related to context because as J. Mey suggests that in order to understand any utterance, one has to know the circumstances in which such an utterance was delivered. It is only through an active co-operative effort, shared between the translator and author, that the interplay of voices can be successfully created and recreated. The benefit of practicing translation via pragmatics is that the translator will be able to know about authors' implicated meanings, their assumptions, and the kinds of actions that they are performing. Pragmatic awareness could help to improve the pragmatic competence to ensure fewer pragmatic failures that translators might fall in (J. Mey, 2001).

In a more recent development, M. Morini's pragmatic theory of translation foregrounds performative, interpersonal and locative dimensions in seeking to build on descriptive approaches, rather than to develop a new paradigm. He argues that the translator not only

reacts to a source text but also acts on a text. "A successful translation is not merely concerned with transferring the main content of the source language text, but also with its other literary pragmatic features" (M. Morini, 2013).

Pragmatics has become increasingly important in the study of translation which is the result of a number of shifts in the way translation itself has been approached. These shifts include, firstly, the fact that we have begun to look at translation increasingly as just another type of language use. Secondly, this has made it possible to consider translation as falling under the remit of verbal communication, thereby allowing us to study it within pragmatics. Finally, new developments in pragmatics have enabled translators to unify the study of all types of language use, including translation, under a single pragmatic theory, thus allowing both to simplify the study of translation and to bring it closer within the sphere of verbal communication (X. Sequeiros, 2005:5).

The study of translation has traditionally been approached from two different points of view: the first one is multidisciplinary and the second is equivalence-based. The multidisciplinary approaches have tried to consider the various influences that can be observed in translation. Within this approach pragmatics has not played a central part in its development. The equivalence-based approach involves an important theoretical shift in that it is one of the first major attempts not only to develop a systematic and explanatory account of translation, but also to include explicitly the role of pragmatics in translation. From a pragmatic point of view, this approach has made it possible to include equivalence features at the pragmatic level (ibid:6-7).

The chief proponent of a consistent application of pragmatics to translation has been E. Gutt, who has applied one of the main current pragmatic theories, Relevance Theory which allows us to approach the study of translation as an act of communication. This approach shows that translation can benefit directly from advances made in our understanding of verbal communication, pragmatics and cognition (which contrasts with the earlier situation, when translation was treated as an isolated discipline).

E. Gutt (2000:23) argues that "translation is indeed best handled as a matter of communication."

He similarly argues that "issues of translation are at heart issues of communication" (ibid:198).

According to E. Gutt, the key notion in any account of translation is that of resemblance, both interpretive and non-interpretive. He claims that for a target text or discourse to be a translation, it has to enter into a relationship of resemblance with the original text/discourse. In particular, the main focus of research has been interpretive resemblance, which focuses on the resemblance of content between original and target texts. For a translation to be successfully communicated, so it is claimed, it must resemble the original in a relevant way (E. Gutt, 2000).

This approach shows why it is necessary to include background information in the target text, as there are many contextual assumptions and intended contextual effects in different cultures. Translator is not only

a receptor of the original text, but also a communicator of the target text. To understand the process of translation, we must first look at how the translator interprets the original text, since we can only understand the translator's decisions if we understand the (semantic and pragmatic) interpretive processes he undergoes in order to construct his interpretation of the original. Studying translation as an instance of communication allows us to draw on the advances being made within pragmatics and verbal communication more generally (X. Sequeiros, 2005:9).

Pragmatic interpretation affects how we understand a text, to the extent that often what a reader takes to have been communicated differs from what is linguistically encoded in the original text. In translation this can have important consequences, since the translator produces a target text on the basis of, not just the linguistic content, but also his interpretation of the original. The discrepancies in translation are often due to the effects of interpretive resemblance between what is encoded and what is communicated. One of the main types of interpretive resemblance found in translation is resemblances between concepts.

The gap between what is encoded and what is communicated has significant consequences for translation. Indeed, target texts are often carried out not on the basis of the concept encoded in the original text, but rather on the basis of the related concept it communicates. A word which linguistically encodes a certain concept does not necessarily communicate that concept. In these cases, the translator chooses to encode not what was encoded originally but the source concept was intended to communicate. But not all that is said is linguistically encoded as there is a gap between what is linguistically encoded and what is said. Here translators can use pragmatic enrichment, i.e. to use immediately accessible contextual assumptions, to the point where it is relevant enough (ibid:71).

In achieving pragmatic equivalence in translation, the semantic features of the original textual language, the meanings of the words, their usage, and their connection with other words present a number of obstacles. The only condition for the translation to be created in a form and content similar to the original is that the translator can select and use in his own language the same linguistic means as the original. This responsibility entrusts the translator, first of all, with the task of fulfilling the original meaning, and then with the task of fully expressing the thought formed in his memory on the basis of the culture and norms of his language (N. Soybnazarov, 2022, pp.2-4).

The correctness of the pragmatic competence in the translation is determined by the impact of the work of art on the reader, its artistic value, and its ability to attract many readers. If there is no pragmatism in the translation, we will not be able to understand it and misjudge the author's work and lose interest in it. If the pragmatic effect of the original does not exist in the translation, then it does not provoke any reaction in the reader, then the pragmatic nature of the original has not been recreated, and such a translation has no value. Thus, the essence of pragmatics is important not only

in translation but also in reality. If the translator is able to cope with such a task, the pragmatic effect of the original in the translation is considered to be fully restored (ibid:5).

In essence, the pragmatic approach not only clarifies the role of the translator as both an interpreter and communicator but also underscores the importance of contextual relevance and interpretive resemblance in achieving efficient translations. Ultimately, embracing this perspective allows for a more cohesive, effective and comprehensive exploration of translation, bridging the gaps between linguistic fidelity and communicative effectiveness.

3. Cross-linguistic Pragmatics: A Case Study in English and Armenian

Every literary work bears an unmistakable mark of its creator, shaped by a writer's individual style and linguistic choices. The notion of idiolect—the unique language patterns of an individual—extends beyond mere vocabulary and syntax, encompassing pragmatic factors, implicit meaning, and communicative intent. Writers employ specific lexical choices and syntactic structures that not only reflect their personal expression but also serve pragmatic functions in shaping reader interpretation. Pragmatics highlights the way meaning is constructed and inferred in context, making it a crucial element in understanding an author's individual style.

Agatha Christie (1890 – 1976), one of the most renowned writers of the 20th century, developed an identifiable literary style that merges clarity with psychological depth continuing to captivate global audiences. Born in Torquay, England, Christie's background in pharmacology during World War I provided her with an intricate understanding of poisons, a knowledge she would later incorporate into her detective novels. A. Christie's writing style is deeply strategic, utilizing economy of language, controlled pacing, and nuanced dialogue. Often termed the "Queen of Crime," Christie's narrative and manipulation of perspective contribute to the deceptive nature of her mysteries.⁷

Pragmatically, A. Christie's works are perfections in speech acts and conversational implicature, often leading readers to infer meanings beyond what is explicitly stated. Her use of indirect speech acts, strategic silence, narrative voice, and carefully placed presuppositions shapes not only character interactions but also reader perception. In many of her novels, including *Endless Night*, she deliberately misleads both characters and audiences, heightening suspense.

Agatha Christie's crime novel or also referred as psychological thriller novel, *Endless Night*, first published in 1967, exemplifies her masterful use of language, where pragmatic factors unfold its narrative. Michael's journey in A. Christie's novel unfolds through themes of fate, deception, and perception. Told in the first person, it relies on speech acts, implicature, and politeness strategies to shape suspense.

The title *Endless Night* in Agatha Christie's crime novel carries significant pragmatic implication, as it is expressed indefinitely, leaving room for multiple interpretations. The indefiniteness suggests ambiguity and foreboding, functioning as an indirect speech act that

conveys more than its literal meaning. It could imply a never-ending period of darkness or metaphorically represent a state of despair, uncertainty, or psychological turmoil.⁸

Hence, the choice of the title is not arbitrary; it reflects the psychological and thematic depth of the novel. The phrase *Endless Night* originates from *Auguries of Innocence*, a poem by William Blake, which speaks of suffering, fate, and moral corruption—key themes in the novel. Within the story, the title symbolizes the protagonist's fall into darkness, both literally and metaphorically, as his actions lead to inevitable doom.

In translation, such pragmatic ambiguity should be preserved to maintain its intended effect on the readership. As in the original, in Armenian as well, *Անվերջաւիշ գիշեր*, the lack of specificity is retained to evoke a sense of darkness and suspense. The title's interplay between explicit denotation and implicit connotation exemplifies how language operates beyond mere words, shaping the reader's perception through pragmatic inference.

As already mentioned above, Agatha Christie opens her book with an epigraph by selecting W. Blake's **fatalistic** and **symbolically rich** excerpt:

"Every Night and every Morn
Some to Misery are born.
Every Morn and every Night
Some are born to Sweet Delight,
Some are born to Sweet Delight,
Some are born to Endless Night." ("Auguries of Innocence", W. Blake, 1863)

We can observe that this passage presents a dualistic worldview, contrasting *Sweet Delight* (happiness, innocence and favor) with *Endless Night* (suffering, doom and darkness). The repetition of "Some are born" can be considered as the inevitability of fate, suggesting that people's lives are predetermined—some are destined for joy, while others face despair and struggles. The phrase *Endless Night* in this context can serve as a symbol of endless suffering, moral blindness, or regret. It conveys the idea that some people are trapped in a state of darkness with no escape. This strong perspective resonates deeply with the plot where the protagonist, Michael Rogers, becomes chained in a cycle of destruction.

The epigraph does not explicitly state its relevance to the novel—it relies on implicature, requiring the reader to infer its significance. Initially, the reader may not grasp its meaning, but as the story unfolds, they recognize its relevance to Michael's fate.

From a speech act perspective (J. Searle, 1969), the epigraph functions in multiple ways:

- Representative Speech Act (Statement of truth)
"Some to Misery are born.
Every Morn and every Night"
"Some are born to Sweet Delight."

The epigraph presents a factual statement about life—that some people are destined for happiness and others for suffering. Via this notion the epigraph estab-

⁷ <https://www.britannica.com>

⁸ <https://www.agathachristie.com/en/stories/endless-night>

lishes a deterministic view of existence, where suffering and joy are predetermined—some are simply “born” into these conditions.

- Expressive Speech Act (Emotional setting)
“Some are born to Sweet Delight,
Some are born to Endless Night.”

These lines set the emotional tone for the novel, preparing the reader for a psychologically intense story. “Sweet Delight” inserts a sense of joy and innocence, while “Endless Night” suggests despair and darkness. The choice of these contrasting states helps us to set up an emotional framework that prepares the reader for the emotional tone of the novel.

The phrases with “Some” in the lines “Some to Misery are born” and “Some are born to Sweet Delight” can be analyzed through the lens of presupposition which refers to implicit assumptions embedded within language that the speaker or writer takes for granted. In both lines, “Some” presupposes the existence of two distinct groups of people: those born to misery and those born to sweet delight. The word implies that these groups are real and inherent in the human condition and suggests that there is no universal condition; rather, it’s a matter of individual fate.

In the Armenian translation of the book (translated by Arpine Vardanyan) the epigraph is rendered as follows:

«Ամեն զիշեր, ամեն ծեզի
Ծնվում է մի դժբախտ հոգի,
Ամեն ծեզի ու խոր մթնում
Մի երջանիկ է կյանք մտնում:
Մեկին հրճվանք է կյանքը մեր,
Մյուսի համար՝ անվերջ զիշեր:»
(«Ամենություն երգեր», Ու. Բլեյք, 1863)

In the Armenian version the word “some” is rendered as an indefinite *մի* (one). According to Armenian prof. Gevorg Jahukyan, indefinite *մի* article strengthens uncertainty. He writes: “One being transposed from a notional part of speech, *մի* functions as an intensifier obtaining a status of an article” (Գ. Ջահուկյան, 1969, p. 187).

An interesting aspect of the Armenian version lies in the translation of the word “some” in two different ways. As for the counterpart, *մեկին* the translator probably wanted to underscore the individual’s experience and presupposes that each person’s fate is unique and isolated. The pragmatic effect is to create a sense of personal, singular destiny, where each individual’s fate is separate and not defined in relation to others. On the other hand, the translation shift *մյուսին* translation highlights a subtle but significant difference in how fate and individuals are presented; with the first version emphasizing individuality and the second one highlighting a contrast between the two distinct fates.

Another intriguing feature of the Armenian translation is the omission of the phrase “are born”. In the English version, “are born” plays a significant role in emphasizing the birth or origin of the fates of individuals. However, in the Armenian translation, this phrase is omitted, which subtly shifts the focus of the sentence.

The absence of “are born” in Armenian removes the direct connection to origin and birth, potentially placing more emphasis on the state or condition of the individuals rather than their inherent fate. Pragmatically, this omission may suggest that the fates are not necessarily tied to birth but are instead more immediate or ongoing.

Furthermore, we have a case of substitution or nominalization (an adjective + noun combination < single noun) in the Armenian translation. “Sweet Delight” is translated as a single word in Armenian “հրճվանք”. According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, the word “sweet” as an adjective and as a noun has the following meanings: ADJ. pleasing to the mind or feelings: agreeable, gratifying — often used as a generalized term of approval; very good or appealing

N. a pleasant or gratifying experience, possession, or state.⁹

Similarly, according to Bararan.am, the word “հրճվանք” has got the meaning of great mental satisfaction, joyful state, great happiness as a first meaning.¹⁰ The translation shift makes sense when we delve into the investigation of the meanings of the words in both languages. “Sweet delight” is not typically listed as a ready-made unit or set phrase in most dictionaries, but when paired, they evoke a specific meaning related to happiness, pleasure, or joy.

Shedding light to the speech acts, in the Armenian translation the speaker’s intent remains the same—to communicate a factual statement about the fate. However, there are subtle shifts in the personality of the statement.

- Representative Speech Act (Statement of truth)
«Ամեն զիշեր, ամեն ծեզի
Ծնվում է մի դժբախտ հոգի...»

The use of “ծնվում է մի դժբախտ հոգի” (A miserable soul is born) personalizes the experience of misery, as the “soul” becomes the subject. This shift from the general “Some” in the English text to “a soul” in Armenian introduces a more individualized focus, creating an emotional sense that suffering is not a universal concept but is tied to a specific person. From a pragmatic viewpoint, the difference in personality could have an impact on how the reader interprets the statement. The English version is more detached and universal, whereas the Armenian translation charges the claim with personalization.

- Expressive Speech Act (Emotional setting)
«Մեկին հրճվանք է կյանքը մեր,
Մյուսի համար՝ անվերջ զիշեր:»

The translation maintains the expressive nature of the epigraph, but with a slight difference in tone. The word “հրճվանք” (“delight”) is used instead of “Sweet Delight.” While “delight” is a valid translation, it may not carry the same intensity of emotional pleasure that “Sweet Delight” does in English. The word “հրճվանք” can be more neutral, lacking the rich sensory quality of “sweet.” Furthermore, in the phrase “Մյուսի համար՝ անվերջ զիշեր” (“for the other, endless night”) the Armenian version uses a descriptive and specialized

⁹ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sweet>

¹⁰ <https://bararan.am/hpճվանք>

phrase (“for the other”), whereas English pertains impersonality (“Some are born”).

We can also conduct the analysis of the given epigraph based on the types of speech acts by J. Austin (1962): perlocutionary, illocutionary, locutionary, as they may contain the whole functions of speech acts within them.

The epigraph, at the **locutionary** level, presents a series of statements describing a world where some people are born into happiness (*Sweet Delight*) and others into suffering (*Endless Night*). The repetition of “*Some are born...*” strengthens the deterministic idea that individuals are placed into one of these categories from birth. At the locutionary level, this is simply an observation about fate and inequality in life. However, the words alone do not suggest an explicit evaluation or emotional weight—they are neutral descriptions rather than judgments. Shedding light on the Armenian translation, the phrase “Ծնվում է մի դժբախտ հոգի” (A miserable soul is born) is more personal and emotional, emphasizing the individual’s suffering rather than fate as an external force. The phrase “Մեկին հրճվանք է կյանքը մեր” (For one, life is joy) somehow lacks the same determinism as “Some are born to Sweet Delight” sounds more descriptive than stating. Thus, the shift from the impersonal “some” to the more personalized “soul” in the Armenian translation introduces a subtle change in the pragmatics of the speech acts. While the English version expresses a universal truth, the Armenian translation gives it a personal tone. The impersonality of the English version contrasts with the more individualized nature of the Armenian translation, which might affect both the emotional impact and the universality of the epigraph’s meaning.

At the **illocutionary** level, encompassing expressive and representative functions of speech acts, the passage functions as a **representative speech act**, creating a worldview in which suffering and joy are predetermined. It could be used to show a philosophical claim rather than a poetic language, shaping the reader’s understanding of fate. The epigraph also acts as an **expressive speech act**, evoking emotions of despair and inevitability, particularly through the repetition of “*Some are born...*” At the illocutionary level, Armenian also keeps the illocutionary force; “Ծնվում է մի դժբախտ հոգի” evokes a sorrow transferring the emotional tone of the source text.

The **perlocutionary** effect of the epigraph is significant: it prepares the reader to approach the novel with an awareness of moral consequences. It makes the readers **raise existential questions** about fate and free will. We can claim that via translation we feel poetic reflection on life’s inequalities as the perlocutionary effect making us think about the life, the difficulties and challenges we can face. However, one thing is obvious as the translation of speech acts is particularly challenging because it is not just about word-for-word equivalence but it involves capturing pragmatic meaning, cultural perceptions and emotional resonance. In Armenian the same epigraph seems to be a bit more poetic

and philosophical whereas English has stronger determinism. Apart from this, repetition of the English version enhances the strong tone, while the Armenian version’s variation makes it feel more lyrical. It is highly important to keep the emotional tone via repetitions because very often changing the structure of sentences combined with repetitions can result in the loss of pragmatic function as well as different interpretations by the listeners in the target language.

Apart from of all, one unique feature of this poem is its capitalization. W. Blake most likely did this to emphasize specific words, but also to suggest that each creature or idea represents more than itself. They are not just descriptive terms but **symbolic concepts** representing human fate. Thus, by capitalizing several words he underscores pragmatic significance, such as “Endless Night” → a condition of existential darkness, made more unfavorable by its prominence, “Misery” → not just suffering, but a universal human condition, given more emotional depth through capitalization.¹¹

In the Armenian translation of the epigraph, the capitalization present in the original English text is notably missing, which can have significant consequences from a pragmatic standpoint. It may cause loss of symbolic weight, as the absence of emphasis can diminish their existential significance, making them seem like ordinary descriptors. **The absence of capitalization not only contributes to a personalized and even neutral tone, reducing the universal impact and symbolic weight of the terms but also contributes to a shift in the pragmatic and emotional functions of the speech acts.** These kinds of shifts are a part of intricacies of translation speech acts or pragmatic phrases in general. **The study reveals that translators can face challenges in maintaining illocutionary force and emotional depth which are essential as if we have a loss of pragmatism in translation we will misjudge the author’s work.**

Chapter 1 of the book begins with the following lines:

“In my end is my beginning... That’s a quotation I’ve often heard people say. It sounds all right — but what does it really mean?”

Is there ever any particular spot where one can put one’s finger and say: ‘It all began that day, at such a time and such a place, with such an incident?’” (ch. 1, p. 6)

Armenian translation

«Ծանապարհի սկիզբը կանխորոշում է նրա ավարտը. այս խոսքը մեկ անգամ չէ, որ լսել եմ: Գեղեցիկ է հնչում, բայց ի՞նչ է իրականում նշանակում:

Կա՞րողյոք ինչ-որ կետ, որի ուղղությամբ մեկը կարող է պարզել ցուցամատն ու ասել. «Ամեն ինչ սկսվեց հենց այս օրը, այս ժամին, այս վայրում և այս դեպքից հետո»»: (գլ. 1, էջ 5)

To start with, the first sentence, worded in italics by A. Christie, originates from T.S. Eliot’s poem “East Coker”, which is the part of his *Four Quartets* first published in 1940. By this sentence Eliot meant

¹¹ <https://genius.com/William-blake-auguries-of-innocence-annotated>

something specific about circularity and the spiritual journey he was undertaking, but the line has more than one application, and it is supposed to work to designate certain tactics or challenges that poets may employ to jump-start their imaginations.¹²

In case of Agatha Christie, “In my end is my beginning,” is a subtle reference to this theme, contributing to the novel’s exploration of fate and the inescapable cycle that unfolds for the characters, particularly Michael Rogers.

At the locutionary level, the literal meaning of the sentence is philosophical—it poses the idea that perhaps the end is not an absolute termination, but rather a **transition**, leading to something new. The concepts “beginning” and “end” are hints at the **cycle of life and death**. The sentence, “That’s a quotation I’ve often heard people say,” immediately makes Michael as someone who has encountered this phrase often, yet his response reveals doubt. He follows with a question: “What does it really mean?” This rhetorical question underscores Michael’s **inability to comprehend** the full meaning of the quote. The final question, “Is there ever any particular spot where one can put one’s finger and say... ‘It all began...?’”, highlights an **important theme** in A. Christie’s *Endless Night*: the **complexity of the origins** of life and the changing nature of **fate** and **beginnings**.

The English phrase conveys a **direct link** between the speaker’s “end” and “beginning.” However, the Armenian translation uses “Ծանապարհի սկիզբը” (the beginning of the path), which is a **metaphorical shift**, moving from a personal focus on the self (my end) to a broader conceptualization of life as a journey (the beginning of the path). This change might slightly alter the tone, making it more abstract and less personal. The word “path” is the most appropriate term in this case as, according to Merriam-Webster dictionary, the third meaning of the word is “a way of life, conduct, or thought”.¹³

In English the locutionary act is a simple statement that paradoxically links an “end” with a “beginning,” creating a reflective tension between two opposites. It suggests that these two are interconnected whereas the locutionary act in Armenian, while also conveying a philosophical idea about life, shifts focus to the **pathway** (ճանապարհ), suggesting that the beginning “**determines**” the end. The next sentence, “That’s a quotation I’ve often heard people say”, has a **casual conversational tone**. The Armenian translation closely follows the original meaning, capturing the **familiarity** of the English sentence despite translating with different words.

However the **illocutionary** level is noteworthy. “In my end is my beginning” introduces an **assertion**, serving also as a **representative speech act**, which has philosophical weight. However, the speaker quickly **weakens** it by questioning its meaning. The illocutionary force is to **insert doubtfulness** or **inquiry** into the meaning of the quote. In the subsequent sentence—“It sounds all right – but what does it really mean?”—the

illocutionary force shifts to a request for clarification or deeper thought. This sentence can be considered to be a **directive speech act**, as it urges the readers to contemplate about the quote. The speaker is explicitly asking the reader to engage with the deeper implications of the statement, without providing a clear answer. Subsequently, via the next sentence “Is there ever any particular spot where one can put one’s finger and say: ‘It all began that day, at such a time and such a place, with such an incident?’” the author seems to create an illocutionary force of **inquiring** into the nature of time and the notion of beginnings. It also creates a doubt regarding the clarity of the events in life.

In the Armenian translation, at the illocutionary level, “Ծանապարհի սկիզբը կանխորոշում է նրա սկիզբը”, this statement is a **declarative assertion**, overlapping **declarative** and **representative speech acts** in Armenian, and shifting the tone from the more philosophical inquiry in the English version to a firm statement of **predetermined destiny**. As in the original, in Armenian via the use of the interrogative sentences the translator pertains the function of the directive speech act through getting readers to start thinking about life and fate, such as “...բայց ի՞նչ է իրականում նշանակում:” The translation of the whole passage maintains an **invitation for reflection** similar to the English version, but the emphasis on the phrase “զեղեղիկ” (**beautiful**) instead of “all right” may give a slightly more **appreciative tone** to the speaker’s initial doubtfulness, serving as an **expressive speech act**, whereas in English we have a **representative speech act**. The illocutionary acts in both versions serve to engage the reader in reflecting on philosophical questions related to the concepts of time, fate, and the nature of beginnings and endings. However, the Armenian translation shifts the tone from a doubtful question to a more deterministic assertion, thus altering the philosophical message and illocutionary force. This difference emphasizes the intricacies in translating speech acts that have deep philosophical implications, where slight shifts in language can alter the overall meaning.

Delving into the **perlocutionary** level, we can find the perlocutionary effects performed via different functions of speech acts. The English passage involves **representative speech acts** that describe the speaker’s thoughts, making statements about life’s beginnings, endings, and the difficulty of pinpointing a clear origin for events. The opening line, “In my end is my beginning,” serves as a philosophical idea about life, implying that the end of something often leads back to its origin. In contrast to the illocutionary force, which urges or advises readers, the perlocutionary effect here makes the readers contemplate about the cyclical nature of life. The passage also employs **expressive speech acts**, as it discusses the idea of beginnings and endings, creating an emotional response in the reader. The speaker is not just asking about the meaning of the quote but also inserts ambiguity of existence, expressing their doubt about the ability to identify a specific starting point. The rhetorical question—“Is there ever any particular spot where one can put one’s finger and

¹² <https://theamericanscholar.org/in-my-end-is-my-beginning/>

¹³ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/path>

say: *'It all began that day, at such a time and such a place?'* — evokes a sense of uncertainty and discomfort among readers. Thus, the perlocutionary effect is the sense of anxiety and unease which we may feel. The phrase *"In my end is my beginning"* is a **declarative speech act** where the speaker makes a statement of belief. The perlocutionary effect of this act could be a **challenge of the validity** of the given statement in our lives. Obviously, there are also implicit **directive speech acts** in the forms of questions mentioned earlier in the passage, where the speaker is not just asking questions, but implicitly encouraging the reader to engage in deep thought about life.

The Armenian version, as we already know, begins with a stronger assertion of determinism: *"Ճանապարհի սկիզբը կանխորոշում է նրա ավարտը"*. The statement is definitive, asserting a deterministic view of life and events. We can assert that the perlocutionary effect is stronger in Armenian because of its determined and decisive nature. The Armenian version, while still questioning, makes the emotional impact somewhat gentler but also more affirmative about the deterministic worldview with a sense of respect for the quote's beauty. This study reveals that very often the same functions of speech acts, e.g. representative or expressive, may create either illocutionary forces or perlocutionary effects upon readers.

Thus, the key difficulties in translating this passage are related to the challenge of maintaining the intended emotional response and the subtlety of meaning between languages. The shift from a representative act in the English version to a combined representative and declarative act in the Armenian translation significantly alters the illocutionary force and perlocutionary effect. While the English version urges the reader to question and reflect on the origins and endings of life, the Armenian translation shifts toward a more decisive, deterministic standpoint, which alters the reader's engagement with the text making the perlocutionary effect stronger.

Interestingly enough, following G. Yule's categorization (1996), speech acts pertain another spectrum according to the sentence communicative function. *"In my end is my beginning..."* sentence is a **declarative speech act** as it is a statement by the author, as in Armenian *"Ճանապարհի սկիզբը կանխորոշում է նրա ավարտը"*. As for the passage, *"...but what does it really mean?"* it is considered to be an **interrogative speech act** based on the same classification of speech acts, as in the Armenian translation *"բայց ինչ է իրականում նշանակում"*. The last type of speech act is **imperative** which is not present in the given passage in both languages, however, as mentioned earlier, the whole passage carries the function of the **directive speech act**, as it makes the readership contemplate about the question asked by the author. Hence, we can claim that the passage has an implicit function of command.

In the following excerpt, the locutionary acts remain straightforward, merely stating information about the land's history and its supposed curse. However, it

is the illocutionary and perlocutionary acts that give the conversation its weight.

" 'Why Gipsy?' I asked him.

Again his eyes slipped past me and his answer was vague. 'Some tale or other. It was gipsies' land once, they say, and they were turned off, and they put a curse on it'.

I laughed.

'Aye,' he said, 'you can laugh but there's places as is cursed. You smart-Alecks in town don't know about them. But there's places as is cursed all right, and there's a curse on this place.' " (ch.1, p. 11)

In the given passage, the **illocutionary act** is expressed through several functions, each serving a unique function. The most intriguing is the following part: *"Some tale or other. It was gipsies' land once, they say, and they were turned off, and they put a curse on it."* The sentence functions as **representative speech act**, as it conveys assertion, i.e. the speaker asserts a belief about the land's history and the existence of a curse. The sentence, *"I laughed"* is very interesting from the standpoint of pragmatics. At first, Michael expresses his disbelief and dismisses the old man's claim and his laughter functions as an **expressive speech act**, showing a doubtfulness and amusement at the old man's words. However, this "laugh" can also be considered to be a **directive speech act** because through this laughter Michael seeks to obtain the old man's personal belief, directing and making him share his perspective. Directive speech act is developing in the next sentence: *"Aye, you can laugh but there's places as is cursed."* The old man makes a subtle warning, implying that disbelief does not negate the curse's reality. Here the **illocutionary force** is very strong as it challenges Michael's perspective, suggesting that he should take caution. The last sentence functions as a representative speech act: *"You smart-Alecks in town don't know about them. But there's places as is cursed all right, and there's a curse on this place."* The old man reasserts his belief in the curse and the repetition of the word "cursed" intensifies the illocutionary force, heightening the threatening tone.

However, the spelling of "there's places" and the repetition of the phrase is noteworthy. It can be considered to be intentionally non-standard English as the old man speaks in a **dialectal or rural form of English**, which reflects his background and adds authenticity to his character. It may also mean reflection of the old man's rural or working-class speech pattern. As for its repetition, the old man is not just stating a fact but reaffirming his words, ensuring that Michael, as well as and the reader, understand that he truly believes in the curse. It may also function as an **implicit directive**, urging Michael to take the warning seriously.

Apart from all, *"smart-Aleck"* is another phrase that catches one's attention. According to Oxford English Dictionary, the phrase has the meaning of a person who is (or wishes to seem) clever and knowing, but is regarded as annoyingly smug or obnoxious; a 'know-it-

all': cocky, self-assured to anyone who dares challenge his logic.¹⁴

The origin of the phrase comes from the mid 19th century, named after Alexander Hoag. Ten years after Hoag's arrest, "smart Alec" entered the American lexicon, initially as police slang for a criminal who was too smart for his own good, or whose cockiness led to his arrest.¹⁵

The old man uses "smart-Alecks in town" to contrast Michael's perspective. This phrase serves an **expressive illocutionary act**, where he conveys his disapproval of people like Michael, who think they know everything but dismiss traditional beliefs. Thus, the old man's illocutionary force is stronger than Michael's as he does not just state facts, but actively warns and insists on the reality of the curse.

The phrase "gypsies' land" also plays a crucial role in the passage, carrying both linguistic and pragmatic weight. First of all, it is a **locutionary act**, simply describing that the land once belonged to gypsies. However, its **illocutionary** and **perlocutionary effects** go much deeper, contributing to the themes of superstition, and foreboding. By calling it "gypsies' land" and linking it to a curse, the old man performs a **representative illocutionary act**, presenting this as a fact rather than speculation. However, this also functions as an **expressive speech act**, conveying the old man's belief that the displacement of the gypsies led to supernatural consequences. The perlocutionary effect is powerful, especially in how it influences Michael and the readers.

Moving on to the **perlocutionary effect**, the readers may experience dramatic irony thinking that the old man's words might hold truth, even if Michael does not believe them. Moreover, Michael's laughter does not fully negate the warning but creates psychological tension. For Michael, the perlocutionary effect is twofold: first, it amuses him, but second, it inserts a doubt. Even though he does not openly acknowledge it, the old man's words contribute to a growing sense of unease that resurfaces later in the novel. His laughter also functions as a defensive reaction, possibly masking a curiosity or unease. His engagement in the conversation, despite not believing in the curse, suggests that the speech act has successfully provoked thought and inquiry, leading him to direct the old man to explain more. For the reader, the effect is even stronger. The threatening tone of the old man's words, combined with Michael's coolness, creates dramatic irony. The power of perlocutionary acts in this scene lies in how the old man's words continue to resonate beyond the moment of speech, influencing both Michael's thoughts and the reader's anticipation of what is to come.

From the viewpoint of conversational implicature the old man's words carry an implicit warning; i.e. although he does not explicitly say Michael should avoid the land, his phrasing suggests that bad things will happen.

Armenian translation

«- Բսկ ինչու՞ զնշուական,- հարցրի ես:

Նա կրկին փախցրեց հայացքը. պատասխանը չգոհացնող էր:

- Ըստ առասպելների՝ այստեղ ժամանակին զնշուներն են ապրել և հեռանալուց հետո անիծել հողը:

Փոթևազի:

- Ծիծաղում եք, հա՛... Կարող եք ծիծաղել, որքան ուզում եք, բայց այդպիսի վայրերը շատ են: Դուք՝ քաղաքի գիտունիկներդ, դրանցից ի՞նչ զաղախարունեք: Անիծված վայրեր աշխարհում շատ կան, և սա էլ մեկն է:» (գլ. 1, էջ 7)

Prior to examining the translation of speech acts in Armenian, there are some points to consider. In the original version, the word "Gypsy" is in capital letters which gives it a sense of specificity and weight beyond just describing a group of people. Furthermore, it may function as a **directive illocutionary act**, prompting the old man to provide more information. However, in the Armenian translation "զնշուական" is in lowercase creating a more neutral and non-dramatic tone, and for reducing the intensity or urgency of the illocutionary act. That is why, it is necessary to keep the same effects and impressions of the original as the target readership can relive the same tension present in the source language.

As the original, the Armenian translation retains the core meaning of the **locutionary acts**. The old man's explanation about the curse is accurately translated, with a slight shift in phrasing: "It was gypsies' land once..." and "այստեղ ժամանակին զնշուներն են ապրել", which can be seen as a transformation, i.e. replacement in sentence members. However, the translation of "smart-Alecks in town" is interesting. It is translated as "քաղաքի գիտունիկներ". It conveys the same sentiment, though it is slightly less pejorative in tone in Armenian which, in its turn, weakens the illocutionary force of the expressive speech act. It may be considered ironic in Armenian due to the connotation of "գիտունիկներ," which often implies playful or sarcastic overstatement rather than direct pejoration. The focus on "the people from the city" remains consistent with the original, maintaining the social division between urban and rural beliefs. The **illocutionary force** is more or less kept in Armenian though it is a bit weaker than that of English. The laughter (Փոթևազի) in Armenian similarly highlights Michael's doubtfulness but also pushes the old man to elaborate. The old man responds with a more forceful tone, shifting from the **representative act** to a **directive act** again by warning Michael that he does not understand the significance of the curse.

As for the **perlocution**, its effect on Michael is similar. The Armenian translation maintains the old man's emphasis on the curse, which still creates a sense of forewarning and unease in Michael, despite his outward laughter. The phrase "դրանցից ի՞նչ զաղախարունեք" (what do you know about them?) adds a slight touch of challenge, subtly suggesting that Michael lacks the understanding of rural superstitions.

In English before talking about the curse, the old man says "some tale or other". According to Merriam-

¹⁴ <https://www.oed.com/search/dictionary/?scope=Entries&q=smart+aleck>

¹⁵ <https://priceconomics.com/the-original-smart-aleck>

Webster dictionary, ‘tale’ means a usually imaginative narrative of an event, an intentionally untrue report and a libelous report or a piece of gossip.¹⁶ The phrase is translated into Armenian “ըստ անասպելների”. According to Bararan.am the first meaning of the word “անասպել” is an ancient folk tale about the origin of the world and life of gods and mythological heroes and the second is (figuratively) an unbelievable, exaggerated fiction.¹⁷

Hence, the word “անասպել” carries a stronger mythological and cultural resonance in Armenian, often evoking ancient stories of gods and heroes, which may lend the idea of the curse more weight and significance than the word “tale” in English. This could elevate the idea of the curse in the Armenian version, making it seem more tied to traditional beliefs or mythological elements, whereas the English version’s “tale” seems more like a frivolous story.

In both versions, the speech acts—locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary—are rendered with the care to cultural and linguistic nuances. While some phrases are adapted to sound more natural in Armenian, or the opposite (e.g. անասպել), the core functions of the speech acts remain the same, with only slight shifts in tone and emphasis. The changes reflect the different ways in which language can convey meaning while preserving the underlying intent of the original text.

Another compelling excerpt from the book, rich in speech acts, demonstrates how language subtly influences actions and reveals hidden intentions:

“It’s Death I see. There behind your left shoulder. It’s Death standing by you and it’s Death will have you.” (ch. 15, p. 188)

To begin with, the **illocutionary force** of the passage is obviously strong as the speaker warns of an inevitable event (death will have you), implying a fatalistic outcome. However, the capitalization of the word “Death” and its repetition catches the readers’ attention. The capitalization probably conveys “Death” as a proper noun, emphasizing that it is a specific and unavoidable entity in this context, and not just an abstract concept. The speaker wants to emphasize her perspective that “Death” is not merely something that happens but something that is always present, and unavoidable. By repeating “Death,” the speaker intensifies **the illocutionary act of warning** creating symbolic weight, heightening the fear and emphasizing urgency.

The first sentence, *“It’s Death I see”* suggests a personal emotional response rather than an objective fact. It functions as an **expressive speech act** evoking fear and reinforcing the speaker’s belief in fate. The next sentence is more intriguing: *“There behind your left shoulder”* functions as a **commissive speech act** with the function of warning. Meanwhile, it can be viewed as an **expressive speech act**, as the listener is urged to **imagine the presence of death** behind them, increasing psychological tension. Moreover, this phrase also includes the function of a **declarative speech act**, being a declaration of an unseen reality. The speaker is not merely making a claim but asserting that Death is already present. Nevertheless, the word

“left” is more important in the given context. Why left shoulder? The left side is often symbolically linked to bad omens. In ancient Roman culture, the word “sinister” comes from the Latin term for left (sinistra) and is associated with negative connotations, such as misfortune and bad luck. The word “sinister” eventually became linked to concepts of evil or untrustworthiness in many Western cultures. In the Oxford English Dictionary, the word traces the etymology from the Latin sinister, meaning “left” or “on the left side,” evolving into the modern sense of “evil” or “threatening.”¹⁸

The phrase *“There behind your left shoulder”* creates a perlocutionary effect by making the listener feel vulnerable and possibly insecure, leading to a physical response and an emotional reaction of anxiety or dread. The next sentence also inserts illocutionary force leaving perlocutionary effects on the listeners. First of all, via the sentence *“It’s Death standing by you and it’s Death will have you”* the speaker is making a declaration that “Death” is present and will claim the listener. The structure of the sentence, especially the use of “will have you”, indicates that the speaker is asserting an unavoidable and imminent fate. Apart from this function of the **declarative speech act**, it is also a **commissive speech act** as it functions as a warning of an inevitable fate, possibly invoking a sense of urgency or fear. Emotional and behavioral responses of the hero prove how strong the perlocutionary effect is. It makes the listener fear and realize that “Death” is physically near instilling a deep sense of vulnerability, potentially causing them to feel helpless. Personification of “Death” in the phrase strengthens both the illocutionary and perlocutionary effects. The speaker’s declaration becomes more powerful as Death is portrayed as an active, influential force, and the listener’s emotional responses intensify as they feel the presence of Death more personally and immediately.

Armenian translation

«Մահ եմ տեսնում, այն անմիջապես թիկունքումդ է: Մոտենում է քեզ և շուտով կհասնի:» (զլ. 15, էջ 154)

In the Armenian translation, the **illocutionary force** is maintained via several functions of speech acts. The speaker is declaring that “Death” is already present and getting closer to the listener, with the intention of conveying an inevitable fate which is a **declarative speech act**. The phrase *“Մահ եմ տեսնում”* (I see Death) directly signals that the speaker is providing a vision or insight, strengthening the illocutionary force as a prediction of something unavoidable. As in the original the phrase also carries a warning function being a **commissive speech act**. The speaker implies that Death is near and will soon claim the listener. The structure of the sentence suggests that the speaker is committing to this prediction, urging the listener to acknowledge the coming threat. *“Շուտով կհասնի”* (It will arrive soon) also emphasizes urgency, making the statement function as a warning.

As for the **perlocutionary effect**, the listener is likely to experience a strong emotional response, particularly fear and unease. The speaker has directed the

¹⁶ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/tale>

¹⁷ <https://bararan.am/անասպել>

¹⁸ https://www.oed.com/dictionary/sinister_adj?tab=meaning_and_use

listener's attention to an unavoidable threat, which may make the listener feel vulnerable and anxious. The phrase “Ծուռով կհասնի” adds a sense of immediacy, suggesting that “Death” is no longer distant but approaching rapidly. This enforces the perlocutionary effect by making the listener feel as if Death is unavoidable.

However, several omissions are noteworthy in the Armenian translation: no repetition of the word “Death”, absence of the word “left”. In the English version, “Death” is repeated three times, which reinforces the inevitability and certainty of death. In the Armenian version, “Death” is mentioned only once, which still conveys the idea that the speaker is providing an insight or a vision of this inevitable force. The single mention of death makes the prediction feel less redundant, but it still maintains its powerful effect. However, it is necessary to keep the repetitions of the original in translations because repetitions preserve the emphasis or intensity that the speaker intended. If repetitions are removed, the impact of the message may be weakened or lost, especially when the repetition serves to underline a key concept, emotion, or urgency.

The English version specifies that death is behind the listener's left shoulder, invoking symbolic associations with the left side. Unlike the original, the Armenian version does not specify the side. Instead, it focuses on death being behind the listener (*թիկունքում է* - it is behind you), which still conveys the ominous

proximity but without the symbolic weight of the left side. In Armenian left side is compensated by the noun “թիկունք”. In Armenian, “թիկունք” (back) carries a strong connotation of vulnerability and danger, as threats are often perceived as coming from behind. Culturally, the back symbolizes exposure and the unseen, making it a natural way to convey a presence like death expressed through several idioms in Armenian, such as “մեկին թիկունքից (կռնակից, մեջքից) հարվածել”, “մեկի թիկունքի ետևում”¹⁹.

The translation, indeed, loses the traditional symbolism associated with directionality in the English version which is not accurate in terms of language and pragmatics.

4. Distribution of Speech Acts in English and the Armenian Translation

According to the frequency of speech acts in the analyzed four passages, the distribution of speech acts is presented in the **Figure 1**. It provides a nuanced understanding of how different types of speech acts function in communication. Representative and expressive speech acts, which are primarily concerned with conveying information and emotions, respectively, dominate the discourse. Directives and commissives, which are more action-oriented, reflect the importance of control, influence, and commitment in the novel. Meanwhile, declaratives, though less frequent, remain significant in contexts.

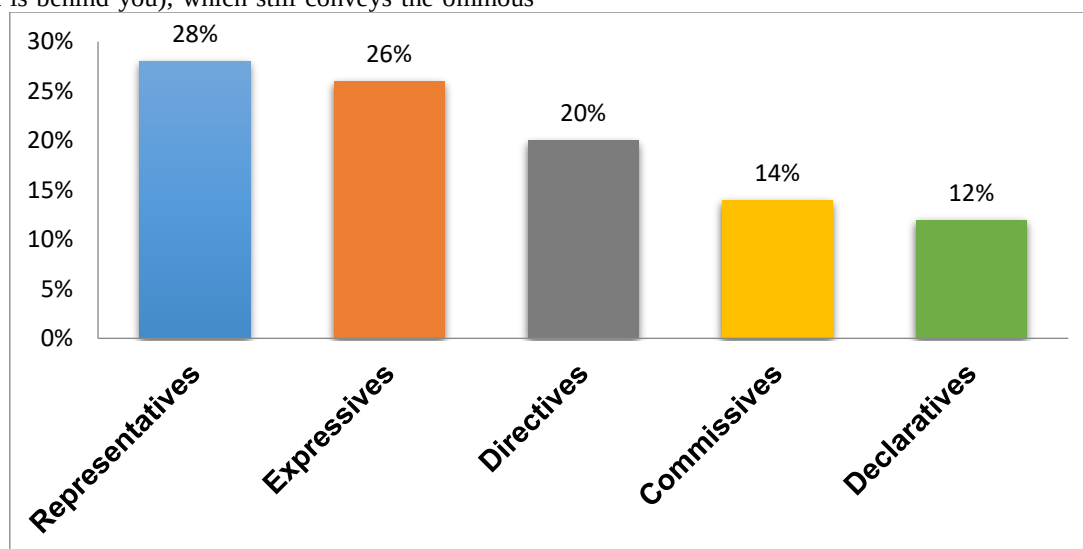


Figure 1

The distribution can be influenced by cultural communication styles. In both languages, there is often a preference for indirectness and politeness via the use of speech acts, especially in situations where direct commands or commitments might be considered impolite or too assertive. As a result, speakers tend to rely more on representatives and expressives to maintain social harmony and express themselves respectfully.

Moreover, it may also be influenced by contextual factors such as the genre and medium of the texts, the social roles of speakers, and the overall tone of the interactions.

As such, the observed distribution indicates how speakers of a particular language are conditioned by culturally specific norms regarding politeness, authority, directness, and interpersonal relationships contributing to a richer understanding of how language functions as a tool for navigating social interactions.

5. Conclusion

Pragmatics is a sort of knowledge that enables people to comprehend intercultural interaction patterns and speech acts techniques in order to address communication issues in cross-cultural contexts.

¹⁹ http://www.nayiri.com/imagedictionaryBrowser.jsp?dictionaryId=64&dt=HY_HY&query=թիկունք

The analysis of the passages containing various speech acts in the framework of the novel "Endless Night" manifests that the core structure of speech acts is largely maintained in translation, whereas significant variations arise due to *linguistic, cultural, and contextual differences*. Direct speech acts, generally retain their intended force, while indirect speech acts, especially those involving cultural conventions, often require adaptation to fit the norms of the target language. In some Armenian translations specifically personalized instances are used, as well as more explicit expressions to preserve illocutionary effects, while English, being more impersonal and detached, relies more on contextual inference, leading to shifts in interpretation. According to the frequency of speech acts in the analyzed passages, representative and expressive acts dominate, while directives, commissives and declaratives though less frequent, hold significance in formal or authoritative contexts in both languages.

The key challenges in translating speech acts encompass preserving illocutionary force and perlocutionary effects, navigating cultural and pragmatic differences, and managing speech act transformations. Illocutionary force is preserved to maintain the intended function of the speech act, while perlocutionary effects may shift due to cultural differences in emotional or behavioral responses.

Furthermore, speech act transformations occur when direct equivalents are lacking in the target language, requiring adjustments that can alter meaning, emphasis and tone. These challenges reveal the primacy of pragmatic over linguistic equivalence in the translation of speech acts.

An additional complexity in translation arises from the differing philosophical and stylistic tendencies of English and Armenian. English allows for implicitness and interpretative openness, while Armenian often favors a more lyrical and authoritative tone due to its structural constraints. Repetitions, capitalization and alliteration are frequently lost or altered in Armenian, reducing their symbolic and aesthetic impact and highlighting the challenge of preserving both pragmatic function and stylistic nuance in translation.

Therefore, the art of translation lies in harmonizing linguistic accuracy with pragmatic knowledge and cultural resonance. In this way, an accurate translation is not merely an act of communication but a bridge between languages and cultures which seeks to transcend the pragmatic factors and emotional depth of the original while honoring the cultural essence of the target language.

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