

**STRATEGIES FOR TRANSLATING IDIOMS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
THREE ROMANIAN TRANSLATIONS OF A *LITTLE CLOUD*
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Abstract: *The origin of this paper arises from a desire to emphasize the link between language and how each person structures their perception of the world. In this sense, we posit that the author’s unique mode of linguistic expression inherently precludes precise alignment with that of the translator. Consequently, a linguistic disparity emerges between the original text and its translated counterpart. Furthermore, this linguistic variance can also manifest when comparing multiple translations of the same source text. Given our intention to delve into the topic of translation and retranslation, we further posit an additional hypothesis worthy of examination. This hypothesis pertains to the notion that retranslations should exhibit a greater inclination towards aligning with the author’s original intentions in terms of form, linguistic register, and the selection of linguistic structures, as opposed to the initial translation of the text. To demonstrate these hypotheses, we employ a corpus entailing idiomatic phrases utilized by James Joyce in “A Little Cloud”, one of his Dubliners’ stories. We also consider the renditions provided by three Romanian translators, namely Frida Papadache in 1965, Radu Paraschivescu in 2012, and Violeta Baroană in 2015. Subsequently, we analyse their progression over time within the context of the Romanian translation, concerning the application of distinct collections of translation techniques, as delineated by Mona Baker in her 1992 work titled “In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation”. We conduct our analysis through the provision of linguistic and contextual commentary, wherein we consider the grammatical and semantic structure of the utterances.*

Keywords: *Idioms, Translation Strategies, Translation and Retranslation, Style of Expression*

1. Introduction

In James Joyce’s 1914 collection of stories, *Dubliners*, the portrayal of an underworld extends beyond the depiction of early 20th-century Dublin and delves into the moral corruption of his characters. The author espoused the use of precise language, contending that his prose authentically depicted the lives of Dublin’s inhabitants. Despite the apparent simplicity of his writing style, Joyce’s proficiency in language is evident through the abundant use of symbols and figures of speech, demanding meticulous interpretation. Within his portrayal of Dublin, the city emerges as a place where silence prevails, and its inhabitants, though capable of speech, frequently grapple with expressing their thoughts effectively. This paper is dedicated to examining the translation of some of the most challenging idioms by three Romanian translators in the episode “A Little Cloud”.

In 1966, the inaugural Romanian full translation of *Dubliners*, undertaken by Frida Papadache, a committed literary translator, was released by Colecția Meridiane. This translation drew criticism from scholars for its abundant use of expressive language

and its perceived reluctance to embrace Joyce's minimalist style.¹ Hence, the prospect of retranslation sparked considerable enthusiasm. In the year 2012, the Humanitas Publishing House unveiled the second rendition of *Dubliners* in Romanian, undertaken by Radu Paraschivescu - journalist, book editor, and prolific prose writer, possessing an extensive background in the domain of translation.

Finally, in 2015, Violeta Baroană embarked on a bilingual exploration centred on the translatability of James Joyce's work. In this endeavour, she contributed her personal Romanian renditions of three stories from the collection: "A Little Cloud", "Clay", and "A Painful Case". Baroană, equipped with a master's degree in the translation of contemporary literature and a wealth of experience in the realm of translation editing, aimed to uphold Joyce's distinctive stylistic traits, characterized by their simplicity and ambiguity. Despite a span of 51 years separating the first Romanian translation from the second, both the latter translators are part of the same era and share similar educational experiences, expertise, and abilities within their respective field.

It is a well-established fact that many acclaimed literary works undergo multiple translations into the same language and within the same target culture following their initial publication. This phenomenon is a testament to the intricacies of literary translation, which is a creative process influenced by a multitude of factors, ultimately yielding multiple valid interpretations. Therefore, the evolution of translations from one rendition to another is a complex and progressive endeavour, an idea which represents the starting point of our research.

By exploring the strategies for translating idioms, we hope to shed light on the nuances of the translation process and the critical role that idiomatic expressions play in conveying the stylistic effect and emotional force of a text. This requires a deep understanding of both cultures, as well as a mastery of the nuances of each language. Ultimately, our analysis will contribute to a greater appreciation of the effort put in recreating the stylistic value and the effects produced on the readers.

2. Definition and Features of Idioms

Idioms, expressions that cannot be deduced from the meanings of the individual words that compose them,² have garnered significant attention from linguists throughout the years. This introductory part to the paper will present a synopsis of some of the most seminal linguistic theories of idioms and refer to the authors who have explored this subject. Generally speaking, idioms refer to widely used phrases that change the original meanings of individual words. They are typical for a particular population, and their origins are related to practices from times long past.

Cognitive linguists have registered on many occasions the embodiment of emotions in the use of language. According to Lakoff and Johnson, metaphors are part of our judgement, and we tend to integrate them into our "objective reality"³. Besides, the human mind works with interpretations of the surrounding world, which often aligns abstract thoughts with features belonging to tangible objects. Idiomatic expressions are

¹ Adrian Oțoiu, 'Le sens du pousser.' *On the spiral of Joyce's reception in Romanian*, In *The Reception of James Joyce in Europe*, vol. I, edited by Geert Lernout and Wim van Mierlo, 2004, p. 201.

² Mildred Larson, *Meaning-Based Translation*, New York, University Press of America, 1984, p. 127.

³ George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, *Metaphors we live by*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1980, p. 184.

not merely linguistic quirks but are intricately tied to the way we conceptualize abstract concepts through metaphors. For instance, the idiom “time flies” is grounded in the metaphorical understanding of time as a moving object.⁴

The *Oxford dictionary of idioms* explains that the word itself comes from the Greek “idios”, which refers to the specific and unusual characteristic of a concept.⁵ Thus, idioms may be interpreted as deviations from the regularities of language. The words inside an idiom gain peculiar meanings, and they work together to refer to distinct contexts, unquestionably different from the ones they would normally be used in. It is quite impossible in real life for a cat to get your tongue. However, if you are feeling miserable and you are not in the mood for talking, one can imagine that a random cat slipped in and took away your tongue, so you can no longer utter words.

Theories concerning the intersection of language and cognition have consistently underscored the profound connection between specific lexical combinations and the cultural milieu within which they are employed. These linguistic expressions, far from serving merely as communicative tools, function as markers that delineate the dynamics of social interactions. Our linguistic choices are indicative of our affiliations and shared cultural references, as individuals tend to employ idiomatic expressions as a means of establishing rapport with those who share similar sociocultural backgrounds and can discern the nuanced connotations of these phrases. Consequently, idiomatic language can prove to be enigmatic and challenging to decipher in the absence of a nuanced understanding of its contextual and cultural usage.

One of the pioneering theories of idioms was presented by Charles Fillmore et al., who asserted that idioms possess a compositional nature, so that their meaning can be composed from the distinct semantics and pragmatics of the words that comprise them⁶. The authors propose that idiomatic expressions, such as “let alone”, possess both regular and irregular properties and that this combination contributes to their idiomaticity. The regular properties of idioms refer to the consistent and predictable linguistic features of an expression, such as its syntax, grammatical structure, and sound pattern. For example, the phrase “let alone” has a regular structure in that it is consistently formed of a verb-adjective combination. On the other hand, the irregular properties of idioms refer to the unique and unpredictable meaning of an expression that cannot be deduced from the meanings of its individual words. For example, the phrase “let alone” has an irregular meaning that is not directly related to the literal meaning of “let” or “alone”. The combination of regular and irregular properties contributes to the idiomaticity of an expression, meaning its distinctiveness as a linguistic unit that cannot be reduced to its individual parts. The regular properties provide a framework for the idiomatic expression, while the irregular properties add an element of unpredictability and uniqueness to its meaning.

⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 46-47.

⁵ Judith Siefring, *Oxford dictionary of idioms*, 2nd ed., Oxford/New York, Oxford University Press, 2004, *Preface*.

⁶ Charles Fillmore et al., *Regularity and idiomaticity in grammatical constructions: The case of let alone*, In *Language*, vol. 64, no.3, 1988, p. 504.

As Baker⁷ clearly points out, idioms are fixed expressions that cannot change their form, unless the speaker's intention is to deliver a word play or to make a linguistics joke. Translating idioms requires a deep understanding of both source and target languages, as well as cultural knowledge and context, making it a complex task for translators.

3. Translation of Idioms: Strategies

One key aspect of the personal interpretation of a text is the utilization of translation strategies to capture the meaning and the form of the source text. These are not applied uniformly but are determined by various factors, including the type of text being translated, the intended audience, and the translator's interpretation of the author's style and intent.

From the point of view of linguistic measures applied by translators in dealing with certain challenges, Mona Baker's classification of translation strategies for idioms⁸ encompasses six distinct approaches, including utilizing an idiom of similar meaning and form, resorting to one of similar meaning yet dissimilar form, adopting the source language idiom, translating through paraphrase, opting for the omission of a play on the idiom, or choosing to omit the idiom altogether. If we were to consider the concept of "similar meaning" in a more comprehensive manner, it would involve effectively conveying a notion that closely aligns with the intended message. On the other hand, the notion of "form" delves into the utilization of identical lexical components in the expression of that idea.

The most widely adopted strategy is the translation through paraphrasing, where the meaning of the idiom is rephrased in a different manner. When a suitable equivalent cannot be found in the target language or when it seems inappropriate, this strategy is often utilized. The choice of strategy is contingent on various factors, including cultural and stylistic differences between the source and target languages. These categories are not mutually exclusive, and in practice, translators often use a combination of strategies to translate idioms effectively.

4. Hypotheses and Methods of Analysis

The "coinage" of an idiom always starts with someone who points at a specific situation when using it and with other community members expressing acceptance and transferring it from one to another until generation after generation takes it up. As Steven Pinker argues, the capacity for language is hardwired into the human brain, and the development of language is not just a cultural or social phenomenon but is also shaped by biological and evolutionary factors that determine human language evolution to meet the communicative needs of our species, so that sometimes, it becomes almost impossible to remember the real implications of an expression.⁹

⁷ Mona Baker, *In other words: A coursebook on translation*, 3d ed., London/ New York, Routledge, 2018, pp. 69-70.

⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 77-87.

⁹ Steven Pinker, *The stuff of thought: Language as a window into human nature*, New York, Viking Press, 2007, p. 238.

We posit that Pinker's concept of a language uniquely constructed within each individual's cognitive framework exerts a substantial influence on the generation of distinct translations of identical textual content and highlights the creative aspect of the translator's role. The very notion that every translation is an interpretation underscores the complex and nuanced nature of the translation process.¹⁰ When a text is translated from one language to another, it inevitably passes through the filter of the translator's perception and understanding. This process is not a mere mechanical replacement of words; it involves the translator making a series of choices influenced by their understanding of the source text, the target language and culture, and their own individual perspective. These choices are made in pursuit of conveying not only the literal meaning but also the deeper nuances, cultural references, and stylistic elements of the original text.

Ultimately, what makes translation even more intricate is that it leads to the development of a personal style of expression for the translator. By "style of expression" we understand the distinctive and characteristic way in which an individual or a writer conveys their thoughts, ideas, and emotions through language. A hallmark that can be thought of as a unique literary fingerprint. It encompasses various elements, including word choice, sentence structure, tone, figurative language, and rhetorical devices. This style may or may not align perfectly with the author's style, and that discrepancy can be seen as both a challenge and an opportunity.

In his work, *West-East Divan*, penned in the year 1819, J. W. von Goethe expounded upon a classification of three distinct approaches to the act of translation. The initial category, denoted as "the prosaic rendering",¹¹ endeavours to furnish readers with a plain and direct representation of the original text. The second category, referred to as "the parodistic approach",¹² seeks to immerse the reader within the cultural milieu of the source text. This is accomplished by introducing unfamiliar linguistic elements and characteristics from the source culture, albeit adapted to the sensibilities of the receiving culture. Lastly, Goethe described the third type of translation as aspiring to be "identical to the original, not a substitute but a replacement".¹³ According to Goethe's viewpoint, the realm of literary translation represents an ongoing progression, and it is exclusively through the iterative process of retranslation that a faithful equivalent of the original can be attained. Nevertheless, this concept continues to be a subject of ongoing discourse and examination within the scholarly community, with various theorists offering both supporting and opposing arguments concerning the notion that retranslations might possess greater accuracy or superiority compared to initial translations.

In the scope of this study, we intend to examine two hypotheses stemming from the premise that each instance of literary translation embodies an act of interpretation:

1. *Each translator exhibits a distinct mode of linguistic expression, a phenomenon that can be discerned through the scrutiny of employed translation strategies.*

¹⁰ A fundamental concept underlaid by Lawrence Venuti in: *The translator's invisibility: A history of translation*, New York, Routledge, 1995.

¹¹ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *West-East Divan: Poems, with "Notes and Essays": Goethe's Intercultural Dialogues*, translated by Martin Bidney, New York, State University of New York Press, 2010, p. 279.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 279.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 280.

2. *Translations prioritize a faithful representation of the source text, whereas retranslations tend to adopt a more natural and reader-friendly linguistic alignment with the target audience's language.*

To ascertain the validity or invalidity of these two hypotheses, we engaged with a corpus comprising nine idiomatic expressions extracted from the source text and its three corresponding translations, arranged chronologically within the narrative. Our analysis takes the form of commentary, considering both the semantic content of the phrases and their grammatical structures. The comparative examination of these translations adheres to the idiom translation strategies delineated by Mona Baker.¹⁴

5. Data Analysis

The story “A Little Cloud” follows the life of a man named Little Chandler, who is a civil servant living in Dublin. He has just returned from a visit with his old friend Gallagher, who has become a successful writer and lives a bohemian lifestyle. Little Chandler is envious of Gallagher’s success and independence and feels trapped in his own mundane life. He is also conflicted about his responsibilities as a husband and father, and longs for the freedom he once had before settling down. Joyce employs a third-person narrative approach yet refrains from offering any guidance to the reader regarding the interpretation or evaluation of the protagonist; the absence of a clear stance or judgment leaves room for the reader to form their own opinions and perspectives, allowing for a more personal and subjective reading experience.

The text uses colloquial language to cultivate an interactive ambiance while artfully mirroring the characters’ individual traits, manner of speech, and essence. The challenge lies in the endeavour to encapsulate these idiomatic nuances, given their unceremonious integration into the everyday discourse of the two men characterized by their nonchalant and alcohol-infused way of life.

As Little Chandler walks through the streets of Dublin, his excitement is palpable. He envisions the upcoming meeting as an opportunity to escape the monotony of his everyday life and immerse himself in the world of his charismatic friend. The narration captures his heightened senses, with vivid descriptions of the environment and his perceptions.

(ST 1) “made him tremble like a leaf”.¹⁵

(TT 1) “îl făcea să tremure ca frunza”.¹⁶ [Adaptation of the SL idiom].

(TT 1.1) “îl făcea să tremure ca varga”.¹⁷ [Translation by idiom of similar meaning and form].

(TT 1.2) “tremura ca varga”.¹⁸ [Translation by idiom of similar meaning and form].

The idiom “tremble like a leaf”, which is an alternate version of “shake like a leaf” (verb + preposition + noun phrase) describes Little Chandler’s state of apprehension and fear upon the prospect of hearing “a sound of low fugitive laughter” while traversing

¹⁴ Mona Baker, *Op. cit.*, pp. 69-87.

¹⁵ James Joyce, *Dubliners*, New York, Signet Classics, 2007, p. 73.

¹⁶ James Joyce, *Oameni din Dublin*, translated by Frida Papadache, București, Editura Litera, 2018, p. 95.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 87.

¹⁸ James Joyce, *Three stories from Dubliners*, translated by Violeta Baroană, edited by Lidia Vianu, The University of Bucharest, Contemporary Literature Press, 2015, p. 70.

Corless's street during the nighttime, as this street is portrayed as possessing a somewhat unsettling reputation. In this way, the protagonist's dreams and desires are juxtaposed against his fearful nature. While the initial translator adapts the primary structure through a verbatim rendition of the idiom, the two subsequent re-translators employ the Romanian equivalent of the idiom: *a tremura ca varga* (verb + preposition + noun –back translation: “tremble like a rod”). The meaning remains intact across all three translators, although the retranslations appear to sound more natural to the Romanian readers. We also notice a syntactic change in Baroană's rendition, because in the original text the subject “a sound of low fugitive laughter” performs the action, thus emphasizing the external source of the laughter and the sporadic nature of the trembling, whereas the retranslation omits the verb “made” and focuses on the cause-and-effect relationship between the protagonist hearing the sound and experiencing the emotions.

In the second example, Little Chandler describes how Ignatius Gallaher was able to maintain a brave or confident appearance despite financial difficulties. The two idioms, underlined in the example below, describe someone who is both broke and at a loss for how to improve their financial situation.

(ST 2) “Even when he was out at elbows and at his wits' end”¹⁹.

(TT 2) “Chiar când n-avea de nici unele și dădea din colț în colț”²⁰ [Translation by Paraphrase & Translation using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form].

(TT 2.1) “Chiar și-atunci când n-avea după ce bea apă și nu mai știa de unde să facă rost de bani”²¹. [Translation by idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form & Translation by Paraphrase].

(TT 2.2) “Chiar și atunci când era strâmtorat și nu știa cum să mai facă rost de bani”²² [Translation by idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form & Translation by Paraphrase].

These two different idioms are used in conjunction. The first, “to be out at (the) elbows”, (verb + adverb + preposition + noun), dates from the late 1500s²³ and originally described the state of wearing clothes that are worn out or torn. In contemporary times, it signifies an individual who lacks material possessions and financial resources. The second idiom, “to be at one's wits' end”, (verb + preposition + noun), suggests that the character is overpowered by difficulties and feels doubtful of what to do next.²⁴

Frida Papadache paraphrases the first idiom and uses the common expression *a nu avea de nici unele* (negation + verb + preposition + negative pronoun –back translation: “to have nothing”), which refers to having insufficient wealth to meet the necessities or comforts of life or to live in a manner considered acceptable in a society, and translates the second idiom with the familiar expression *a da din colț în colț* (verb + adverbial locution –back translation: “to move from one corner to another”), meaning to be in a state of distress, especially when there is no obvious solution to the problems one might have.

¹⁹ James Joyce, *Dubliners*, New York, Signet Classics, 2007, p. 74.

²⁰ James Joyce, *Oameni din Dublin*, ed. cit., p. 95.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 87.

²² James Joyce, *Three stories from Dubliners*, ed. cit., p. 71.

²³ Online Etymology Dictionary, 2017, <https://www.etymonline.com>, retrieved August 29, 2023.

²⁴ Judith Siefing, *Oxford dictionary of idioms*, ed. cit., p. 315.

Radu Paraschivescu employs a popular expression: *a nu avea după ce bea apă* (negation + verb + preposition + verb + noun –back translation: “to have nothing to eat and thus no reason to drink water”), which means to be extremely poor. Regarding the subsequent segment, the re-translator elucidates the essence of the original idiom by centering on the protagonist’s endeavours to conceive strategies for procuring money. Violeta Baroană seamlessly emulates the approach of her precursor in elucidating the essence of the second idiom, whereas for the first part she uses the expression *a fi strâmtorat* (verb + adjective – back translation: “to be short of money”), which conveys the notion of being financially constrained.

(ST 3) “when he was in a tight corner”²⁵.

(TT 3) “când era la ananghie”.²⁶ [Translation by idiom of similar meaning and form].

(TT 3.1) “când era la ananghie”.²⁷ [Translation by idiom of similar meaning and form].

(TT 3.2) “când acesta se găsea în dificultate”.²⁸ [Translation by paraphrase].

“To be in a tight corner” or “spot” or “place” describes a difficult situation that a person might have²⁹ and has the syntactic structure of (verb+prepositional phrase). In Joyce’s text it appears when the character Little Chandler is depicted as reminiscing about a particular moment involving his friend Ignatius Gallaher. We observe that both Papadache and Paraschivescu utilize an identical familiar Romanian expression, bearing resemblance in both semantic intent and linguistic structure to its English counterpart, *a fi la ananghie* (verb + adverbial locution –back translation: “to be in need of something”). The noun *ananghie* finds its origin in the Modern Greek word *anánki* (Ciorănescu 2007: 38), denoting the concept of “necessity” and serving as a synonymous term with *strâmtoare*, a word that carries a strict sense of confined space and a figurative representation of challenging circumstances. Conversely, Violeta Baroană offers a rephrasing of the idiom using a sentence that straightforwardly communicates its meaning. Consequently, her approach lacks the level of resonance and evocative imagery that James Joyce’s figurative expression aims to achieve.

(ST4) “That was Ignatius Gallaher all out”³⁰.

(TT 4) “Ăsta era Ignatius Gallaher întreg”.³¹ [Adaptation of the SL idiom].

(TT 4.1) “Ăsta era Ignatius Gallaher”.³² [Translation by omission].

(TT 4.2) “Ăsta era Ignatius Gallaher”.³³ [Translation by omission].

This fourth example represents the narrator’s opinion on the vibrant individual who stands in stark contrast to the story’s dispirited protagonist. “To be all out” (verb + adverbial phrase) means that one uses all their strength and resources to achieve something³⁴ and showcases Gallaher’s essential feature of possessing a commanding

²⁵ James Joyce, *Dubliners*, New York, Signet Classics, 2007, p. 74.

²⁶ James Joyce, *Oameni din Dublin*, ed. cit., p. 95.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 87.

²⁸ James Joyce, *Three stories from Dubliners*, ed. cit., p. 71.

²⁹ Judith Siefiring, *Oxford dictionary of idioms*, ed. cit., p. 292.

³⁰ James Joyce, *Dubliners*, New York, Signet Classics, 2007, p. 74.

³¹ Idem, *Oameni din Dublin*, translated by Frida Papadache, București, Editura Litera, 2018, p. 95.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 87.

³³ James Joyce, *Three stories from Dubliners*, ed. cit., p. 71.

³⁴ Judith Siefiring, *Oxford dictionary of idioms*, ed. cit. p. 6.

presence despite his struggles with financial stability. Among the Romanian translations, it is worth noting that only Frida Papadache endeavours to render the original idiom, by using the adjective *întreg* (back translation: “complete”/“as a whole”), signifying comprehensiveness and entirety. To the Romanian readership, this might appear somewhat unfamiliar, as the prevalent practice involves employing expressions that hold greater familiarity when describing a person, such as *în întregime* or *privit pe de-a-ntregul*. The two re-translators decide to omit the idiom, likely due to the necessity of providing a comprehensive explication of the term within the Romanian language. This omission results in the target text losing the nuanced undertone of admiration conveyed by Little Chandler, whose perspective covers a part of the narrator’s voice.

(ST5) “He’s gone to the dogs”.³⁵

(TT 5) “S-a dus pe copcă”.³⁶ [Translation by idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form].

(TT 5.1) (TT 5.1) “S-a cam zis cu el”.³⁷ [Translation by idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form]

(TT 5.2) (TT 5.2) “A ajuns rău”.³⁸ [Translation by paraphrase].

After the two long-time friends reunite, they engage in a conversation about their “old gang”. During their discussion, Gallaher uses the previously mentioned idiom to depict the declining state of one of their friends. This friend’s situation is rapidly deteriorating in terms of quality, standards, and overall condition.³⁹ According to an online article by Tim Bowen, the idiom’s origin traces back to ancient China, where city regulations prohibited dogs from entering city limits. As a result, stray dogs congregated beyond the city walls, surviving on discarded waste. Those who were banished from the city, including criminals and outcasts, shared this space with the dogs and waste. This situation led to the coining of the expression “to go to the dogs”, (verb phrase + preposition + noun phrase), signifying both the physical location of these individuals and the metaphorical decline in their lives.

Papadache employs an idiom with akin significance yet divergent structure, *a se duce pe copcă* (verb phrase + preposition + noun -back translation: “to go on the ice fishing hole”), where the Romanian lexical composition conveys the intended implication of individuals embroiled in substantial predicaments.⁴⁰ Paraschivescu employs an expression incorporating a reflexive verb: *s-a zis cu (cineva)*, which conveys the notion that an individual is trapped in an inescapable predicament. It is interesting to note that the re-translator introduces the adverb *cam* (lit.: “somewhat”/“rather”/“sort of”) to the expression, which serves to modify the intensity or certainty of the statement. Out of the three translators, it is only Violeta Baroană who provides an elucidation of the idiom found in the source text, effectively rephrasing the core meaning it conveys. *A ajuns rău*, broadly meaning “he is bad”, conveys a judgment of the character's negative

³⁵ James Joyce, *Dubliners*, New York, Signet Classics, 2007, p. 77.

³⁶ Idem, *Oameni din Dublin*, translated by Frida Papadache, București, Editura Litera, 2018, p. 99.

³⁷ James Joyce, *Oameni din Dublin*, ed. cit., p. 90.

³⁸ James Joyce, *Three stories from Dubliners*, ed. cit., p. 75.

³⁹ Judith Siefiring, *Oxford dictionary of idioms*, ed. cit. p. 82.

⁴⁰ Academia Română, *DEX: Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române*, ed. cit., p. 254.

qualities or behaviour without the use of metaphor or imagery. While it clearly states the individual's negative attribute, it lacks the layered meaning and potential for nuanced interpretation that the original idiom provides.

(ST6) "I'm going to have my fling first".⁴¹

(TT 6) "Deocamdată vreau să mă mai zbunguiesc nițeluș".⁴² [Translation by paraphrase].

(TT 6.1) "Întâi și-ntâi, mai zbor un pic din floare-n floare".⁴³ [Translation by idiom of dissimilar meaning and dissimilar form].

(TT 6.2) "Întâi vreau să mă zburd o vreme".⁴⁴ [Translation by paraphrase].

When Little Chandler proposes the idea of marriage to his friend, the idiom he employs conveys his intention to thoroughly relish this phase, often with limited regard for potential outcomes or obligations. "To have one's fling" (verb + pronoun + noun), generally means to engage in a brief period of unrestrained enjoyment, adventure, or indulgence.⁴⁵ The term "fling" can also find application within a distinct idiom, namely "to have a fling with someone", signifying a concise engagement in a sexual relationship with another individual, a subtle distinction which may pose a challenge in translation.

For valid grounds, it becomes evident that both the initial translator of the text and the subsequent translator choose renderings that allude to the intricacy of sexual matters. Frida Papadache paraphrases the idiom by using the reflexive verb *a se zbungui*, which literally means "to jump around playfully", while concurrently encompassing a connotation of engaging in pleasurable interactions with individuals of the opposite gender. At the same time, Paraschivescu employs the expression *a zburda din floare în floare* (verb + preposition + noun + preposition + noun –lit., "to jump from flower to flower"), which conveys the portrayal of an individual characterized by frivolity and emotional capriciousness. Finally, Baroană, by using the verb *a zburda*, imbued with the figurative meaning of an exuberant existence marked by a penchant for celebratory gatherings and joviality,⁴⁶ is the interpretation that we find most closely aligned with the intended significance of the author.

(ST 7) "you may bet your bottom dollar".⁴⁷

(TT 7) "poți liniștit să pui la bătaie și să pariezi pe ultimul tău dolar".⁴⁸ [Translation by idiom of similar meaning and dissimilar form; Translation by adaptation of the SL idiom].

(TT 7.1) "poți să pariezi pe ce vrei".⁴⁹ [Translation by paraphrase].

(TT 7.2) "pun pariu pe ce vrei tu".⁵⁰ [Translation by paraphrase].

⁴¹ James Joyce, *Dubliners*, New York, Signet Classics, 2007, p. 83.

⁴² Idem, *Oameni din Dublin*, translated by Frida Papadache, București, Editura Litera, 2018, p. 106.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 94.

⁴⁴ James Joyce, *Three stories from Dubliners*, ed. cit., p. 82.

⁴⁵ Frederick Thomas Wood, *The Macmillan dictionary of English colloquial idioms*, London, Macmillan Press, 1983, p. 125.

⁴⁶ Academia Română, *DEX: Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române*, ed. Cit., p. 1345.

⁴⁷ James Joyce, *Dubliners*, New York, Signet Classics, 2007, p. 83.

⁴⁸ Idem, *Oameni din Dublin*, translated by Frida Papadache, București, Editura Litera, 2018, p. 107.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 96.

⁵⁰ James Joyce, *Three stories from Dubliners*, ed. cit., p. 85.

The idiom “you may bet your bottom dollar” is used to convey a high degree of certainty or confidence in a statement or prediction.⁵¹ Essentially, it means that you are so sure of something that you would be willing to wager the very last dollar you have on it. It is a way of emphasizing your conviction in a particular outcome or assertion. Grammatically, it consists of the subject “you” followed by the modal verb “may”, which indicates permission or possibility. “Bet” is the main verb, and “your bottom dollar” is the object of the verb. In this context, “bottom dollar” refers to the last or least amount of money one possesses, signifying the utmost confidence in the statement being made.

Upon scrutiny of the three translations, it becomes apparent that Papadache’s rendition stands out for its length and its adherence to the original form. Notably, the usage of the Romanian idiomatic expression *a pune la bătaie* (verb + adverbial locution), denoting the act of risking something, is conjoined with the adaptation of the source idiom. This translation is seemingly employed with the dual purpose of authentically capturing the character’s colloquial speech patterns, employing a common Romanian linguistic style, and effectively conveying the foreign essence inherent in the original expression.

Both re-translators employ the identical Romanian informal expression, conveying the equivalent meaning as the source idiom. The distinction between them lies in the syntactical structure employed. Paraschivescu opts for a direct address to the second person singular, mirroring the original idiom’s structure: *poți să pariezi pe ce vrei* (back translation: “you may bet on anything you want”). Conversely, Baroană shifts the focus to the first person singular and omits the rendering of the modal verb, utilizing *pun pariu pe ce vrei tu* (back translation: “I bet on anything you want”). In doing so, she implies the speaker’s commitment and eliminates the invitation extended toward the other character.

(ST 8) “See if I don’t play my cards properly”⁵².

(TT 8) “Să vezi tu dacă nu-mi joc eu bine cărțile !”⁵³ [Translation by idiom of similar meaning and form].

(TT 8.1) “să vezi dacă-mi joc bine cărțile”⁵⁴ [Translation by idiom of similar meaning and form].

(TT 8.2) “Să nu-mi spui pe nume dacă nu obțin ce vreau”⁵⁵ [Translation by paraphrase].

Ignatius Gallagher continues his idea of wanting to marry a woman with money at some point. In this context, he used the idiom “to play your cards properly”, a variant of “to play your cards right”, meaning to make the best use of your assets and opportunities.⁵⁶ The syntactic construction conveys a sense of determination on the part of the speaker. “See if” is a construction that introduces a challenge or a statement of confidence in the speaker’s ability to do something, and the negated verb phrase “don’t

⁵¹ Judith Siefiring, *Oxford dictionary of idioms*, ed. cit., 2004, p. 23.

⁵² James Joyce, *Dubliners*, New York, Signet Classics, 2007, p. 84.

⁵³ Idem, *Oameni din Dublin*, translated by Frida Papadache, București, Editura Litera, 2018, p. 107.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 96.

⁵⁵ James Joyce, *Three stories from Dubliners*, ed. cit., pp. 85-86.

⁵⁶ Judith Siefiring, *Oxford dictionary of idioms*, ed. cit., 2004, p. 46.

play” emphasizes his competence and expresses assurance that he that will successfully execute his strategy.

Once again, Papadache adeptly reproduces the essence of the original text in both meaning and form by skilfully identifying precise semantic and syntactic counterparts in the Romanian language. In contrast, Paraschivescu employs a comparable idiom while altering the negative phrase to an affirmative one, *să vezi dacă-mi joc bine cărțile* (back translation: “see if I play my cards properly”). This adaptation yields a statement of more neutral tonality, which could be interpreted as either a query or an invitation for an observer to assess whether the speaker is effectively managing their circumstances. Lastly, Baroană exercises the greatest degree of creative freedom in paraphrasing the statement, encapsulating a similar meaning but in a more direct manner: *Să nu-mi spui pe nume dacă nu obțin ce vreau* (back translation: “Don’t call me by my name if I don’t get what I want”).

6. Conclusions

Our study commenced with the creation of two hypotheses aimed at enhancing our comprehension of disparities between the source text and the target text, as well as facilitating comparisons among the translations. Subsequently, we will recapitulate each hypothesis and outline the conclusions drawn from our analysis.

1. *Each translator exhibits a distinct mode of linguistic expression, a phenomenon that can be discerned through the scrutiny of employed translation strategies.* The outcomes of our analysis demonstrate that, indeed, each translator employed distinct strategies when translating the idiomatic expressions. Frida Papadache frequently opted for adaptation (on three occasions), leading to lengthy phrases, and frequently incorporating the original idiom’s words. This approach resulted in a language that often felt unnatural within the context of the Romanian language. Paraschivescu predominantly identified idiomatic expressions that retained the original text’s meaning (three instances) while diverging in their linguistic structure (another three instances). In this respect, Paraschivescu emerged as the most even-handed translator, adept at conveying the author’s linguistic intent and presenting a lucid and precise mode of expression that resonates with the sensibilities of Romanian readers. Ultimately, Violeta Baroană’s translation, while maintaining a similar meaning to the original text, predominantly employed the paraphrasing strategy (6 times). This choice led to a shift in language towards greater accessibility, omitting words with non-literal connotations.

2. *Translations prioritize a faithful representation of the source text, whereas retranslations tend to adopt a more natural and reader-friendly linguistic alignment with the target audience’s language.* Based on the conducted analysis, this hypothesis is further substantiated. As previously mentioned, the initial translator of the text employs an elaborate language, frequently augmenting the text with additional words to encompass every nuance of the original text, without prioritizing readability. In Radu Paraschivescu’s retranslation, the idioms are conveyed in a lucid and straightforward manner, yet they manage to retain the essence of a natural conversation. On the other hand, re-translator Violeta Baroană adopts an expressive style that, at times, becomes overly simplistic and fails to retain the artistic expression characteristic to idioms.

What makes translation even more intricate is that it leads to the disclosure of a personal style of expression for the translator. This style may or may not align perfectly

with the author's style, and that discrepancy can be seen as both a challenge and an opportunity. Undoubtedly, this topic warrants examination from multiple perspectives, and the formulation of a universal theory remains elusive, given that individual analyses can yield diverse findings.

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