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MASTER THESIS

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CROATIAN AND SERBIAN TRANSLATIONS OF
J.R.R. TOLKIEN'S *THE HOBBIT* FOCUSING ON ELEMENTS OF FICTIONAL
CULTURE**

**KONTRASTIVNA ANALIZA HRVATSKOG I SRPSKOG PREVODA DJELA '*HOBIT*'
J.R.R. TOLKIENA SA FOKUSOM NA ELEMENTE IZMIŠLJENE KULTURE**

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Abstract

The main aim of this paper is to examine the ways in which the original text of Tolkien's *The Hobbit* was translated to Serbian and Croatian languages and to show the differences between the original work and its translations. What is important to mention is that the paper is going to focus on elements of fictional culture which does not exist outside of Tolkien's works. This is done through thorough examination of translations. The paper is going to show all the differences between these two translations. Also, the paper is going to examine whether the translators managed to transfer the original terms and feelings that Tolkien created in his work. Since *The Hobbit* is full of invented terms and names, translators had a difficult job. The analysis shows that, although there are many differences between the original work and its translations, there are some certain similarities as well, especially when it comes to the translation of the names of characters and places.

Key words: translation, equivalence, differences, Croatian translation, Serbian translation, modification

Apstrakt

Glavni cilj ovog rada jeste da istraži načine na koje je Tolkienovo djelo 'Hobit' prevedeno na hrvatski i srpski jezik, te da prikaže razlike između originalnog djela i njegovih prevoda. Bitno je napomenuti da će se rad fokusirati na elemente izmišljene kulture koja ne postoji izvan Tolkienovih djela. Ovo je postignuto temeljnom analizom prevoda. Rad će prikazati sve razlike koje su uočene između ova dva prevoda. Također, rad će se baviti time da li su prevodioci uspjeli da prevedu izvorne termine, kao i osjećaje koje je Tolkien stvorio. Budući da je 'Hobit' prepun izmišljenih pojmova i imena, prevodioci su imali zahtjevan posao. Analiza pokazuje da, iako postoje mnoge razlike između originala i prevoda, postoje također i određene sličnosti, posebno kada je riječ o prevodima imena likova i mjesta.

Ključne riječi: prevod, ekvivalencija, razlike, hrvatski prevod, srpski prevod, modifikacija

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1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to show the main challenges when it comes to translation of prose fiction literature, especially when it comes to translating invented terms. Any form of translation requires an excellent theoretical foundation and, of course, lots of practice. Translators always have a difficult job while translating any kind of work. It is even more difficult to translate prose fiction, especially Tolkien's fiction because it is full of invented terms. One should be very familiar with Tolkien and his style to be able to translate *The Hobbit* as accurately as possible. That is not an easy task, but it is not impossible.

This paper is going to focus on elements of fictional culture, with special focus on proper names, place names, names of creatures and races, dialogues, riddles and narrative poems which play a very important role in Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, and descriptions which are very important for readers to understand Tolkien's world, Middle Earth. The goal of every translation is to be equal to the original as much as possible, to sound good, and to transfer feelings from the original work. The translators whose translations were used while writing this paper, Zlatko Crnković (2001) in Croatian, and Meri and Milan Milišić (2016) in Serbian language, managed to do that in their own special way. Some parts were translated descriptively and some were very accurate and similar to Tolkien's original.

Nevertheless, both translations paint an accurate picture of Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and are definitely interesting to read.

1.1. About the author¹

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, known as J.R.R. Tolkien, was born in January, 1892 in South Africa, and died in September, 1973 in England. He attended Kin Edward's School in Birmingham and Exeter College, Oxford. He was an English scholar and a very famous writer. He taught English language and literature, and he specialized in Old and Middle English at the Universities of Leeds and Oxford, from 1920-1959. He produced few scholarly publications, for example, a landmark lecture on *Beowulf* called *Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics*, 1936. He got his fame because of his children's book *The Hobbit* (1937) and his epic fantasy *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-55). He began writing *The Hobbit* about 1930, and in 1937 *The Hobbit* was published. It was written for his four children, so it was written as children's book. The book contained pictures made by author which were a great accessory for children. *The Hobbit* is a fantasy about a smaller relative of Man, called hobbit. This hobbit's name is Bilbo Baggins, and he joins a quest for a dragon's treasure. The imagined world where it all happens is called Middle Earth. The book got so popular that the publisher asked for a sequel, and that was the next Tolkien's masterpiece, *The Lord of the Rings*. *The Lord of the Rings* also represents an extension of Tolkien's Silmarillion tales. *The Silmarillion* (1977) is Tolkien's collection of works published posthumously by his son, Christopher Tolkien. His other works, such as *Unfinished Tales*, *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*, and *The Road Goes Ever On*, have the same purpose like *The Silmarillion*. However, *The Lord of the Rings* was not supposed to be a trilogy at the beginning, but it was published in three parts: *The Fellowship of the Ring*, *The Two Towers*, and *The Return of the King*. *The Lord of the Rings* was translated many times, and more than 50 million copies were sold in some 30 languages.

Besides the above-mentioned books, Tolkien also wrote some shorter works. These include a mock-medieval story *Farmer Giles of Ham* (1949), *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil and Other Verses from the Red Book* (1962), poetry related to *The Lord of the Rings*, and fantasy *Smith of Wootton Major* (1967). Among Tolkien's other works that were published posthumously are *The Father Christmas Letters* (1976), *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien* (1981), and two children stories *Mr. Bliss* (1982) and *Roverandom* (1998).

¹ Hammond, Wayne G. "J.R.R. Tolkien." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/biography/J-R-R-Tolkien accessed on June 1, 2019.

1.2. Plot summary of *The Hobbit*

The Hobbit is a fantasy novel which introduced Tolkien's imaginary world called Middle Earth, and it served as a prologue to *The Lord of the Rings*. The book consists of 19 chapters, and every chapter has its own name. It starts with An Unexpected Party and finishes with The Last Stage. It all started when one hobbit, called Bilbo Baggins, unwillingly became a hero.

The book opens with a description of a hole where this hobbit lives, in a village called Hobbiton. Bilbo lived a happy and quiet life until the old wizard Gandalf appeared and persuaded him to set out on an adventure with thirteen dwarves. They are embarking on a grand quest to reclaim the treasure from a dragon called Smaug, and Bilbo is to be their burglar. They had many misfortunes, the first of them being three hungry trolls. They captured all of them, but not Gandalf, who eventually saved them. The next misfortune was in the Misty Mountains, when they became the prisoners of goblins. Gandalf managed to save them, but Bilbo was left behind. He wandered through the tunnels and found a golden ring on the ground. He met Gollum, a hissing creature that wanted to eat Bilbo, and they had a contest of riddles in order to determine Bilbo's faith. Bilbo won, but Gollum still wanted to eat him, and in the end, Bilbo disappeared by wearing the ring he found. After that, the evil wolves called Wargs wanted to kill them, but they managed to escape to safety because of great eagles and Beorn, who was able to change shape from a man into a bear. They entered the dark forest of Mirkwood where Gandalf abandoned them. In the forest, they were caught in the webs of giant spiders, and trapped by a group of wood elves. Bilbo used his magic ring to save his new friends in both cases. Finally, they arrived at Lake Town. Bilbo managed to enter the mountain and talk to Smaug. He infuriated him by stealing a golden cup and Smaug went to destroy Lake Town, but he was murdered by a heroic archer, Bard. Both humans of Lake Town and the elves of Mirkwood went to the Lonely Mountain to ask for a share of the treasure, but Thorin became greedy and refused. The humans and elves managed to besiege the mountain when Gandalf finally reappeared bearing bad news of the upcoming war. An army of goblins and Wargs attacked the mountain, and all of them fought together to defeat them. Even Beorn and the eagles came to help and they defeated an evil army together. After the battle, Bilbo returned to Hobbiton and continued to live his life. His people did not like him anymore, but he did not care because he had the greatest adventure ever and made new, better friends.

1.3. Tolkien's style and language

Before even starting with the analysis, it is important to mention that Tolkien used a very specific style and language, and he was constantly criticized for that. When it comes to *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien valued the vulgarity of hobbit speech and the archaism of men. He believed that archaism is an ancient and noble form of English language, so he used it in most of his works. What is interesting is that he played with inflections and used some expressions that are not grammatically correct, such as 'I knows' in the part where trolls speak to each other. *The Hobbit* is written in a third-person perspective, and that is what makes it very interesting to readers because they can keep up with other scenes as well, not only Bilbo's. This work is also full of descriptions which play a significant role in explaining to the readers how Tolkien's invented world, the Middle Earth, looks like. *The Hobbit* is considered to be a children's literature since he wrote it for his four children. His inspiration came from British folktales and Victorian genre fiction. The locations in his books and the entire Middle Earth were inspired by some places that he visited in real life. He decided to combine everything he saw to create one unique world. Even some of the events in the book are similar to those that actually happened to him. One can conclude that Tolkien had a very good inspiration and managed to create an everlasting fictional novel.

1.4. Translation as decision-making

The translation process is a process of decision making, and it is up to a translator to make the decision when it comes to his translation. One word can be translated in many different ways, but it is the translator's job to decide which word suits some context the best. Thomas Honegger discusses the translators' problems concerning translation in general and especially the translation of Tolkien's works. He states:

Since different languages do not correspond exactly in their syntactic, semantic and ideological structures, translators are constantly having to decide on the best possible approximation.²

² Honegger, Thomas. *Tolkien in Translation*. Zurich and Berne: Walking Tree Publishers, 2003, p. 23. PDF

He continues by saying that ‘translators are forced to create, or at least to invent’³ because it is not always possible to translate some phrases, especially in Tolkien’s case. He also used inventions of his own, and that forces the translator to make a decision on how to translate some phrases into his own language and make them understandable to the audience.

One thing that every translator should have in mind is something called ‘skopos theory’. This term is best explained in Armstrong’s book, where he says:

The constraints that weigh on the translator are sometimes discussed in terms of what is known as ‘skopos theory’ (Vermeer, 1989); more specifically, the *skopos* surrounding an ST refers to the circumstances in which it was written, and the reasons for which it is being translated. [...] the translator needs to know why the ST was composed and for whom, and correspondingly, why the translation has been commissioned, and for whom. These factors will influence many translation decisions.⁴

Here, ST represents a source text, and it is clear that before translating something, the translator has to know why and for whom the source text was composed. *Skopos* is a Greek word which means ‘purpose’, and it is clear that the translator has to know the purpose of source text before translating it into the target language. He has to ask himself some certain questions before even starting with the translation. Armstrong talks about those questions:

The translator needs frequently to be thinking in terms of *process*: ‘what am I doing at this point?’; ‘what are the choices available?’; ‘what is the underlying meaning?’; ‘what is the fundamental problem?’; etc. This is in contrast to an attitude that lays stress merely on the *product*, and risks limiting itself to the question: ‘what is the dictionary translation for this word?’.⁵

The decision-making process is not simple, and it cannot be done in one day. Translators have to do thorough research before starting with the translation, and they have to be able to understand what the author wanted to say so that they can transfer the same meaning and feeling.

³ Honegger, *op.cit.*, p. 28.

⁴ Armstrong, Nigel. *Translation, Linguistics, Culture: A French-English Handbook*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2005, p. 44. PDF

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

1.5. Strategies in translation

Before starting with the analysis which represents the most important part of my thesis, there are some strategies that are important to mention when it comes to translation. Armstrong discusses these strategies in his book and he mentions some of them, including equivalence in translation and compensation. He also says that the translator has to ‘pay close attention always to the register of the ST’⁶, which can sometimes be difficult, especially in fiction. Compensation strategy simply means that the translator must accept the loss of one element from the target text, but he will compensate by adding an element somewhere else. Equivalence is considered to be the most important strategy because the translation must be equivalent to the original, one way or another.

Although the languages are different and have different rules, the feeling and message of the source text must be transferred to the target text, which can be done by following these strategies.

⁶ Armstrong, *op.cit.*, p. 77.

2. Comparative analysis

Now that I have explained a bit about Tolkien's style and decision-making process, I would like to start with the analysis of the two translations. I have chosen Crnković's translation to Croatian, and Milišić's translation to the Serbian language. These translations are interesting because they differ in so many aspects, but it is important to mention that there are no two translations that are completely the same. That brings us back to decision making and the fact that every translator decides how he wants to translate a certain word or phrase.

The analysis will be done in a way that the two translations will be compared with original and between each other as well. The analysis is classified in groups according to the topic of the elements chosen to be analyzed.

2.1. Proper names, creatures, and races

There are many names in Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, and all of them would be very interesting for the analysis. However, it is impossible to go through all of them, so I have chosen some proper names that are eye-catching and that are translated in a different way. Nevertheless, there are many names that are the same in both Croatian and Serbian and they are not included in this paper. Since Tolkien invented his own world, there are many creatures and different races with very unusual names. I believe it is interesting to see how translators managed to translate some non-existent words.

Tolkien wrote a guide for translators when it comes to the names in *The Lord of the Rings*. That guide can be partially used for *The Hobbit* as well since many characters can be found in both of these works. Robert Foster also wrote a book where translators could find everything they need. Still, not many translators checked those two guides and they were not able to translate some names correctly.

I would like to start with Bilbo's last name, and that is *Baggins*⁷.

⁷ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*. Houghton Mifflin Company of Boston, 1973, p. 10.

Serbian

Croatian

*Bagins*⁸

*Baggins*⁹

From these two examples, we can see the main difference when it comes to these two translations. In the Serbian language, the rule is that most of the names are translated according to the pronunciation. *Bagins* here has only one *g* letter because of the way the speaker pronounces it. However, in the Croatian language, most of the names stay just like in the original, as it can be seen here.

Another example is the name of Bilbo's distant cousin, *Belladonna Took*¹⁰.

Serbian

Croatian

*Beladona Tuk*¹¹

*Belladonna Took*¹²

In his guide for translators, Tolkien wrote how to translate last name Took and personal names of the Took family. He said:

Took. Hobbit-name of unknown origin representing actual Hobbit *Tūk*. It should thus be kept and spelt phonetically according to the language of translation. The Took personal names should be kept in the form and spelling of the text, as *Peregrin*, *Paladin*, *Adelard*, *Bandobras*.¹³

From his guide, we can see that he said that the last name Took should be spelled according to the phonetical rules of the target language. In Serbian translation, we have that because of the already mentioned rule. Croatian translation kept the original form, we have *Took*, just like in the case of *Baggins*. What is interesting is her personal name, Belladonna. In the original, it is spelled with double *l* and double *n*, and Tolkien wrote that the Took names have to be spelled just like in the original. In Serbian, it is spelled phonetically according to the rules of the Serbian language,

⁸ Tolkien, Dž.R.R. *Hobit*. Novi Sad: Solaris, 2016, p. 10.

⁹ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Hobit*. Zagreb: Algoritam, 2001, p. 7.

¹⁰ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*, p. 10.

¹¹ Tolkien, Dž.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 11.

¹² Tolkien, J.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 8.

¹³ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Guide to the Names in The Lord of the Rings*, p. 10. PDF

however, in Croatian, we have double *l*, but only one *n*. The reason for that might be that Croatians have name *Dona*, so maybe the Croatian translator wanted to make it original in some way.

When it comes to proper names, one name is extremely important to mention, and that is the name of a leader of dwarves, *Thorin Oakenshield*¹⁴. In these two translations, we have one difference and one similarity.

Serbian

Croatian

*Torin Hrastoštit*¹⁵

*Thorin Hrastoštit*¹⁶

It is obvious that the name is translated and spelled according to the rules of these two languages. However, what is interesting is that both translations have the same last name, *Hrastoštit*. That is probably because it cannot be translated differently and still have the same meaning as in the original.

Another interesting name is actually a nickname of Bandobras Took, and that is *Bullroarer*¹⁷. Tolkien said that his nickname ‘should be translated by sense (if possible alliterating on B)’.¹⁸

Serbian

Croatian

*Grcman*¹⁹

*Rikobik*²⁰

As we can see, Serbian translation is quite peculiar because it uses a word that cannot be heard often. *Grcman* sounds like the last name in the Serbian language; however, it seems that it describes a person who is very loud. *Rikobik* has a similar meaning, but what is interesting is how Tolkien described the usage of this word. He said:

I believed when I wrote it that *bullroarer* was a word used by anthropologists for instruments that made a roaring sound, used by uncivilized peoples; but I cannot find it in any dictionaries.²¹

¹⁴ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*, p. 18.

¹⁵ Tolkien, Dž.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 20.

¹⁶ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 13.

¹⁷ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*, p. 26.

¹⁸ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Guide to the Names in The Lord of the Rings*, p. 10. PDF

¹⁹ Tolkien, Dž.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 28.

²⁰ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 18.

²¹ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Guide to the Names in The Lord of the Rings*, p. 10. PDF

He was not able to find this word in dictionaries, but he still used it to describe Bandobras who was a very loud and noisy person. We can conclude that both translations suit the context and that the translators paid attention to the strategy of equivalence and the register of the source text.

In the book, when Bilbo comes back home all of his things are being sold, and there is a sign which says that the one selling is *Messrs. Grubb, Grubb, and Burrowes*²². This is a ‘company’ that started selling Bilbo’s things after his long absence. We can see that the last name Grubb is mentioned two times.

Serbian

*trgovačka kompanija Gruvalo, Krkalo i Njuškalo*²³

Croatian

*tvrtka Kopač, Kopač i Rovač*²⁴

Let us start with the first part, *Messrs.*, which is a plural of Mr. It is actually used in the title of a company, before the names of two or more men. In Serbian, *trgovačka kompanija* is a descriptive translation, meaning the company that sells something, which is accurate since they did sell things. Croatian translation is simply *tvrtka*, which means ‘company’, and there is no additional meaning here, the translation does not say what kind of company it is. When it comes to last names, Croatian translation just like the original has repeated *Kopač*. This translation is equal to the original because Tolkien said in his guide that ‘the name is meant to recall the English verb *grub* (dig, root, in the ground)’²⁵, hence it should be translated if possible. Same goes for *Burrowes*. However, Serbian translation has no equivalence with the original text. First, last name Grubb is not repeated twice, but it is translated in two different ways. *Gruvalo*, *Krkalo*, and *Njuškalo* do not really suit Tolkien’s context, and they are quite hilarious, especially for little children. Tolkien did not intend them to be funny, and that is why the Croatian version is more suitable here. Also, the target text reproduced the same effect we can find in the source text.

What is interesting in Tolkien’s *The Hobbit* is that there are many different creatures and races that play an enormous role in his book. There are goblins, elves, dwarves, Wargs, and many others.

²² Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*, p. 314.

²³ Tolkien, Dž.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 347.

²⁴ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 231.

²⁵ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Guide to the Names in The Lord of the Rings*, p. 7. PDF

There is one name that contains both a personal name and a race name, and that is *Azog the Goblin*²⁶. Whenever he is mentioned, it is in this form. In the translations, one can notice that this word *goblin* is translated differently in both languages.

Serbian

Croatian

*bauk Azog*²⁷

*goblin Azog*²⁸

Now, the name is the same, *Azog*, because proper names have to stay the same; otherwise, that is not a translation anymore, but an invention. In Serbian translation, there is a word *bauk* for a goblin. In Tolkien's book *The Lord of the Rings*, this word has been changed into *orc*; however, it still means the same, a creature that is not human, that is not pleasant for an eye, and that usually hides in dark places. That is what the word *bauk* means in Serbian, and that is the reason why it was translated this way. The meaning is still the same. However, in Croatian translation, we have word *goblin*, just like in the original. Goblins are usually considered to be small creatures, but in Tolkien's book, they are big and nasty. Nevertheless, the meaning is the same, although these two translations differ from each other.

There is another goblin mentioned in the book, the son of *Azog*, *Bolg of the North*²⁹. He is the one who let the goblins into the battle of five armies. The translations are:

Serbian

Croatian

*Severni Bolg*³⁰

*Bolg sa sjevera*³¹

In the book, *Bolg of the North* is a leader of northern goblins, and this part *of the North* is actually his title, not merely his place of origin. It is important for the readers to know that *Bolg* is someone important, that he is not a common goblin, but their king and a leader, and that is why this part does not mean that he only lives in the north. According to that, Serbian translation is more suitable here because it has the same meaning as in the original. *Bolg sa sjevera* simply means that he is

²⁶ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*, p. 33.

²⁷ Tolkien, Dž.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 37.

²⁸ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 24.

²⁹ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*, p. 292.

³⁰ Tolkien, Dž.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 323.

³¹ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 213.

from the north. What is important here is his title, not the place where he lives. That is why equivalence is very important.

When it comes to other races, elves play a very important role in Tolkien's book. He mentioned many types of elves, but I would like to mention only one type, and that is *Deep-elves*³² because of the way they are mentioned in the two translations.

Serbian

Croatian

*zagasiti vilovnjaci*³³

*Podzemni Vilenjaci*³⁴

The first thing we can notice would be capitalization. In the original, the first word is capitalized and there is this dash between the two words. We do not have that dash in either of the two translations, and in Serbian, no word is capitalized, while in Croatian translation both of them are capitalized. This is the race name and the first word should be capitalized according to the original. The difference is also in the word *elves*. In Serbian, it is *vilovnjaci*, while in Croatian it is *vilenjaci*. It is important to mention that both words have the same meaning, so the equivalence is preserved here. What is also interesting is that *deep* in Serbian means 'of dark skin color', while in Croatian it means 'someone who comes from the underground'. Tolkien did not really explain anything about these elves, so we cannot argue the truth here.

In conclusion to this part, we can see that there are some certain similarities in these translations, although there are many differences as well. When it comes to proper names, creatures, and races we can see that the translators did not really use Tolkien's guide for names, but they still managed to translate in the way that the readers of Croatian and Serbian languages can understand what the author wanted to say.

³² Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*, p. 178.

³³ Tolkien, Dž.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 196.

³⁴ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 125.

2.2. Place names

Place names are quite interesting since every place is invented and has a name that does not exist outside of Tolkien's world. In his book, Honegger said:

In dealing with a work of fiction we may be faced with places and situations which are completely invented and outside not only our personal experience but also the resources of reference books. In some genres such as fantasy and science fiction it is not unusual even to find invented words, or already existing words used in a special sense so that they have no referent in the 'real' world.³⁵

As we can see, Tolkien's world is not a real world, and these places are not actual places. Nonetheless, it is interesting to see how the translators did that.

The first and the most important place is, of course, *The Lonely Mountain*³⁶. It is the place where our heroes wanted to go, where the horrible dragon keeps his treasure, and it is the dwarves' home.

Serbian

Croatian

*Samotna planina*³⁷

*Pustogora*³⁸

It is obvious that the first translation to the Serbian language is closer and more accurate when it comes to the description of this place. It is a big and lonely mountain, so this translation suits the context. Croatian translation uses a word *gora*, which is similar to the word *mountain* but is considered to be smaller than the mountain. Word *pusto* means 'empty, lonely', so both of the translations are acceptable and transfer the same meaning as the original. Here we can introduce the term known as 'multiple equivalence'³⁹ mentioned by Armstrong, where he argues that there is a possibility of translating one element into several different ways that still have the same meaning. After all, even the English language has several different words that have the same or at least similar meaning.

³⁵ Honegger, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

³⁶ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*, p. 55.

³⁷ Tolkien, Dž.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 60.

³⁸ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 39.

³⁹ Armstrong, *op.cit.*, p. 197.

It is interesting how the word *Dale*⁴⁰ was translated, especially because there is one significant difference between Croatian and Serbian translation.

Serbian

Croatian

*Dol*⁴¹

*Dôlje*⁴²

Robert Foster wrote an entire guide to Middle Earth, where he explained what Dale was, and it was a ‘city-kingdom of Men, located on the southern slopes of Erebor.’⁴³ Since it was located on the slopes of the mountain, both of the translations transfer the meaning and location properly. What is interesting is the difference between these two words, *dol* and *dôlje*. In Balkan languages, word *dolje* without this accent means ‘down’, and the letter *o* is pronounced quickly. However, with the accent on the letter *o* the pronunciation changes, and it is pronounced as [o:]. Both *dol* and *dôlje* have a similar meaning which shows that the equivalence in translation is achieved.

Bilbo’s home in Hobbiton is called *Bag-End Under-Hill*⁴⁴. Tolkien wrote in his guide that Bag End is:

The local name for Bilbo's house, and meant to be associated (by hobbits) with the end of a 'bag' or 'pudding-bag' = cul-de-sac. Translate by sense.⁴⁵

He mentioned that the translation should have an element which means ‘sack or bag’. Here are the translations:

Serbian

Croatian

*Ulica Bagrema ispod Brda*⁴⁶

*Vrećasti vijenac podno Brijega*⁴⁷

In Serbian translation we have a word street (*ulica*), which cannot be found in the original text, and there is a word *bagrem* which in Serbian stands for a plant. As we can see in Tolkien’s guide, the translation should contain word sack or bag. We have that in Croatian translation, but there is

⁴⁰ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*, p. 32.

⁴¹ Tolkien, Dž.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 36.

⁴² Tolkien, J.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 23.

⁴³ Foster, Robert. *The Complete Guide to Middle-Earth*. London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993, p. 80. PDF

⁴⁴ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*, p. 237.

⁴⁵ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Guide to the Names in The Lord of the Rings*, p. 12. PDF

⁴⁶ Tolkien, Dž.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 260.

⁴⁷ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 170.

still a word *vijenac* which does not fit this context of Bilbo's house. His house is located under the hill, just like the name says, and it does not resemble any of the words used for translation. However, it is extremely difficult to translate the name of this place, and the translators had to be creative when it comes to their translations. Honegger explained that very well:

All of these [...] types are examples of original creation in the source language, so that the establishment of an equivalent in the target language will of necessity also be a creative act, even if it consists merely of utilising the source text term as a loan-word.⁴⁸

Since Tolkien's names, both proper and place names, are unique and represent an original creation, translators also have to be creative and modify names to be able to translate them. This was an excellent example of modification and creation, and the readers can still picture Bilbo's home and the way it looks like, although there is no equivalence when it comes to Bag-End.

Another important place where our heroes met many misfortunes is called *Mirkwood*⁴⁹. Tolkien described the origin of its name:

A name borrowed from ancient Germanic geography and legend, chiefly preserved in Old Norse *myrkviðr*, though the oldest recorded form is Old German *mirkiwidu*. Not preserved in English, though *Mirkwood* is now used to represent Old Norse *myrkviðr*. Translate by sense, if possible using elements of poetic or antique tone.⁵⁰

As we can see, this name is borrowed, not invented and it should have some poetic and antique tone in its translation. I believe that is not achieved in these translations.

Serbian

*Mrka Šuma*⁵¹

Croatian

*Mrkodol*⁵²

It seems that the Croatian translation has word *dol* repeated quite often for many different things. Mirkwood is a large, gloomy, and very spooky forest where many bad creatures live. Hence, the word *dol* is not suitable to be its translation. Serbian translation paints a more accurate picture of

⁴⁸ Honegger, *op.cit.*, p. 28.

⁴⁹ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*, p. 129.

⁵⁰ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Guide to the Names in The Lord of the Rings*, p. 18. PDF

⁵¹ Tolkien, Dž.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 144.

⁵² Tolkien, J.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 93.

Mirkwood, especially because it has a word forest (*šuma*) in it. The adjective that is used in both of the translations describes Mirkwood very well since it is a dark forest, and *mrk* means ‘dark’.

If we recall the translation of The Lonely Mountain, we can notice that the Serbian translation used the word ‘planina’ for ‘mountain’. Another example regarding Mirkwood is *Mountains of Mirkwood*⁵³. If a reader looks at the map, which can be found in the original and in translated books, he/she can see that there is a range of mountains, not only one; hence the name Mountains of Mirkwood. This time, Serbian translation did not stick to the original:

Serbian

Croatian

*Uzvišica Mrke šume*⁵⁴

*Planine Mrkodola*⁵⁵

As we can see, in Serbian there is a simple word *uzvišica*, which means ‘small hill’, definitely not a mountain. The translators (Meri and Milan Milišić) did not stick to the register of the source text because there is no plural in their translation and there is no equivalent word to the word mountain. In this case, Croatian translation is more suitable and closer to the register of the original text. However, both of the translations are understandable and can be read easily.

Tolkien liked playing with new words, so he created a place where ravens live, called *Ravenhill*⁵⁶, and that is a ‘hill near Erebor at the end of the great southern spur of that mountain.’⁵⁷ Ravenhill as such does not exist outside of Tolkien’s world. Since it is made out of two words, raven and hill, it is not that easy to translate. It is a hill where ravens live, and this is how it was translated:

Serbian

Croatian

*Vran*⁵⁸

*Gavranbrijeg*⁵⁹

Croatian translation consists out of two words, raven and hill, just like in the original, and here, the equivalence is clear-cut. However, Serbian translation has one simple word, *Vran*. In the Serbian language, this word means ‘raven’ (gavran), so this is understandable for readers whose

⁵³ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*, p. 55.

⁵⁴ Tolkien, Dž.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 60.

⁵⁵ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 39.

⁵⁶ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*, p. 216.

⁵⁷ Foster, *op.cit.*, p. 327.

⁵⁸ Tolkien, Dž.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 234.

⁵⁹ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 153.

maternal language is Serbian. Regarding the translation itself, it is simple and to the point; however, it does not mark a hill where ravens live. It plainly refers to the place where they live, it does not explain to the readers that it is the hill, which is very important to create a perfect picture of the Middle Earth which is full of mountains and high places. Croatian translation describes the place in a better way and it paints a clearer picture, and it is necessary for a reader to have an exact picture in his mind when reading a book, especially fiction.

When we look at the map that can be found in the book, the entire area where Tolkien's world is set is called *Wilderland*⁶⁰, which is 'an invention (not actually found in English), based on *wilderness* (originally meaning country of wild creatures, not inhabited by Men).'⁶¹

Basically, the translation should have a meaning of something wild because *Wilderland* refers to wild land. Here are the translations:

Serbian

Croatian

*Divljilend*⁶²

*Pustošija*⁶³

It can be said here that both translations are not good enough in this context. Let us start with the Serbian one. It has the word 'divlji' (wild) in it, which seems like a good start. However, instead of translating the word 'land', it is simply written the way it is pronounced, so it is spelled phonetically. The problem here is that, to a reader *divljilend* means nothing, especially if the reader does not know what the word 'land' means. This translation can, maybe, be connected with Disneyland. Everyone knows that is the name of an amusement park; however, the reader here does not know what *divljilend* refers to, especially if he is not familiar with Tolkien's explanations of the place. This is a case of non-equivalence at the word level, which according to Baker means 'that the target language has no direct equivalent for a word which occurs in the source text.'⁶⁴

In this case, translators have a very difficult job and have to invent something new. I believe that this word could have been translated as 'Divlja zemlja', or even 'Divljina', and the readers would have a perfect picture of this place. Even Croatian translation did not achieve equivalence because,

⁶⁰ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*, p. 55.

⁶¹ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Guide to the Names in The Lord of the Rings*, p. 21. PDF

⁶² Tolkien, Dž.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 60.

⁶³ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 39.

⁶⁴ Baker, Mona. *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*. London: Routledge, 1992, p. 20. PDF

according to the translation, this place is a ghost-like place, without anyone living there, which is not true. It is safe to say that this place could have been translated in a better way. However, the reaction of the audience is important, and both of the translations are very popular and well-read in the Balkans. Every translator has the freedom to adjust the text if he thinks that it will be accepted. This part can be summarized by Honegger's explanation:

It is important to remember that translation takes place at a particular point in time and proposes only a provisional solution; there is no such thing as a perfect and definitive translation. The translator's task is to present the text in a way that is both accessible and acceptable to the target readership at the time and place where it is published.⁶⁵

It is important to know the audience, and if the audience reacts well to the translation, the translator has achieved its purpose.

2.3. Descriptions

Descriptions play a big role in Tolkien's books because they show the readers his world, his vision, and it is much easier to imagine something if you have detailed explanations. Tolkien uses descriptions to paint his world, and I believe that every book is more interesting if you have descriptions. However, too many descriptions can make a book boring, which is definitely not the case here. When it comes to translation, there are certainly many interesting things to observe. Now, the focus is not on the names, but on the ways that entire sentences were translated and on the feeling they should transfer.

Here we can also talk about different kinds of translation, such as literal translation because there are some parts translated literally, which sometimes can fit the context and sometimes cannot. It all depends on the translator who has to have a good knowledge of the text and style he deals with. Honegger discusses:

It is assumed that any professional literary translator has a thorough knowledge of the structure and idiom of the source language, as well as being familiar with a wide range of

⁶⁵ Honegger, *op.cit.*, p. 5.

literary styles, but Tolkien's command of a range of historical styles and interplay of philological correspondences often poses special problems.⁶⁶

The first example of an amazing description is a description of Bilbo's house.

English

*In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. **Not** a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor **yet** a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or **to eat**: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means **comfort**.*⁶⁷

Serbian

*U jednoj rupi u zemlji živeo je hobit. **Ne** u gadnoj, prljavoj, vlažnoj rupi, ispunjenoj ostacima crva i zadahom vlage, nit, **pak**, u suvoj, ogoleloj, peščanoj rupi, u kojoj nema na šta da se sedne i u kojoj nema ništa **za jelo**: ovo je bila hobitska rupa, a to znači – **udobnost**.*⁶⁸

Croatian

*U rupi u zemlji živio je hobit. **Nije to bila** gadna, prljava, mokra rupa ispunjena ostacima crva i zadahom vlage, niti suha, gola, pješčana rupa u kojoj se nema na što sjesti, niti se ima što **jesti**: bijaše to hobitska rupa, a to znači **vrlo udobna**.*⁶⁹

The second sentence starts with *not*, and in Serbian translation there is also only one word, *ne*, meaning that it was not a dirty hole. In both original and Serbian translation, we have ellipsis used. It is another strategy that can be used and it is the omission of elements that are normally present in a full version, which would be: 'It was not a nasty, dirty', etc. Armstrong said that 'the spoken language makes much use of ellipsis, often by omitting pronouns and other elements like auxiliary verbs.'⁷⁰ There is no ellipsis in Croatian translation, but we have a fully constructed sentence with all elements in it. Also, in the original part, we have word *yet* which was translated in Serbian as *pak*, while in Croatian this word cannot be found. Now, when it comes to translation, translators

⁶⁶ Honegger, *op.cit.*, p. 8.

⁶⁷ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*, p. 9.

⁶⁸ Tolkien, Dž.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 9.

⁶⁹ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 7.

⁷⁰ Armstrong, *op.cit.*, p. 124.

have a right to translate verbs as nouns or nouns as adjectives, as long as they fit the context and express the same thing. Thus, there are two differences from that point of view in the second sentence. In Serbian translation, the verb *to eat* was translated as a phrase *za jelo*, and the word *jelo* is actually a noun, while in the Croatian version there is a verb, just like in the original. Their form is different, but they are still related to the process of eating, and that is important. Same goes for the last word, *comfort*; it is a noun, and its form was kept in the Serbian translation. However, in Croatian, this word was translated using adverb *vrlo* as an intensifier before adjective *udobna*. As we can see, the form was not kept but changed into an adjective (*udobna*=comfortable). This is acceptable in translation, as Baker said:

If the target-language equivalent is neutral compared to the source-language item, the translator can sometimes add the evaluative element by means of a modifier or adverb if necessary.⁷¹

The next example is a description of a dreadful dragon, Smaug. By using this description, Tolkien wanted to show his readers how terrible the dragon was and how the world changed after his desolation.

English

*There was a most specially greedy strong and wicked worm called Smaug. One day he flew up into the air and came south. The first we heard of it was a noise like a hurricane coming from the North, and the pine-trees on the Mountain creaking and cracking in the wind.*⁷²

Serbian

*Među tim džinovskim crvima postojao je jedan posebno pohlepan, snažan i pokvaren, zvao se Šmaug. Jednog dana on polete vazduhom i spusti se na jug. Prvo je do naših ušiju doprla buka koja je nalik uraganu pristizala sa severa, a borje je na Planini krckalo i škripalo na vetru.*⁷³

⁷¹ Baker, *op.cit.*, p. 23.

⁷² Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*, p. 32.

⁷³ Tolkien, Dž.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 36.

Croatian

*Među tim je aždajama posebice pohlepan, snažan i opak bio Smaug. Jednog je dana on poletio i spustio se na jugu. Prvo je do naših ušiju doprla buka sa sjevera poput uragana, a borovi su na Gori zacviljeli i zakrckali na vjetru.*⁷⁴

The first sentence must be observed in a way that there are some elements added in both translations that cannot be seen in the original sentence. In the original, the description says *worm called Smaug*, but the translations say that ‘amongst those worms, there was Smaug’, if translated literally to English. There is a modification used here for the sake of context and readability. To be more precise, this sentence was translated by paraphrasing it to some certain extent. Baker said:

Instead of a related word, the paraphrase may be based on modifying a superordinate or simply on unpacking the meaning of the source item, particularly if the item in question is semantically complex.⁷⁵

Nevertheless, the reader has a clear description of Smaug that is easy to understand. In the third sentence, there are two things to be said. The Croatian translation of *a noise like a hurricane coming from the North* has different word order. The first word is *buka* just like in the original; however, the part *from the North* is moved into the second position, before *like a hurricane*. According to Croatian translation, this noise originated in the North, which we do not know precisely, we simply know that it came from the North. Word order is very important, especially in translation ‘because it plays a major role in maintaining a coherent point of view and in orienting messages at text level.’⁷⁶ Serbian translation is closer to the original regarding word order. It describes the noise saying that it was similar to the hurricane because it was equally dreadful. In the same sentence, *creaking and cracking* switched places in Serbian translation, and were translated in a way that they describe this situation as something that lasted for quite a while, which is true if we look at the original. It seems that in the Croatian translation all of this happened only in one moment, at least if we look at the translation *zacviljeli i zakrckali*. Thus, in this translation,

⁷⁴ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 23.

⁷⁵ Baker, *op.cit.*, p. 38.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

we do not have a continuous tense. This does not play a big role for a reader, and according to that we can say that both of the translations were able to transfer the original description and feeling.

The next, very short description is of someone who is mentioned in *The Lord of the Rings* as well, and that is the Necromancer, or better known in *The Lord of the Rings* as Sauron, an evil wizard.

English

*He is an enemy **far beyond the powers** of all the dwarves put together, if they could all be collected again **from the four corners of the world.***⁷⁷

Serbian

*On je protivnik **znatno iznad moći** svih patuljaka uzetih zajedno, kad bi se svi mogli sabrati ponovo **sa sve četiri strane sveta.***⁷⁸

Croatian

*On je protivnik **koji znatno nadmašuje snagu** svih patuljaka zajedno, kad bi se ponovo mogli okupiti **iz svih krajeva svijeta.***⁷⁹

This is how the Necromancer was described, and we can see from the beginning of the sentence that he is an enemy. Now, in the original, we can see Tolkien's unique style of describing something or someone. Serbian translation of *far beyond the powers* is very close to the original and it transfers the same feeling that the original text has. However, Croatian translation is a bit more descriptive and wants to say how strong the Necromancer is. It should be known that Tolkien did not talk only about the strength, but about all the abilities that the dwarves have. From the point of view of equivalence, this translation is not as equal to the original as Serbian is. Nonetheless, it serves the purpose and it is there to intrigue the readers. The last thing we can notice here is, again, the difference in Croatian translation of *from the four corners of the world*. There is no number in the translation, it simply says *iz svih krajeva svijeta*. Tolkien refers to the four corners of the world,

⁷⁷ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*, p. 34.

⁷⁸ Tolkien, Dž.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 38.

⁷⁹ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 24.

meaning four compass points, just like the Serbian translation says *četiri strane sveta*. These are some minor differences, but they still exist and are worth mentioning while doing the analysis.

What is also interesting is all the names Bilbo gave himself while talking to Smaug, trying to trick him because that is the way to talk with dragons. This is how he describes himself:

English

*‘‘I am the clue-finder, the web-cutter, **the stinging fly**.’’* [...] *‘‘I am the friend of bears and the guest of eagles. I am **Ringwinner** and Luckwearer; and I am **Barrel-rider**.’’*⁸⁰

Serbian

*„Ja sam odgonetač, mrežokidač, **žacava muva**.’’* [...] *„Ja sam prijatelj medveda i gost orlova. Ja sam **Prstenovanik** i Srećonosac. Ja sam i **Jahač Buradi**.’’*⁸¹

Croatian

*- Ja sam odgonetač, mrežokidač i **peckava muha**. [...]* *- Ja sam prijatelj medvjeda i gost orlova. Ja sam **prstenodobitnik** i srećonosac; i ja sam **jahač na bačvama**.’’*⁸²

The expression *the stinging fly* refers to the time when Bilbo killed spiders using his sword, the Sting. According to that, Serbian translation is closer than the Croatian one, because in Croatian we have an adjective *peckava* which is not strong enough for this context. *Ringwinner* marks the time when Bilbo found the golden ring which can make him disappear. *Prstenodobitnik* is a literal but accurate translation since the translator wanted to copy the original. In the original, we have a compound word which is made out of two words, ring and winner. Same goes for the word in Croatian translation. It could be translated in a better way, but at least it is understandable.

However, *Prstenovanik* in the Serbian translation does not bear any significant meaning, but I do have a theory about its meaning. In Serbian language, there is a verb *prstenovati* which means ‘to be marked by a ring, to have a ring’. Perhaps this is what the two translators had in mind while translating this word, so they created a new word. From the translator’s point of view, this word

⁸⁰ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*, p. 235.

⁸¹ Tolkien, Dž.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 257.

⁸² Tolkien, J.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 168, 169.

does not fit the context, and if someone from Bosnia was to read this translation, I believe that person would not understand the meaning completely. However, the meaning can be understood if we refer to the entire book because we know that Bilbo found a golden ring and that he kept it for himself. Luckily, the entire context can help us with understanding this word.

The last thing about this description is *Barrel-rider*, which was not translated as a hyphenated compound word. In Serbian version, there is *Jahač Buradi* which is similar to the original and it definitely transfers the meaning and describes accurately what Bilbo did. In Croatian version, we have a more descriptive translation, *jahač na bačvama*. Serbian version sounds like some nickname, but here it was translated descriptively, which is acceptable.

It can be concluded that there is no possibility for one translation to be completely faithful to the original. Newark discusses faithful translation stating that the job of a faithful translation to ‘reproduce the precise contextual meaning of the original’⁸³, and that is something that it is not always possible to achieve. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that ‘a translator will wish to transmit as much as possible of the literary design of the source text into the target language’⁸⁴.

2.4. Dialogues

Just like descriptions, dialogues play an enormous role in Tolkien’s *The Hobbit*. Through some conversations, we can understand the nature of Tolkien’s characters, and we can see how the usage of grammar can show readers who the characters are. Only two examples are going to be used here because the dialogues are often very long. The first one is regarding trolls and the second one regarding spiders. I have chosen these creatures because of the peculiarity of their language. Let us take a look at the first example. Here we are being introduced with the trolls who just caught Bilbo sneaking around.

English

“Blimey, Bert, look what I’ve copped!” said William.

“What is it?” said the others coming up.

⁸³ Newark, Peter. *A Textbook of Translation*. New York: Prentice-Hall International, 1988, p. 46. PDF

⁸⁴ Honegger, *op.cit.*, p. 8.

“**Lumme**, if **I** knows! What are yer?”

“*Bilbo Baggins, a bur - a hobbit,*” said poor Bilbo, shaking all over, and wondering how to make owl-noises before they throttled him.

“*A burrahobbit?*” said they a bit startled. Trolls are slow in the uptake, and mighty suspicious about anything new to them.

“*What's a burrahobbit got to do with my pocket, anyways?*” said **William**.

“*And can yer cook 'em?*” said Tom.

“*Yer can try,*” said Bert, picking up a skewer.⁸⁵

Serbian

„**Joj, Berte, pogledaj šta sam ukebao!**”, reče Viljem.

„Šta je to?” upitaše ostali prilazeći.

„**Pljuni me ako znam! Šta si ti?**”

„*Bilbo Bagins, obi-hobit*”, reče siroti Bilbo, dršćući celim telom, pitajući se kako da proizvede huk sove pre nego što ga pridave.

„**Obihobit?**”, rekoše oni, pomalo začuđeni. Divovi sporo shvataju i užasno su sumnjičavi u pogledu svega što im je novo.

„*Brez obzira, kakve veze ima obihobit sa mojim džepom?*”, reče **Viljem**.

„**A moguš li se kuvati?**” upita Tom.

„*Možeš pokušati*”, reče Bert, uzimajući ražanj.⁸⁶

Croatian

- **Pobogu, Berte, vidi šta sam ukebo!** - uzvikne Bill.

- Šta ti je to? - upitaju ga ona dvojica prilazeći mu.

- **Đavo bi ga znao!** Čuj, šta si ti?

- *Ja sam Bilbo Baggins, obi.. hobit - protisne jadni Bilbo tresući se sav i pitajući se kako da hukne poput sove prije nego što ga zadave.*

⁸⁵ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*, p. 45.

⁸⁶ Tolkien, Dž.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 51.

- **Obihobit?** - ponove oni pomalo u čudu. Trolovi malo sporo kopčaju, i strašno su nepovjerljivi prema svemu nepoznatom.

- A šta to obihobit radi u mom džepu? - upita ga **Bill**.

- **A može li se njija skuvat?** - zapita Tom.

- Možemo probat - reče Bert skidajući ražnjić s vatre.⁸⁷

There are many interesting things regarding this dialogue, the first of them being the expression *blimey*. This is a word expressing surprise, anger, or excitement. In this case, it is used for surprise, and I believe that these translations are not strong enough for the meaning of this word. *Joj* does not really go well with Tolkien's style and language because he would not use plain language. *Pobogu* is a bit stronger word, but it still does not reflect Tolkien's language completely. However, it does suit the target language, just like the continuation of this sentence. In Croatian translation, the first sentence is translated as *Pobogu, Berte, vidi šta sam ukebo!*, and to readers of Croatian language this shows how primitive trolls were and how their language is different from, let us say Gandalf's. This is called cultural substitution, and it is best explained in Baker's book:

This strategy involves replacing a culture-specific item or expression with a target-language item which does not have the same propositional meaning but is likely to have a similar impact on the target reader. The main advantage of using this strategy is that it gives the reader a concept with which s/he can identify, something familiar and appealing.⁸⁸

As long as the target audience can understand the meaning, it is acceptable as a translation. In that regard, Serbian translation does not show primitivism of trolls.

The expression *lumme, if I knows* shows us two things. First one is regarding the verb and ungrammaticality of the sentence itself; however, this perfectly describes the way trolls spoke. They were uneducated and not very smart, and Armstrong describes that 'some non-standard grammatical constructions are perceived [...] as betraying lack of education, and even of the capacity to think straight.'⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 33.

⁸⁸ Baker, *op.cit.*, p. 31.

⁸⁹ Armstrong, *op.cit.*, p. 139.

This is exactly how Tolkien wanted readers to perceive the trolls. *Lumme* is an old English expression of surprise or interest. It is difficult to translate, and both of the translations reflect the cultural specifics of target languages. Personally, I believe that the Croatian translation is better for this context because it expresses surprise; there is no other way to describe this situation. It is modified, of course, but the readers will immediately understand how confused and surprised trolls were. Serbian translation is more closely related to the mentality of people from the Balkans. This expression is definitely well known to everyone, but from the point of view of translation, it is modified more than it should be since it contains the verb ‘to spit’.

The word *burrahobbit* (burglar + hobbit) is translated in the best possible way, both in Serbian and Croatian, and this was definitely the only possible way to translate this expression in order for it to be close to the original.

When it comes to the name *William*, in Serbian version there is *Viljem* because all the rules discussed in 2.1. (proper names), but in Croatian version we have *Bill*. Now, Bill is William’s nickname, and it was mentioned only once in the original in that form; however, in Croatian version, we do not have William anywhere, only Bill. This is also possible to do since Bill was his nickname, and it is not a big mistake.

Yer is used when representing dialectal speech, and it is a non-standard form of ‘you’. This sentence before the last one is interesting because of this *yer*, and the translations are even more interesting. In Serbian version, *moгуš li se kuvati* represents a style of language used mostly by uneducated people; one will rarely hear someone educated speaking like this. This *se* refers to Bilbo, while in Croatian version instead of *se* we have *njija*. This word also means ‘you’ and refers to Bilbo, but it is an even older expression used by people who live in the villages. Here, again, we can talk about translation according to the culture of the target language and people who are going to read a certain translation. Although these sentences are a bit unusual, ‘our linguistic competence consists in our ability to recognise and produce acceptable sentences in our native language’⁹⁰, and it is obvious that these sentences are acceptable and understandable for the readership.

⁹⁰ Armstrong, *op.cit.*, p. 41.

In the end, we can notice one distinction when it comes to punctuation. We have quotation marks in both English and Serbian languages, while in the Croatian language we have dashes, and it is like this throughout the books. When using punctuation ‘the translator simply needs to be aware of the different conventions.’⁹¹

The second example is the conversation between spiders, which again shows Tolkien's unique style and language. Spiders caught dwarves and this is how they spoke while Bilbo was spying on them.

English

*“It was a sharp struggle, but **worth it**,” said one. “What nasty thick skins they have to be sure, but I’ll wager there is good juice inside.”*

*“**Aye, they’ll make fine eating**, when they’ve hung a bit,” said another.*

*“**Don’t hang ‘em too long**,” said a third. “They’re not as fat as they might be. **Been feeding none to well of late**, I should guess.”*

*“**Kill ‘em**, I say,” hissed a fourth; “kill ‘em now and hang ‘em dead for a while.”*

*“**They’re dead now, I’ll warrant**,” said the first.*

*“**That they are not**. I saw one a-struggling just now. Just coming round again, I should say, after a bee-autiful sleep. **I’ll show you**.”⁹²*

Serbian

*„Bila je to oštra borba, ali je **vredelo truda**”, reče jedan. „Stvarno, kako im je odvratno debela koža, ali opkladio bih se da su iznutra sočni.”*

*„**Aha, biće oni fina zakuska kad odviše malo**”, reče drugi.*

*„**Nemoj ih ostaviti da vise suviše dugo**”, reče treći. „Mogli bi biti malo deblji. **Nisu** baš dobro hranjeni u poslednje vreme, rekao bih.”*

*„**Ubit’ ih sad**, kažem vam”, prosikta četvrti. „**Ubit’ ih sad pa neka tako malo vise**.”*

*„**Sam uveren da su već mrtvi**”, reče prvi.*

*„**Te uveravam da nisu**. Sad sam video kako se jedan koprca. Upravo je dolazio svesti, rekao bih, posle prekrasnog sna. **Pokazaću ti**.”⁹³*

⁹¹ Armstrong, *op.cit.*, p. 205.

⁹² Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*, p. 168.

⁹³ Tolkien, Dž.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 184.

Croatian

- *Bila je to teška borba, al se isplatila* - rekao je jedan od njih. - *Imaju doduše gadnu, debelu kožu, al bi se kladio da su iznutra sočni.*

- *Aha, bit će to prava gozba kad malo odviše* - napomene drugi.

- *Samo nek ne vise predugo!* - ubaci treći.- *Mogli bi bit i malo deblji. Reko bi da se u zadnje vrijeme nisu bogzna kako hranili.*

- *Ubit ih treba, kažem vam ja* - prosiće četvrti. - *Ubit ih pa ih mrtve objesit nek vise neko vrijeme!*

- *Ja vam jamčim da su već otegnuli papke* - *opet će onaj prvi.*

- *Bogme nisu. Vidio sam baš maločas jednog od njih kako se batrga. Reko bi da se upravo budi iz prekrasnog sna. Evo pogledajte!*⁹⁴

The expression *worth it* from the original is translated in two different ways. In Serbian version, we have *vredelo truda* which is equal to the original, while in Croatian version we have (*borba*) *se isplatila*, which means, again, that it was worth it, but it is said in a different way. Serbian version wants to say that the fight was worth the effort, while the Croatian one describes it as worthwhile. When you consider the context, both of the translations say the same thing only in two different ways.

Aye, they'll make fine eating refers to dwarves being very delicious and a fine dish. The key word here is the subject *they* which was translated in Serbian version, while in Croatian translation we have a modification. *Bit će to prava gozba* refers to the entire process of eating them, it does not refer directly to dwarves, but the entire eating process. When we talk about the strategy of equivalence, 'literal translation, modulation, transposition and adaptation are also possible procedures'⁹⁵ that can be taken into consideration while translating.

In the third paragraph, we have an object '*em* (them), which was transferred to Serbian, but not to Croatian version. It seems like the Croatian translation is a bit more modified in some parts because in this sentence, *samo nek ne vise predugo*, there is not object as such, although it can be understood from the context. It is possible to leave out subject and object because we know what they refer to, we can conclude that from the entire context. Bosnian, Serbian, and Croatian

⁹⁴ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 118, 119.

⁹⁵ Armstrong, *op.cit.*, p. 153.

languages are very special when it comes to that, so this is acceptable. *Been feeding none to well of late* was translated as a passive sentence in Serbian, but not in Croatian. In the original sentence, we have ‘to’ instead of ‘too’ which again shows Tolkien’s use of language and him playing with grammatical rules. *Kill ‘em* was translated to Serbian with a time adverb *sad*, which cannot be found in the original, while in Croatian we have *ubit ih treba*, the key word being *treba* which was added, just like *sad*. The reason for both of these words in translation is because in English we can simply say kill them, without adding anything, while Croatian and Serbian languages need some additional word to fulfill the meaning.

They're dead now is interesting when it comes to Serbian translation because we do not have a subject as such; *Sam uveren* has an omitted element, the subject I (from *I'll warrant*). In Croatian version, *they are dead now* is translated with a typical expression from the Balkans, *otegnuti papke*. This is a cultural expression and it suits the context well because every reader will find it interesting, just like Tolkien wanted. When it comes to the next sentence, in Croatian we have an expression *Bogme nisu* for *that they are not*, which says that this spider is hundred percent sure that dwarves are not dead. Again, this is a cultural expression, used often in the Balkans, and 'the emphasis always in translation is on the reader'⁹⁶, which means that it is important to translate the text in order for the reader to be able to understand it and to have the same feeling as the reader of the original text. Armstrong wrote:

Hervey and Higgins (1992: 22) provide a useful refinement of the concept of equivalence in translation, pointing out that the difficulty associated with the notion of achieving equivalent effect in translation is that it implies the translator is attempting [...] to reproduce in the TT the ‘same’ effect achieved in the ST.⁹⁷

Again, the focus is on the equivalence, but this time it is about the translator trying to achieve equivalence when it comes to the effect that some text has on the target reader, which is definitely achieved by using these expressions, although they differ slightly from the original.

The last part, *I'll show you*, is translated to Serbian as *pokazaću ti*, and this *ti* tells us that he is talking to one spider only. However, in the Croatian version, we have *evo pogledajte*, which means

⁹⁶ Bassnett, Susan. *Translation Studies*, 3rd edition. London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis E-Library, 2005, p. 5. PDF

⁹⁷ Armstrong, *op.cit.*, p. 45.

that he talks to more than one spider. In the original version, we have *you* which can be used for both singular and plural. Here, this spider is telling the other spider to take a look, not to all of them, which is important when it comes to comparison. Having said that, we can conclude that the Serbian version is more accurate here.

When it comes to grammar, we were able to notice different things here and different usage of grammar. Every translator has the freedom to adjust the translation to his native language, and that refers to grammar as well. This part can be concluded by Armstrong's observation:

Languages possess a nonstandard as well as a standard grammar, as well as a continuum in between, allowing speakers or writers to modulate their language in response to the context. Thus a sentence may be grammatical, in the sense of being recognised as well formed by a native speaker, without being acceptable *in context*.⁹⁸

In the end, it is important for the reader to understand and accept the given translation.

2.5. Narrative poems

This part is called narrative poems because these poems in Tolkien's *The Hobbit* are not merely poems, but they tell a story, and they represent an important part of his book. Also, they are a great accessory for children because they can imagine dwarves, hobbits, and elves jumping around and singing. Honegger discusses Tolkien's style and the problems that the translator has to face while translating these poems:

His style is often intensely poetic, offering [...] a richness of sound effects such as alliteration and rhythm, nevertheless we are dealing not with a relatively short poem, but with a long and complex narrative, in which the precise details of events and descriptions are usually of major importance, so that if it is impossible to convey both denotation and aesthetic effect in the target language, the translator may choose to sacrifice the higher level.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Armstrong, *op.cit.*, p. 42.

⁹⁹ Honegger, *op.cit.*, p. 25.

We can see that Tolkien's poems are very significant and I can certainly say that their translations are the most interesting part of this analysis. We will see how the translators decided to sacrifice the context for the sake of rhyme, or vice versa. The first poem is right at the beginning of the book when dwarves visit Bilbo's house and they start singing. It should be mentioned that only some parts of the poems will be analyzed because Tolkien's poems are very long.

English

*Dump the crocks in a **boiling bowl**;
Pound them up with a thumping pole;
And when you've finished, if any are whole,
Send them down the hall to roll!¹⁰⁰*

Serbian

*U **golem kazan** zgrni suđe;
Istuckaj sve dobro tučem;
A kad završiš, ostane li išta,
Otkotrljaj ih do dvorišta!¹⁰¹*

Croatian

*Sve suđe sruči u **kotao vrući!**
Mužarom opali, skrši, ne žali!
Pa ako zdjela mu ostane cijela,
Nek se kotrlja, kroz hodnik sve prlja!¹⁰²*

Before starting with the analysis of the translations, rhyme should be mentioned. It seems that in the original, all four last words rhyme. In Serbian version, we have end rhyme *aabb*, although

¹⁰⁰ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*, p. 20, 21.

¹⁰¹ Tolkien, D.Ž.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 22.

¹⁰² Tolkien, J.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 15.

these two words, *sude-tučem*, do not rhyme completely; this is called near rhyme. In Croatian version, we do not have end rhyme, only internal rhyme (*sruči-vrući, opali-žali, zdjela-cijela, kotrlja-prlja*). When it comes to the rhythm of the song, the Croatian version has different rhythm because of the rhyming pattern and the way it was translated.

When it comes to the analysis, let us start with the expression *boiling bowl*. None of these translations have a word *boiling* in them. Croatian version is closer to it because it has the word *vrući*, which means ‘hot’, but it is still not boiling, while the Serbian version implies that the bowl was big. Now, if we take a look at the second line, we can see that the Croatian version has a huge modification because there are some things added that do not exist in the original, or in Serbian version. It is modified in a way that only the first part resembles the original. This part, *skrši, ne žali* cannot be found in the original; this is a new invention, added by a translator, perhaps to make it more appealing to the readers because it sounds fun and cheerful when you read it. From the translator’s point of view, this can be considered a free translation. ‘Free translation reproduces the matter without the manner, or the content without the form of the original.’¹⁰³

Same goes for the last line when it comes to Croatian version; we have additional phrase *sve prlja* which does not exist in the original. This was inserted to achieve the above-mentioned internal rhyme. In the Serbian version, we do not have the word *hall*, but we have ‘yard’ instead (*dvorište*). Again, this word was modified to achieve end rhyme. It is up to translators to determine what is more important, rhyme or faithful translation. Here we can talk about the translator’s creativity and wish to make his translation more appealing to the audience. Bassnett said:

It is clearly the task of the translator to find a solution to even the most daunting of problems. Such solutions may vary enormously; the translator’s decision as to what constitutes invariant information with respect to a given system of reference is in itself a creative act.¹⁰⁴

One last thing that can be mentioned is in the third line of Croatian translation: *pa ako zdjela mu ostane cijela*. Here, the word *zdjela* is inserted, although it cannot be found in the original;

¹⁰³ Newark, *op.cit.*, p. 47.

¹⁰⁴ Bassnett, *op.cit.*, p. 44.

however, it is used for the sake of internal rhyme, just like *dvorište* was used in Serbian version to achieve end rhyme.

This poem was extremely interesting when it comes to its translations and all the differences. The next one is even more interesting because it was written to make the readers laugh and imagine Bilbo teasing a spider. He put on his ring and went to save his friends.

English

Old fat spider spinning in a tree!

Old fat spider can't see me!

Attercop! Attercop!

Won't you stop,

*Stop your spinning and look for me?*¹⁰⁵

Serbian

Debeli stari pauk prede!

Zalud mu oči na me glede!

Aterati! Aterati!

Zar ne misliš stati,

*Prestat' presti pa me malo jesti?*¹⁰⁶

Croatian

Debeli pauk u stablu prede

Ne vidi ništa, a mene glede

Gnjida! Gnjida!

Slaboga vida.

*Tražiti mora da me pojede.*¹⁰⁷

Here we have one stanza and 5 lines, and the rhyming pattern in English and Serbian versions is *aabbc*, while in Croatian version we have *aabba*. The original version sounds more cheerful, and the Serbian version is a bit closer to it when it comes to the rhythm, while the tone of Croatian version sounds a bit more serious when you read it. When it comes to the translations, there are many things that can be observed, starting with *old fat spider*, which was translated into Croatian

¹⁰⁵ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*, p. 170.

¹⁰⁶ Tolkien, Dž.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 186, 187.

¹⁰⁷ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 120.

without the adjective *old*. In Serbian version, the tree is not mentioned, while in Croatian it is. Here we can talk about the strategy of compensation. One element was lost in both of these two translations, while the other one was added. We know what happened here; however, the readers will not know because they will read the translation, probably not the original as well. Armstrong wrote:

Loss is a concept that lays a considerable burden of responsibility upon the translator, since the reader of a TT who does not know the SL will not know whether translation loss has occurred at any given point.¹⁰⁸

In the original, the second line starts again with *old fat spider*, while in the translations it is not repeated. This is called translation by omission, and Baker said:

If the meaning conveyed by a particular item or expression is not vital enough to the development of the text to justify distracting the reader with lengthy explanations, translators can and often do simply omit translating the word or expression in question.¹⁰⁹

Word *attercop* is offensive and ‘no spider has ever liked being called Attercop’¹¹⁰. Bilbo used this word to make the spider angry, and although it is very hard to find an equivalent for this word, Croatian version suits the context because this word was meant to offend the spider. However, I cannot find the meaning of Serbian word *aterati* so I can conclude that this word is either invented or borrowed from some other source. *Won’t you stop* is not translated to Croatian; instead of that, we have *slaboga vida* which does fit the context because the spider could not see Bilbo at all. This phrase was introduced to achieve the rhyme, and it is not a complete mistake, although it is not a direct translation of the English version, it is a modification. In some cases, ‘the only equivalence possible is what seems acceptable to each translator’¹¹¹ and this poem is an excellent example of modification.

All Tolkien’s poems are unique and are there not only to entertain but also to tell a story.

¹⁰⁸ Armstrong, *op.cit.*, p. 46.

¹⁰⁹ Baker, *op.cit.*, p. 40.

¹¹⁰ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*, p. 171.

¹¹¹ Armstrong, *op.cit.*, p. 45.

When it comes to translating poems, we can conclude that ‘there is no single *right* way of translating a poem’¹¹², and that it is very difficult to achieve rhyme and stay close to the register of the source text. However, when translating a poem, ‘the poet translator can more easily break the prime text down into translatable units, e.g. lines, verses, stanzas.’¹¹³

Both translations, of a poem and of prose text have difficulties. It is up to the translator to overcome these difficulties in the best possible way.

2.5.1. Riddles

Riddles are similar to poems because they rhyme, but they are rather short. When Bilbo met Gollum, they played this game to decide Bilbo’s faith. Gollum loved riddles because that was the only game he ever played. As previously mentioned, all of the riddles rhyme and are extremely entertaining. Only two riddles will be analyzed, one from Gollum, the other one from Bilbo. Gollum’s first riddle was about the mountain, and it goes like this:

English

*What has roots as nobody sees,
Is taller than trees
Up, up it goes,
And yet never grows?*¹¹⁴

Croatian

*Što korijenje ima, a ne vidi nitko,
Nebu je bliže no stablo vitko,
Uvis se penje više od hrasta,
A nema rasta?*¹¹⁶

Serbian

*Šta raste iz zemlje kad ne vidi niko,
Od drveća više,
Uvis, uvis ide,
A ne raste nikad?*¹¹⁵

¹¹² Bassnett, *op.cit.*, p. 106.

¹¹³ *Ibis.*, p. 121.

¹¹⁴ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*, p. 84.

¹¹⁵ Tolkien, Dž.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 91.

¹¹⁶ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 60.

Let us start with the rhyme. As we can see, the English version has rhyming pattern *aabb*, and Serbian version has no rhyme at all but is translated quite accurately and is close to the original. Croatian version achieved the same rhyme, *aabb*; however, there are some modifications here which cannot be found in the original. When it comes to the first line, Croatian version is closer to the original, it has word *roots* in it, while the Serbian one simply says *šta raste iz zemlje*, meaning ‘what grows from the ground’. When it comes to the following three lines, Serbian translation is almost the same as the original version. If we look at the second line of the Croatian version, we have a modification which includes words *nebu* and *vitko*, together with adverb *bliže*. It says that this thing (the mountain) is closer to the sky, although the original simply says that it is taller than trees. The third line also has a word *hrast* although it cannot be found in the original, and it is used to make rhyme *hrasta-rasta*. All of these modifications were made in order to achieve rhyme, and although these words were not mentioned in the original, the translation still suits the context.

As aforementioned, it is possible and acceptable for a translator to make slight modifications to achieve rhyme, which was done in this riddle. If we take a look at the books and all of the riddles, we can notice that the Croatian translation has many modifications, but the rhyming pattern is just like in the original.

Let us take a look at Bilbo’s riddle, and the answer to this riddle is teeth.

English

Thirty white horses on a red hill,

First they champ,

Then they stamp,

*Then they stand still.*¹¹⁷

Serbian

Trideset belih konja na brdu crvene boje

Prvo zagrizu,

Zatim topoću,

*Zatim mirno stoje.*¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*, p. 85.

¹¹⁸ Tolkien, Dž.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 91.

Croatian

Trideset bijelih konja na brijegu crvene boje

Grizu otprve,

A poslije smrve,

A onda sasvim mirno stoje.¹¹⁹

The rhyming pattern in the original is *abba*, just like in the Croatian version. We can see that, if the rhyming pattern is the same, then the rhythm is also the same. However, the Serbian version has a bit different pattern, and it is *abca*. In both riddles, we have end rhyme because end rhyme is mostly used in poems. The reason why it is used very often is that it helps to achieve musicality and it is more pleasant to listen to. When it comes to translation, the first line is identical in both translations. The only difference is that the Serbian version has *brdu* while the Croatian one has *brijegu*. The second line is also very similar, but the third one has a difference in words that were used. In the Serbian version, we have *topoću* which means something similar to ‘hitting’. This word describes the process that our teeth do, they are moving up and down while ‘hitting’ food. In the Croatian version, we simply have word *smrve* which is more straightforward and easier to understand. The word *topoću* is usually used for hammers because that is what they do; people hit things with them. The last line is quite similar in both versions, the only difference is that the Croatian version has one additional word, and that is adverb *mirno*. It is used to describe the ending of the process when teeth stand completely still, without any movement. Basically, this adverb is used for emphasis and additional description. Both translations are similar to the original, with slight differences, including rhyming pattern.

It is not always possible to achieve rhyme without some modifications. Rhyme is a peculiar thing and something that not many people can achieve. Zlatko Crknović gave his best to achieve the rhyme in his translation to the Croatian language. When it comes to narrative poems, he made some big changes that do not actually make sense in some parts, but he managed to achieve rhyme. Meri and Milan Milišić stayed close to the original when it comes to the context and words used,

¹¹⁹ Tolkien, J.R.R. *Hobit*, p. 61.

but they did not achieve the rhyme. It can be concluded that the translators really have to sacrifice one thing for the other one. It is up to them which part they decide to sacrifice and for what purpose.

All in all, audience changes and people are constantly in the search for new things. Just like everything else, the translations can also become old and they have to be replaced with new ones.

Armstrong wrote:

The difficulty is that sooner or later, a translation that reads in a rather old-fashioned way will come to be considered as outmoded to the point of being difficult to read.¹²⁰

As the generations change, so does the usage of language. It is important to look for the better ways of translating old books and to always keep in mind who the target readership is. After all, the most important thing is that the translation is accepted and read; otherwise, it is a complete failure.

¹²⁰ Armstrong, *op.cit.*, p. 149.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is important to mention the purpose of my master thesis. The main aim of this thesis was to show all the difficulties translators have to face when translating prose fiction, especially Tolkien's works which are full of invented terms. It compared two different translations and showed how a single word can be translated differently. The paper focused on elements of fictional culture, through the thorough analysis of proper and place names, dialogues, descriptions, narrative poems, and riddles. The examples that were used in this paper were chosen according to the difference in their translations, and they proved to be very interesting in terms of analysis. As mentioned, the most interesting examples from the books were used to show the decision-making process, differences, and challenges in translation. The analysis was done by a simple method of the comparison of the two translations with the original and between each other. The differences can be best seen if using this kind of analysis. In this thesis, we were able to see that the translators had a different approach in some parts and also similar in some other parts. The notion of equivalence was not always achieved because it is impossible at times to stay close to the register of the source text. What is important is that the context stays the same and that the feeling is transferred. After the analysis, it can be concluded that there is no only one perfect translation. One word can be translated in many different ways and so can the entire sentence. Translators have to choose what is the priority for them. As an example, we can refer to narrative poems and the choice between rhyme and equivalence. Crnković decided that rhyme is more important for his Croatian translation, while Milišić decided that equivalence and closeness to the original are more important. Nonetheless, they managed to transfer Tolkien's unique world into their native languages, and although they made certain modifications which led them far away from the original, they still tried to stay close to Tolkien's style, one way or another.

In the end, it can be said that the translation is never an easy task, no matter how experienced translators are. It takes a lot of effort and research to be able to translate one piece of literature, especially if the entire world where it happens is invented like it is in the case of *The Hobbit*. All in all, both of these translations managed to stay as close as possible to the original, and both translations are acceptable and very interesting to read. Nevertheless, the audience changes, and the translators should always strive to improve their translations.

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