UNLOCKING THE SECRETS: EXPLORING TRANSLATION STRATEGIES FOR SIMILES AND METAPHORS IN THE CROATIAN TRANSLATION OF DONNA TARTT'S *A SECRET HISTORY*[1]

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Abstract

This article examines translation strategies on a sample of 54 similes and 40 metaphors in Donna Tartt's A Secret History *and its Croatian translation* Tajna povijest *by Tina Antonini. Applying Patrizia Pierini's and Mildred L. Larson's classifications of strategies, the analysis reveals that literal translation is a predominant strategy, accounting for over 60% of similes and nearly 90% of metaphors. This reflects a deliberate effort to preserve Tartt's unique imagery, maintain the source text's stylistic and semantic integrity, and ensure cultural compatibility in the target language. The article also highlights the translator's creative use of other strategies, such as image replacement, explicitation, and glosses, to address cultural and linguistic disparities. By demonstrating the practical application of these classifications, the article explores the balance between fidelity and creativity in figurative language translation, offering insights that could contribute to refining translation strategies and furthering practical studies in cross-linguistic literary contexts.*

Keywords: figurative language, similes and metaphors, translation strategies

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[1] This article is a revised version of the second co-author Maras's master's thesis (2023).

1. Introduction

This article explores the strategies used for the translation of similes and metaphors in the Croatian translation of Donna Tartt's novel *A Secret History* (1992) by Tina Antonini (2004). Often considered a quintessential example of the "dark academia" genre, *A Secret History* is a compelling study of metaphors and similes that enhances its thematic and psychological depth. Tartt's use of metaphors and similes intricately shapes her distinctive narrative style, enriching the text with layers of meaning, emotional resonance, and vivid imagery. Successfully translating these elements requires a careful balance of preserving meaning, style, and impact, illustrating broader issues of fidelity, adaptation, and creativity in literary translation.

The analysis relies on a systematic random sample of 54 similes and 40 metaphors from the novel, examined using classifications of strategies proposed by Pierini (2007) and Larson (1984). Pierini's approach focuses on strategies for translating similes, offering options such as literal translation, replacement with a different image, explicitation of similarity features, reduction to sense, or even omission when necessary. This systematic approach enables translators to adapt similes while preserving their impact on meaning and style. Larson's taxonomy of strategies extends to metaphors, proposing strategies such as retaining the original metaphor, converting it into a simile, substituting with a culturally appropriate metaphor in the target language (TL), explaining the metaphor, or translating its essence without imagery.

The study explores how the proposed classifications of strategies explicate the complexities involved in translating Tartt's similes and metaphors, emphasizing the balance between fidelity and adaptation. It also seeks to uncover the impact of these strategies on preserving Tartt's intended psychological and thematic depth, while providing broader insights into the challenges and methodologies of translating complex figurative language.

2. Translation theories and literary translation

Translation studies have evolved significantly, reflecting shifts in theoretical and cultural paradigms. Early linguistic oriented approaches emphasized rigid

equivalence, as Catford (1978, 20) defined translation as "the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)". Nida further developed this approach with his concept of dynamic equivalence, proposing that "a translator seeks to translate the meaning of the original text, so that the target language wording will trigger the same impact on the target culture audience as the original wording did upon the source text audience" (Nida 1969, 91). Over time, scholars began to expand the scope of what translation refers to. Sokolovsky (2010, 285-292) categorized translation as "a process, result, communication, and skill", highlighting its multifaceted nature and social purpose. Pym underscores the field's evolution, stating, "translation has shifted from rigid equivalence models towards approaches that emphasize interpretive and adaptive strategies, recognizing the translator's creative agency" (Pym 2023, 7).

Literary translation, as a subset, introduces specific complexities. Jones (2019, 298) describes it as "inherently interpretive and culturally embedded, contrasting mechanical equivalence". He categorizes literary translations into "cribs, best-fits, and adaptations", illustrating the spectrum of approaches translators navigate (Jones 2019, 298), whereas Pym (2023, 8) observes that "literary translation prioritizes cultural mediation and the negotiation of meaning over static textual fidelity". These perspectives highlight the fact that literary translators must strike a balance between fidelity to the source text with cultural and creative adaptation, showcasing translation as a dynamic, context-driven process.

3. Cognitive insights into metaphor translation

Building on the insights of G. Lakoff and M. Johnson (1980), human conceptual systems are understood to be saturated with metaphorical constructs, making metaphors foundational to how we understand the world. Consequently, the translator's task extends beyond the literal text to convey these concepts, which are intrinsic to the source language and culture but must resonate within the target language's conceptual framework.

Samaniego Fernández (2011) highlights that most cognitive approaches to metaphor translation traditionally focus on identifying and categorizing linguistic metaphors, proposing conceptual equivalents, and evaluating translations through a

prescriptive lens. However, she argues that equivalence should be seen as a relationship between the source and target texts, not as a demand for 'sameness' or 'transparency', citing Hermans, who states, "it is difference, not sameness or transparency or equality, which is inscribed in the operations of translation" (1999, 60). Schäffner (2004, 1261) similarly observes that "not all individual manifestations of a conceptual metaphor in a source text are accounted for in the target text by using the same metaphorical expression". Translators often adapt structural elements of metaphors, making their implications more explicit in the target language, reflecting the inherent flexibility of metaphor translation.

4. The explicit vs. the implicit

4.1 The explicit: Simile

Similes and metaphors are rhetorical devices often grouped together due to their comparative nature. Larson (1984) delineates both figures of speech as comprising three essential parts: the topic, image, and point of similarity. She states that understanding a simile accurately depends on the identification of the topic and image (Larson 1984, 246–255). This means potential misunderstandings can complicate rendering of similes, thus presenting challenges in conveying the original meaning across languages. Pierini's model defines a tripartite structure for similes consisting of a topic or comparandum, a vehicle or comparatum accompanied by a comparison marker, and similarity features. For example, in 'You're acting like a little boy,' 'You' is the topic, 'a little boy' the vehicle, and 'like' the comparison marker, illustrating the similarity between the actions of 'You' and 'a little boy' (Hilman et al., 2013, 48). Larson's interpretation, also referred to by Hilman et al., highlights a simile's structure involving a topic, image, and point of similarity. The topic is the subject of the initial statement, while the image is the second statement, acting as a figurative counterpart to the topic. Their shared characteristics, or the point of similarity, are fundamental to both elements in the SL and must be accurately interpreted in the translation process. To translate a simile correctly, the structure must be analysed in the SL to identify the topic, image, and point of similarity, before attempting to express these in the TL (Hilman et al., 2013, 45–48).

Romano (2017) notes that the conventionality of the concepts being compared and the formal complexity of the structures used are key factors influencing the preference for similes over metaphors in opinion discourse. Moreover, similes tend to be favoured when they involve more complex and unexpected structures, whereas metaphors are preferred when their structures are familiar and simpler. She further attributes this distinction to the principles of iconicity, stating that "The preference of similes for the more daring, unexpected and complex structures and that of metaphors for the more familiar and simple ones, is related to iconicity, more specifically to the principles of 'quantity' and 'proximity – distance'" (Romano 2017, 28). Additionally, she points out that the word 'like' in similes signals dissimilarity between the source and target, acting as a "discourse staller, enabling the speaker/writer's process of creation and the hearer/reader's comprehension or construal of the intended mapping by means of the elaboration" (Romano 2017, 21).

4.2 The implicit: Metaphor

Newmark recognizes metaphors as powerful linguistic devices that offer richness and brevity beyond literal speech (1981). He categorizes metaphors into distinct types, illustrating their varying prevalence and impact within language. From 'dead' metaphors, barely identifiable due to their ubiquity, to 'original' metaphors, crafted specifically for a particular context, each type plays a unique role in enriching expression.

Translating metaphors presents distinct challenges tied to the cultural and linguistic contexts from which they originate. Translators often face the dilemma of SL metaphors that have no direct equivalents in the TL. The crux of metaphor translation involves coming up with strategies to preserve the original meaning, creating a complex field that grapples with conveying the same effect and implications in another linguistic and cultural context.

As we delve into the next section, we will explore the practical strategies and nuanced decisions translators use to navigate the complex landscape of metaphorical language.

5. Strategies for translating similes and metaphors

Translation strategies are universally applicable across languages (Fadaee 2011, 174) and serve as standard approaches for translators to address various challenges (Neubert and Shreve 1992, 52). Krings (1986, 263, cited in Fadaee 2011, 175) describes these strategies as plans for tackling specific issues within a translation task, while Loescher (1991, 8, cited in Fadaee 2011, 175) sees them as problem-solving procedures. Bell (1998, cited in Fadaee 2011, 175) differentiates between local strategies, which focus on specific text segments, and global strategies, which target the entire text. Adding to this, Venuti (1998, 240) introduces domesticating and foreignizing methods, highlighting different cultural orientations of translations.

When dealing with figures of speech like metaphors and similes, specific strategies are necessary. Mollanazar (2005, 46) suggests identifying, classifying, and analysing these elements to manage their complexity effectively. According to Pierini (cited in Hilman et al. 2013, 49), these strategies have a significant impact on translation quality, with factors like connotation, rhetorical effect, and context playing crucial roles in strategy selection.

Schmidt (2012) argues that the selection of translation procedures is influenced by an intricate interplay of objective and subjective factors. He explains that

> The motivation for using a particular translation procedure is very complex, consisting of numerous reasons, both objective and subjective, such as the features of metaphors themselves, conventionality of the TL, language asymmetry, the general ST-orientation or reader-orientation, various elements of style such as explicitation and implicitation, adding intensity to an expression, increasing expressivity of the text, avoiding redundancy, idiosyncrasies of the translator, the influence of TL literary discourse and literary translation tradition etc. (Schmidt 2012, 187).

This highlights the multifaceted nature of translation decisions, where linguistic, cultural, and personal factors converge to shape the translator's approach.

5.1. Strategies for translating similes

Although often explored together, there are notable differences between similes and metaphors, each necessitating specific translation approaches. Literal

translation works when the simile's meaning is universally understood, allowing direct reproduction in the TL (Newmark, 1981, 88). In addition to literal translation, Pierini (2007, 31) suggests several other approaches for similes, such as image replacement, simile reduction to its sense, retention with explicitation of similarity, replacement with a gloss, and omission.

Replacing the simile with a culturally appropriate image in the TL is advised if the original image could clash with TL cultural norms (Newmark, 1981, 88; Larson, 1984). Furthermore, if the simile is idiomatic, reducing it to its essence may be necessary, though the translator must carefully consider the impact on the text's intention and ensure the simile's function is preserved elsewhere (Newmark, 1981, 88, 91). Explicitating similarity features helps make the simile understandable, involving the addition of explanatory information to the TL text (Hilman et al. 2016, 50). Adding a gloss or note clarifies unfamiliar terms or phrases for the TL audience (Ibid.). Lastly, omitting the simile may be chosen to avoid unnatural translations, focusing on retaining the original's meaning in the TL (Ibid.).

5.2. Strategies for translating metaphors

Translators often use strategies applicable to both similes and metaphors due to their shared characteristics. Morneau (1993, cited in Fadaee 2011, 176) suggests methods like direct translation, rephrasing as similes, substituting with similar TL metaphors, using literal translation, and clarifying for the audience. Around the same time, Newmark (1988, cited in Kendenan 2017, 109) recommended strategies like replicating the original image, using culturally appropriate images, translating metaphors as similes, enhancing similes with explicit sense, simplifying to core meanings, and deletion.

According to Schmidt (2012, 187), "a parameter proved to be relevant for the choice of translation procedure is the universality of metaphor (i.e., whether the metaphor is shared between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL)". However, he concludes, the impact of other factors, such as the metaphor's conventionality and its cognitive function, still requires further investigation (ibid.).

The decision to preserve or delete a metaphor's sense depends on its impact on the text's expressive power, emphasizing the translator's crucial role in aligning the translation with the text's intended message (Alvarez 1993, 488).

6. Rationale for the study

This study focuses on figurative language in *The Secret History* because of its prominence in Tartt's writing style and its critical role in conveying the novel's atmosphere and thematic depth. Translating such complex imagery from English into Croatian presents unique challenges, particularly in maintaining stylistic integrity, cultural nuances, and semantic richness.

Donna Tartt, a critically acclaimed American author born in 1963, is celebrated for her mastery of prose and intricate narrative structures. Her debut novel, *The Secret History*, published by Alfred A. Knopf in September 1992, quickly gained bestseller status and established her as a leading figure in contemporary literature. Renowned for its rich imagery and sophisticated language, it has been translated into numerous languages, including Croatian. The study uses the Croatian translation, *Tajna povijest*, rendered by Tina Antonini and published by Algoritam in 2004, as its primary source.

The novel follows Richard Papen, a disillusioned medical student from Plano, California, who transfers to Hampden, an elite liberal arts college in Vermont. Hampden is portrayed as a microcosm of internal and interpersonal conflict, described by Tartt as "an endless dreary battle of paperwork, full of stalemates, fought in trenches" (p. 21), mirroring the characters' moral struggles and psychological complexity. Tartt's figurative language vividly captures themes of beauty, morality, and self-destruction, making the novel particularly suitable for an analysis of similes and metaphors.

This study employs Pierini's classification of strategies for rendering similes and Larson's classification of strategies for rendering metaphors, as both provide a systematic overview of strategies to address the complexities of figurative language translation. Pierini's approach outlines six strategies for translating similes: literal translation, replacing the image with a different one, reducing the simile to its essence, retaining the same image with explicitation, adding a gloss, and omission. Larson's classification for rendering metaphors offers five strategies: retaining the metaphor if it fits naturally in the TL, translating the metaphor as a simile, substituting it with a culturally appropriate metaphor, explaining the metaphor, or conveying its essence without retaining the imagery. These taxonomies were chosen for their complementary nature – while Pierini provides more nuanced

options for adapting similes, Larson's strategies address metaphors' implicit and explicit dimensions, offering a broader application. By combining these classifications , this study ensures a detailed and balanced analysis, reflecting the shared characteristics and distinct challenges of similes and metaphors.

The next section will delve into the analysis of collected data, providing insights into the practical application of Larson's and Pierini's translation strategies.

7. Aim and research questions

The aim of this study is to examine the translation strategies used to render similes and metaphors, focusing on their effectiveness in preserving figurative language, imagery, and cultural nuances while addressing linguistic and cultural disparities. Guided by this aim, the study is structured around the following research questions: 1. Which translation strategies are predominantly used in rendering similes and metaphors from English to Croatian? 2. How do the strategies employed affect the preservation of the original text's figurative language, imagery, and cultural nuances? 3. What insights can Pierini's and Larson's classifications of strategies provide when applied to the analysis of figurative language translation? and 4. How does the translator balance fidelity to the source text with creativity in addressing cultural and linguistic disparities?

8. Methodology

To investigate Tartt's use of similes and metaphors in *The Secret History* and its Croatian translation, this study employs a systematic and rigorous methodology. The process began with dividing the novel into ten sections, each comprising approximately 50 pages, to facilitate a comprehensive analysis. A close reading of the novel was conducted to locate similes and metaphors, defined as follows: similes explicitly compare two entities using "as" or "like", while metaphors involve implicit comparisons where one thing is described as another. Researchers independently reviewed the text to ensure reliability, with cross-checking to minimize omissions or inconsistencies. A detailed manual analysis was performed on samples comprising 50 pages from the beginning, middle, and end of the novel to estimate the total occurrences of figurative language. This revealed an average density of 35 similes and 60 metaphors per 50 pages, resulting in an estimated

1,032 instances across the entire 544-page novel. Of these, 54 similes and 40 metaphors were selected for an in-depth analysis. The curated corpus represents approximately 9% of all figurative expressions in the novel, ensuring the inclusion of diverse thematic and stylistic patterns while addressing significant translation challenges.

The translator's creative approach to rendering these figurative expressions into Croatian was analyzed using the classifications of strategies proposed by Pierini and Larson. These facilitated the classification of translation strategies, including literal translation, image replacement, explicitation, and glossing. Special attention was paid to how the translator preserved Tartt's unique imagery, adapted it for cultural compatibility, or introduced modifications to address linguistic disparities.

Challenges encountered during this process included identifying metaphors with implicit meanings and distinguishing between fidelity to the original text and creative reinterpretation by the translator. By systematically identifying, cataloging, and analyzing figurative expressions, the study ensures a rigorous exploration of Tartt's stylistic richness and its preservation in translation.[2]

9. Analysis

The results reveal that the translator predominantly employs literal translation for similes, accounting for 62% of all instances. This indicates a strong effort to preserve the original imagery and stylistic integrity of Tartt's text. The second most common strategy is replacing the image with a different image (16%), reflecting the translator's occasional need to adapt similes for cultural or linguistic compatibility. Similarly, the use of glossing (14%) demonstrates a creative approach to clarifying culturally specific or complex similes for the Croatian audience without sacrificing their richness. Explicitating similarity features is used sparingly (8%), suggesting that the translator generally avoids overexplaining

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[2] A benchmark analysis using the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) indicates that most similes and metaphors in Donna Tartt's *The Secret History* are rarely found in the corpus, suggesting a high level of originality. For example, "the hair was snow white" (COCA frequency: 106) and "blood-warm waters of dream" (COCA frequency: 9) illustrate varying degrees of conventionality, but most of Tartt's expressions are innovative in their literary context. This observation, while informative, does not directly impact the study's focus on translation strategies and their application to figurative language.

imagery unless necessary. Notably, strategies involving reduction to sense or omission were not employed, underscoring the translator's commitment to retaining the figurative language's aesthetic and semantic depth.

These findings highlight the translator's deliberate effort to balance fidelity to Tartt's original text with the cultural and linguistic considerations of the target audience. By predominantly favoring literal translation and selectively using creative strategies like glossing and image replacement, the translator effectively captures the novel's intricate imagery while ensuring accessibility and resonance in the Croatian context. This approach reflects an overall preference for preserving the source text's literary essence rather than simplifying or omitting its figurative language.

Table 1.   Percentage of the strategies used in translating similes

Strategy	Frequency (Percentage)
1. literal translation	33 (62%)
2. replacement of the image with a different image	9 (16%)
3. reducing the simile to its sense	0 (0%)
4. retaining the same image by explicitating the similarity features	4 (8%)
5. replacing the image with a gloss	8 (14%)
6. the omission of the simile	0 (0%)
Total	**54 (100%)**

The analysis of metaphor translation strategies reveals a strong preference for retaining the original metaphor in the target text, accounting for 87.5% of all instances. This mirrors the dominant use of literal translation observed in simile translation (62%), highlighting the translator's commitment to preserving Tartt's intricate imagery. Alternative strategies, such as translating metaphors as similes or substituting with TL equivalents, each account for 5%, while only one instance

(2.5%) involved translating the meaning without metaphorical imagery. No cases of combining metaphor retention with explicit explanations were found.

Compared to similes, metaphors are preserved even more consistently, suggesting their compact and integral role in Tartt's narrative style makes them less adaptable. Similes, on the other hand, require adjustments more frequently for cultural or linguistic reasons. These findings underscore the translator's priority for fidelity to the source text while selectively adapting figurative language to meet cross-cultural challenges.

Table 2.   Percentage of the strategies used in translating metaphors

Strategy	Frequency (Percentage)
1. the translator can keep the metaphor in the target text if the TL permits it	35 (87,5%)
2. the metaphor can be translated as a simile	2 (5%)
3. the metaphor can be substituted by a metaphor in the TL which has the same meaning	2 (5%)
4. the metaphor (or simile) can be kept and its meaning explained	0 (0%)
5. the meaning of the metaphor can be translated without keeping the metaphorical imagery	1 (2,5%)
Total	**40 (100%)**

9.1 Classifying translated similes using Pierini's classification of strategies

As previously mentioned, the most frequently used strategy in this sample is literal translation. The translator replicated the same image in Croatian as the one in English, because the simile retains the same meaning in both languages. Moreover,

Croatian allows faithful representation, ensuring proper comprehension by the target audience (see examples 3-6 below). Continuing from example 3, as the first two have been briefly discussed in the footnote 2, the analysis focuses on exploring the innovative and context-specific aspects of Tartt's figurative language. This strategy underscores the translator's careful consideration of linguistic and cultural compatibility, allowing the simile's original meaning and stylistic effect to be effectively conveyed to the Croatian audience.

Example 3.

ST: My years there created for me an expendable past, *disposable as a plastic cup*. (p. 16)

TT: Od godina koje sam ondje proveo dobio sam prošlost koja se mogla žrtvovati, *odbaciti kao plastična čaša*. (p. 13)

Example 4.

ST: In this swarm of cigarettes and dark sophistication, they appeared here and there, *like figures from an allegory, or long-dead celebrants from some forgotten garden party*. (p. 28)

TT: U mnoštvu cigareta i tamne sofisticiranosti izronili bi ponegdje *poput alegorijskih likova ili davno umrlih slavljenika s neke zaboravljene vrtne zabave*. (p. 25)

Example 5.

ST: The whoosh of the flames was *like a flock of birds, trapped and beating in a whirlwind near the ceiling*. (p. 104)

TT: Fijuk plamenova bio je *poput jata ptica koje, uhvaćene u stupicu, silovito mašu krilima pod stropom*. (p. 98)

Example 6.

ST: it stopped and stared—hair on end, mouth agog in idiotic astonishment—*like a comic book character konked on the head with an anvil*, chaplet of stars and birdies twittering about the brow. (p. 377)

TT: zastao je i promatrao me – nakostriješene kose, budalasto se iščuđavajući razjapljenih usta – *nalik liku iz stripa udarenom nakovnjem po glavi*, kojemu oko glave plešu zvjezdice i ptičice. (p. 356)

Using a word-for-word translation method, while not the most dynamic strategy, has proven effective for these similes. The meaning remains consistent in both Croatian and English, allowing readers to grasp the author's intent without modifications. Though slight changes may arise from the translator's interpretation, the wording effectively conveys the intended meaning through literal translation. Preserving these similes in their original form is crucial for maintaining both the text and its meaning.

Instances of replacing the image with a different one are also common in this particular translation. This strategy involves substituting a simile in the SL with an equivalent one in the TL to preserve the same meaning, as exemplified below:

Example 7.

ST: I'll never forget the way he looked, *white as talc,* beads of sweat on his upper lip and the light bouncing off his glasses (p. 400)

TT: nikad neću zaboraviti kako je izgledao, *blijed kao krpa,* kapljice znoja na gornjoj usnici i naočale koje mu se cakle… (p. 379)

Example 8.

ST: His face was *as white as chalk*. (p. 418)

TT: Bio je *blijed kao krpa*. (p. 397)

Example 9.

ST: Charles raised his arm; and *quick as a flash*, Francis, who was standing closest to him, threw a glass of wine in his face. (p. 573)

TT: Charles je podigao ruku; *brz kao strijela*, Francis, koji mu je stajao najbliže, zalio ga je čašom vina po licu. (p. 548)

The translator had to modify the similes' imagery to ensure accurate and culturally resonant meaning in the target language. While Croatian and English share some similar imagery in similes, a literal translation could risk losing impact or clarity for the target audience. For instance, translating *His face was as white as chalk* into Croatian as *Bio je blijed kao krpa* prioritized conventionality within the target

culture by using an established expression, rather than a direct translation, *bijel kao kreda,* which, though understandable, would lack the same cultural resonance. Similarly, *quick as a flash* was translated as *brz kao strijela,* a conventional Croatian expression that effectively conveys the same meaning while maintaining fluency and cultural compatibility.

This approach shows the translator's use of conventional TL expressions for meaningful equivalence, avoiding original imagery when it might impede comprehension. Importantly, idiomatic similes were not simplified to their meanings, a strategy used when no direct equivalent exists.

However, the translator chose to retain the same image by explicitating similar features in some cases (see examples 10-13 below). This strategy is used when the translator is unsure if the target audience is familiar with the literal translation of the source simile. The translator explicates certain parts of the simile to ensure better comprehension for the target audience.

Example 10.

ST: They looked very much alike, with heavy dark-blond hair and epicene faces *as clear, as cheerful and grave, as a couple of Flemish angels*. (p. 28)

TT: Bili su jako slični, guste kose boje žita i androginih lica, *vedri, razdragani i ozbiljni kao par anđela sa slika flamanskih majstora*. (p. 25)

Example 11.

ST: Bunny was himself *as fond of walks as an old dog*. (p. 99)

TT: Bunny je i sam *volio izlete poput kakva starog psa mješanca*. (p. 94)

Example 12.

ST: …*white-laced branches* dripping rain holes in the crust. (p. 410)

TT: …gdje je s *grana ukrašenih bijelom čipkom* kapala kiša i stvarala rupe u snježnoj kori (p. 389)

Example 13.

ST: …it clanged unevenly to and fro *like a bell at a séance*. (p. 447)

TT: …zveketalo je neujednačeno *poput zvona na nekoj spiritističkoj seansi*. (p. 425)

While only a few such examples exist, their distribution justifies discussion. Similes, understandable by the intended audience, may cause comprehension issues if translated literally. For instance, in example 10, the translator had to clarify the simile to avoid confusion. This stems from *Flemish* referring both to people and to artists from Flanders, potentially misleading readers to associate it not with angels in Flemish art, but with literal Flemish angels. Thus, the translator specified: *kao par anđela sa slika flamanskih majstora (as a couple of angels painted by Flemish artists)*.

In example 12, the term *white-laced* functions as a participle, indicating that the branches are adorned with a lace-like layer of snow. A literal translation (*čipkasto-bijele*) might not effectively convey this imagery in Croatian, as it could suggest that the branches themselves are lace-like rather than covered with snow resembling lace. The translator's choice (*gdje je s grana ukrašenih bijelom čipkom – the branches decorated with white lace*) avoids this ambiguity, providing a clearer interpretation for the target audience. By explicitly describing the branches as *decorated with white lace* and adjusting the sentence structure, the translator preserved the original simile's meaning while ensuring it remained accessible and unambiguous in the target language. This approach demonstrates that a literal translation is not always the best option when it risks distorting the source text's intended imagery.

The strategy of replacing the image with a gloss was used eight times in the translation. This is a more drastic approach than retaining the same image by explaining the similarity features, as it involves adding a note or comment to enhance comprehension for the reader. We will explore three of those similes in more detail (see examples 14-16 below).

Example 14.

ST: …a black greatcoat that billowed behind him as he walked and made him look *like a cross between a student prince and Jack the Ripper*. (p. 28)

TT: …crni ogrtač koji se nadimao za njim dok je hodao, tako da niste bili sigurni *sliči li studentu kraljeviću ili Jacku Trbosjeku*. (p. 24)

Gloss: Romantični lik heidelberškog princa kojega njegov otac šalje da iskuša "stvarni" život, poznat iz opereta i filmova, izvorno iz drame W. M. Foerstera.

Example 15.

ST: …Henry too erratic and generally strange, *a sort of Mycroft Holmes of classical philology*. (p. 246)

TT: …Henry preveliki ekscentrik i općenito čudan, *neka vrsta Mycrofta Holmesa klasične filologije*. (p. 232)

Gloss: Brat Sherlocka Holmesa, izuzetno inteligentan, obrazovan i pomalo ekscentričan.

Example 16.

ST: …*like convertibles in some nightmare Rose Parade*… (p. 449)

TT: …*poput kabrioleta u nekakvoj sablasnoj Paradi ruža*… (p. 428)

Gloss: Svakog 1. siječnja, u Pasadeni se održava povorka velikih vozila s cvijećem, u kojoj sudjeluje i orkestar, konjanici…

The gloss strategy was necessary for translating these similes. The target audience might widely understand Donna Tartt's unique similes, especially in example 14 where there is a dramatic reference to a student prince. Similarly, in example 16, without the added gloss, the target reader could interpret the phrase as a general parade of roses or be confused about why capitalization was used. With the added gloss, though, they would understand that there is a specific Rose Parade in Pasadena and have a clear understanding of what the author meant. However, opinions might differ regarding the necessity of gloss, for example 15 due to Sherlock Holmes being widely known, but Mycroft Holmes less so. Acknowledging the book's initial 1992 publication might be essential. The series' recognition among younger readers in the early 2000s was likely limited, justifying the translator's use of a gloss to clarify a simile, but readers familiar with Mycroft Holmes can simply skip it.

In the target text, no omissions of similes have been identified. The approach focuses on removing the simile from the target text, while maintaining the meaning of the source text. One possible reason for this could be that both English and

Croatian are European languages, despite their differences. To avoid such a drastic measure, alternative strategies could be used. Given that this strategy is best avoided and only taken as a last resort, the translator's choice to exclude it is highly appreciated. As a result, alternative solutions have been found to effectively maintain the essence of the original similes.

9.2 Classifying translated metaphors using Larson's classification of strategies

While Larson's classification is applicable to the translation of similes as well, its primary focus lies in addressing the challenges translators face when working with metaphors. This approach is specifically designed to provide solutions for the unique issues that arise in metaphor translation, making it particularly effective in preserving the meaning and impact of these figurative expressions across languages. The analysis of metaphor translation strategies demonstrates a clear emphasis on preserving metaphors in the target text, with other strategies employed only when necessary due to linguistic or cultural considerations. As with similes, literal translation of metaphors is still the most common strategy used (see examples 17-19).

Example 17.

ST: The months subsequent were *an endless dreary battle of paperwork, full of stalemates, fought in trenches*. (p. 21)

TT: Sljedećih mjeseci vodila se *beskonačna zamorna bitka s administracijom, puna pat pozicija, pravi rovovski rat*. (p. 18)

Example 18.

ST: And the nights, *bigger than imagining: black and gusty and enormous, disordered and wild with stars*. (p. 23)

TT: I noći, *veće od slika mašte: crne, burne i goleme, rastrojene i divlje od zvijezda*. (p. 19)

Example 19.

ST: …was evidence that *rational processes rumbled somewhere in the muddied depths of his consciousness*. (p. 35)

TT: …dokazivali su da *racionalni procesi još uvijek životare negdje u zamućenim dubinama njegove svijesti*. (p. 31)

The translator skilfully addressed the challenges of translating metaphors, maintaining their meaning and imagery. The use of expressive language in examples 18 and 19 fits perfectly with the intended meanings. Words like *rastrojene* and *životare* effectively captured the feeling and meaning, demonstrating careful word choice by the translator. This success may be attributed to the implicit nature of metaphors, allowing more flexibility in translation without compromising form or meaning. The strategy of translating metaphors into similes appeared frequently throughout the text. This approach is particularly effective in aiding the target audience's comprehension, as it eliminates the implicit nature of the metaphor. By making the comparison more explicit – a characteristic common to translation in general – the resulting text becomes clearer and more accessible, ensuring that the intended meaning is easier for the audience to grasp and interpret. (see Examples 20-21).

Example 20.

ST: He played with relish, sleeves rolled up, smiling at his work, tinkling from the low ranges to the high with the tricky syncopation of *a tap dancer going up a Ziegfeld staircase*. (p. 91)

TT: Svirao je s užitkom, zavrnutih rukava, smiješeći se onome što radi, prelazeći iz niskih tonaliteta u visoke složenim sinkopiranjem *poput stepera koji se uspinje Ziegfeldovim stubištem*. (p. 86)

Example 21.

ST: His voice was nasal, garrulous, *W. C. Fields* with a bad case of Long Island lockjaw. (p. 30)

TT: Imao je nazalan, bučan glas, *poput W. C. Fieldsa,* s teškim slučajem grča čeljusti tipičnog za govor na Long Islandu. (p. 26)

In example 21, the translator replaced a metaphor with a simile and provided an explanation. This choice was probably influenced by the limited recognition of W.C. Fields in Croatia, which would reduce the metaphor's impact on the reader.

An example of substitution of a SL metaphor by a TL metaphor with a similar meaning can be found at the beginning of the book. It is applied when a common metaphor in the target language would make a different translation seem unnatural (see examples 22-23).

Example 22.

ST: Does such a thing as '*the fatal flaw,*' that showy dark crack running down the middle of a life, exist outside of literature? (p. 16)

TT: Postoji li ono što nazivamo "*kobnom pogreškom*", ona upadljiva tamna napuklina koja se proteže posred nečijeg života, i izvan književnosti? (p. 13)

Example 23.

ST: Rome was all right but actually it was kind of *a sinkhole* when you get right down to it. (p. 223)

TT: U Rimu nije bilo loše, ali zapravo je to pomalo *žabokrečina* kad malo bolje pogledaš. (p. 211)

In some instances, changes were necessary, as the vehicle often has an established and standardized form in the TL. For instance, while *fatal flaw* in English refers to a flaw inherent in someone's character, the Croatian translation as *fatal mistake* (*kobna pogreška*) shifts the focus to an error stemming from one's actions, which introduces a slight difference in meaning. Although understandable to a Croatian reader, this translation may not entirely convey the nuance of the original expression. The metaphor *sinkhole* (example 23), which connotes an isolated or stagnant place in English, was effectively translated as *ditchwater* (*žabokrečina*), an equivalent expression that works well in Croatian to convey a similar sense of stagnation or isolation.

The study found no instances where the translator offered explanations for Tartt's unique metaphors, likely due to the absence of direct equivalents in Croatian. However, there was one example where the meaning of a metaphor was conveyed without retaining the metaphorical imagery, which could be attributed to the translator's oversight (see example 24).

Example 24.

ST: *His eyes were riveted on mine; they were bright with a horrible relish*. (p. 244)

TT: *Pogled mu je bio prikovan uz moj.* (p. 230)

The first part of the metaphor was translated literally (*His eyes were riveted on mine – Pogled mu je bio prikovan uz moj*). This standard metaphor is used in both English and Croatian to explain someone looking deeply into someone else's eyes in concentration. However, the second part (*they were bright with a horrible relish*), also a metaphor, is missing from the translation entirely. This could potentially be attributed to an oversight on the translator's part or challenges in finding an appropriate and satisfying solution for this particular section.

10. Conclusion

This study analyzed 54 similes and 40 metaphors in Donna Tartt's *A Secret History* and its Croatian translation *Tajna povijest* by Tina Antonini, focusing on the strategies used to translate these figurative expressions. Employing classifications of strategies proposed by by Patrizia Pierini (2007) and Mildred L. Larson (1984), the analysis found that the translator predominantly used literal translation for similes (62%) and metaphors (87.5%), reflecting a deliberate effort to preserve Tartt's imagery, stylistic integrity, and cultural nuances. Other strategies, such as image replacement, explicitation, and glosses, were selectively employed to address cultural and linguistic disparities, balancing fidelity to the source text with creative adaptation for the target audience.

The findings revealed distinct challenges in translating similes and metaphors. While metaphors were often preserved through literal translation due to their compact narrative importance, similes required more frequent adaptations, such as explicitation or cultural equivalents, to maintain clarity and avoid misinterpretation. These differences highlight the translator's nuanced approach to handling these rhetorical devices.

The study underscores the complexities inherent in translating figurative language and illustrates the practical value of comprehensive classification of strategies for analyzing translated texts. Limitations include the focus on a single

novel and a purposive sample, which restrict broader generalizations. Future research could explore the application of these frameworks to different genres, languages, and cultural contexts, providing deeper insights into figurative language translation and further refining these methodologies.

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RAZOTKRIVANJE TAJNI: STRATEGIJE PREVOĐENJA POREDBI I METAFORA U HRVATSKOM PRIJEVODU ROMANA DONNE TARTT *TAJNA POVIJEST*

Sažetak

U ovom se članku istražuju strategije prevođenja na uzorku od 54 poredbe i 40 metafora u romanu A Secret History *Donne Tartt i njegovom hrvatskom prijevodu* Tajna povijest *Tine Antonini. Uporabom metodologije Patrizije Pierini i Mildred L. Larson, analiza je pokazala veliki broj doslovnih prijevoda, odnosno za više od 60%*

poredbi i gotovo 90% metafora, što ukazuje na namjeru da se vjerno sačuvaju izvorni figurativni jezik i značenje, zadrži stilska i semantička cjelovitost izvornog teksta i pritom uvaže kulturnospecifične nijanse u ciljnom jeziku. Ostale kreativne strategije rabljene u prijevodu jesu zamjena slike drugom slikom, zamjena slike pojašnjenjem, zadržavanje iste slike uz objašnjavanje sličnim karakteristikama te pojašnjenje. Praktičnom primjenom navedenih strategija istražuje se odnos između vjernosti i kreativnosti u prevođenju figurativnog jezika, nude uvidi za unaprjeđenje strategija prevođenja te daje doprinos budućim stručnim studijama u kontekstu analize figurativnog jezika u prijevodnoj književnosti.

Ključne riječi: figurativni jezik, poredbe i metafore, prijevodne strategije