**UNIVERSITY OF TARTU**
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# TOLKIEN'S *THE HOBBIT*: THE TRANSLATION OF POEMS FROM ENGLISH TO ESTONIAN

**BA thesis**

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## ABSTRACT

The goal of the thesis is to analyse the Estonian translation of two narrative poems from J. R. R. Tolkien's 1937 novel *The Hobbit*. The original poems that will be analysed are 'Under the Mountain dark and tall' and 'Chip the glasses and break the plates'. The equivalent Estonian translations that are analysed are "Nüüd kõrge mäe all kalju sees" and "Tassid ja liuad klirinal maha". The Estonian translations of the poems were done by Harald Rajamets in the 1977 Estonian translation of *The Hobbit* by Lia Rajandi. The aim of the analysis is to understand which translation strategies were used, and how the chosen strategy has impacted the translated poems.

The first, theoretical, part of the thesis will explain key terminology, give an overview of the most prominent theories in poetry translation, both abroad and in Estonia, and discuss Tolkien's own views on translation. The second, empirical, part will analyse the two poems and their translations based on metre and rhyme, narrative, and lexical similarity. The main focus will be on the differences between the original English and translated Estonian texts.

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# INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to analyse the translation of Tolkien's poems into Estonian based on translation strategies and changes made to the text during translation. To analyse the translation from an analytical standpoint, two poems from J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* will be analysed, 'Under the Mountain dark and Tall' and 'Chip the glasses and crack the plates'. To goal of the study is to determine how the translated poems differ from the originals, and how the changes impact the poems.

J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* was first released in 1937, though the version that is popular today was only released in 1960, since the novel was revised in order to be more connected to the sequel, *The Lord of the Rings*. *The Hobbit* is a children's novel, set in a high fantasy world. The first, and only, Estonian translation of the novel was published in 1977. The prose, and verses for the riddles, were translated by Lia Rajandi (born 1929), and the poems were translated by Harald Rajamets (born 1924). The translation was done directly from English to Estonian, unlike a few other languages of (then) SSRs, which had translations done through Russian. Since the publication of the first edition of the translation, the novel has been published again, although it has not been translated again, and the already existing translation has merely been edited.

There are thirteen poems in the novel, all of which are related to the narrative of the story. Some poems are the characters singing about their current situation or activity, while others are more focused on plans for the future. The poems also have varying degrees of seriousness. While some are sombre songs about battle, death, and days gone by, there are more joyful songs about breaking plates and walking in a valley. The poems also make use of varying metres, forms of verse, and rhyme schemes.

The first poem that will be analysed is 'Under the Mountain dark and tall', which appears near the end of the book. The poem was sung by the dwarves to their leader, Thorin,

to lighten his mood when the threat of battle and war loomed over their heads. It is one of the more serious poems. It is a continuation of earlier poems, ‘Far over the misty mountains cold’ and ‘The wind was on the withered heath’. They all share a sense of longing and sadness, and exhibit the same metre and rhyme schemes.

The second poem which will be analysed is ‘Chip the glasses and crack the plates’, which is the first poem of the novel. Though this poem appears earlier in the novel, it will be covered later, since that is the order in which the two poems were selected and first analysed. This poem was also sung by the dwarves but is more light-hearted in nature and overall has a more joyful tone. It was sung while the dwarves were cleaning up the plates of their host, Bilbo Baggins, in order to make fun of him fearing plates breaking. In reality, none of the events mentioned in the poem came to pass.

The paper consists of two main parts. Firstly, relevant background information and chief ideas regarding poetry translation, with the focus on narrative poetry will be covered. Secondly, there will be an analysis of both the original poems and their translations based on form, narrative and lexical similarity, and a comparison. Then a conclusion will be made.

# 1 POETRY TRANSLATION

## 1. 1 Defining Terminology

The term narrative poetry is used to reference a poem, in which narrative is important. Narrative on its own turns the events of a story into an organisation of events, which can then change how their chronology or significance is seen (Greene 2012: 911). When writing narrative using the format or elements of poetry, its rhythmic and sonic properties heighten the process. In narrative poetry, the focus is not only on the narrative itself, but also on ways in which the form of the poem interacts with the narrative (Greene 2012: 912). Thus the most crucial part of a narrative poem is its narrative, the story it tells, and how the form of the poem impacts it.

Lexical equivalence is a complicated term used in translation theory to determine the lexical closeness of the word in original and its translated counterpart. However, the term is controversial as well as broad with several levels and typologies (Baker 1998: 77). Additionally, lexical equivalence has specific categories (see Hatim and Munday 2004: 40), which make the term unsuitable for this paper. Instead, the term lexical similarity will be used, in order to indicate the lexical closeness of words in English and Estonian, based on the understanding that 'equivalence' is impossible to achieve and measure.

## 1.2 Poetry Translation Approaches

The topic of poetry translation has been discussed by Paul Selver (1966). He discusses different approaches to translating poetry and brings out various chief ideas. Selver (1966: 10-11) brings forth an idea from G. H. Lewes (Lewes 1855 via Selver 1966), who believed that since translating poetry has more difficulties than translating prose, a good or adequate translation of a poem is not possible. It was also brought out that, in translation, changes must be made, in order to try to be that which the original was to its audience.

Additionally, Selver (1966: 13-14) also discusses poetry into prose translation. Further expanding on the previous ideas, he discusses the school of thought which asserts that if poetry is translated at all, it should only be translated into prose. On the other hand, Selver also brings out beliefs that translating poetry into prose is absurd since it disregards all formal properties of poetry.

When looking at the research done on translation strategies, the most prominent contemporary poetry translation theory comes from André Lefevere (via Bassnett 1980: 84). Lefevere has brought out seven different strategies, which are most often used by translators. These strategies are phonemic translation, literal translation, metrical translation, poetry into prose, rhymed translation, blank verse translation, and interpretation. (Bassnett 1980: 84) Phonemic translation focuses on reproducing the sound of the source language (SL) in the target language (TL) while also attempting to produce an acceptable paraphrase of the sense. Lefevere does point out, that the overall result is often clumsy and devoid of sense. Literal translation focuses on word-for-word translation, which might distort the syntax and sense of the original. In metrical translation the dominant criterion is the reproduction of the SL metre. Lefevere believes that similarly to literal translation, this method also concentrates on just one aspect of the SL text, and as a result the text as a whole suffers. For poetry into prose translation, Lefevere concludes that the result for this method is the distortion of the communicative value, syntax, and sense of the SL text. In rhymed translation, the main focus is on both metre and rhyme. Lefevere maintains that when using this strategy, the result is merely a caricature of the original. In blank verse translation, the restrictions imposed on the translator are to do with structure, although Lefevere also notes that a higher degree of literalness and accuracy is obtained. Under interpretation, Lefevere categorises ‘versions’, in which the substance of the SL text is retained but form is changed, and ‘imitations’ in

which the translator produces a poem of their own which only has the title and point of departure in common with the source text.

The most prevalent poetry translation strategies in Estonia have been brought out by Märt Väljataga. According to Väljataga (2015: 51) there are two main approaches to translating verse into Estonian. The first approach has been propagated most prominently by Ain Kaalep and is based on trying to maintain the form of the original. According to Hennoste (2012: para. 6), the ideas and works of Kaalep were one of the most influential works on poetry translation around 1950s-1960s. This is the approach which has prevailed since 1960s and is still quite canonical, although new, freer norms of poetry translation have been taking root in Estonia from the 1990s onwards (Gielen 2011: 638-639). Although this was not the case at the time of the translation in 1977, and thus will not be focused on as much. The second approach, according to Väljataga, can be related to Roman Jakobson's 'On the linguistic aspects of translation' (1959), and is concerned with finding a functionally similar form in translation, and not trying to keep the form of the original. This approach, however, needs to be experimented with and requires ingenuity (Väljataga 2015: 51). It seems that though the two theories have their differences, they still focus on having a concrete form.

The idea that poetry and its prosody should prevail through translation is also brought up by Anne Lange (2008: 58) who states that the translation of the rhythm is as important as the translation of the semantic content. Overall, Estonian translators have put a large emphasis on the form of the poem, since without it the poem is not whole (Lotman 2011: 119). Keeping the form of the source text may be the main focus, but often there will still be minor changes to it. It can be seen that the norms of poetry translation more prominent in Estonia (at the time of the translation) were focused on form, whether keeping the original or finding one that is better suited for the translation. Thus, the approaches were all

equimetrical in nature. When analysing poetry translations into Estonian, this seems to rule out use of Lefevere's categories which focus more on other aspects of the poem, such as phonemic, literal, and poetry into prose translation.

Since Tolkien himself had translated verse, his own approaches and views on translation can be brought out. His views on poetry translation are similar to those of Kaalep, since he mainly translated Old and Middle English poems into modern English using the metre of the originals (Turner 2005: 45). Furthermore, he has emphasised retaining the formal characteristics of metre, rhyme, and alliteration present in the source text (Turner 2005: 45-46). It can be seen that Tolkien's views on poetry translation seem to coincide with the equimetric norms that were present in Estonia at the time of the translation.

### 1.3 Translating Poetry into Estonian

When translating poetry from English to Estonian using an equimetric method, difficulties may occur due to the differences in the languages. These problems do not occur when not taking the metre and stressed syllables into account while translating. In Estonian the stress is usually on the first syllable of the word, which means that the poetic language is more trochaic in nature. Furthermore, it makes it hard to write an iamb in Estonian (Väljataga 2015: 49). The Estonian iamb is also often seen as a trochee with an anacrusis, since in order to have an unstressed syllable at the beginning of the line, most often one syllable words are used (Põldmäe 1978: 98). This creates another issue, since one syllable words all have long vowels in Estonian which are more suited for the stressed position (Põldmäe 1978: 29). This creates a question of whether to read the first syllable as short or long. Even if it is more naturally read as long, it is still regarded as the Estonian iamb, and not as a trochee with an anacrusis.

# 2 ANALYSES OF THE POEMS AND TRANSLATIONS

## 2.1 Methodology

In the next section, the poems and the translations will be analysed. Both of the analyses will be done in three sections. Firstly, the metre and rhyme of the original poem and its translation will be compared in order to see similarities and differences. Secondly, the narrative of the two versions will be compared, with an emphasis on the changes. Thirdly, changes to lexical similarity in the translation will be brought out. Lastly, a conclusion will be made in which the translation strategy that fits the poem's translation will be brought out. Then the same analysis will be done to the other poem and its translation in the same order. After that there will be a comparison of the translations of the two poems based on the similarities and differences.

## 2.2 Analysis of 'Under the Mountain dark and tall'

### 2.2.1 Metre and Rhyme

The original English poem consists of seven stanzas, all of which are quatrains, and each line consists of eight syllables. All the stanzas use end rhyme and masculine endings, and the poem is written in accentual-syllabic verse. The rhyme scheme used throughout is AABA. Additionally, the first and seventh stanza use the exact same rhymes, and all the other stanzas use different sounds. The Estonian translation has the same number of stanzas and lines, uses end rhyme and the same rhyme scheme. Additionally, it also uses the same exact rhyme in the first and seventh stanza. While in the original all lines had the same exact number of syllables, in the translation the number varies. In all the stanzas other than the second one, one line has nine syllables, while the other lines have eight as in the original. In the second stanza, two lines have nine syllables while the other two still have eight. The lines with nine syllables are as follows: the fourth line in the first and second stanza, the second line in the third, fifth and seventh stanza, and the first line in the second, fourth and sixth

stanza. Both be lines with eight and nine syllables seem to be in iambic tetrameter akin to the original.

Since the poem is written in accentual-syllabic verse, a specific metre is used. When looking at the metrical feet, the original poem seems to be iambic in nature, since each line begins with an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable, and so on through the line(s). There seem to be four metrical feet, thus making it iambic tetrameter. The rhythm is emphasised in the poem, since it is written in the same metre throughout. The Estonian translation looks to be roughly the same. Most the lines seem to keep the same metre as the original, thus making it iambic tetrameter. Since in Estonian the stress is usually on the first syllable, one could start reading the poem as if it were a trochee, though the rhythm will start feeling more unnatural, with the stressed syllables in places there naturally are none. The lines are all written in tetrameter, since the lines with nine syllables have only added unstressed syllables, not stressed syllables. Whilst most metric feet are iambic, the lines containing nine syllables also use anapaest. As with syllables, it can be seen that the Estonian translation offers more variety and is not the same throughout. This probably stems from the fact, that it is hard to replicate the rhyme and metre of another language, especially if the languages differ considerably.

While the Estonian iamb is often regarded as a trochee with an anacrusis due to using mostly one syllable words at the beginning of lines, this does not change the form of the original much, since the lines of the English poem also start with one syllable words.

### 2.2.2 The Narrative

When looking at the narrative of the two versions, the main ideas of the stanzas are still present in the translation, but smaller details have been changed or omitted. The narrative of the king having returned to under the Mountain is still present, as well as the overall glorification of the fact. Changes that have happened in the narrative during the

translation will be discussed, whether they are reordering, changing lines, omitting or adding information, as well as the implications of the changes.

The content of the first stanza is recalled in the seventh stanza in the same manner, and with the same changes to the order of elements present within it. The only major difference is that in English the line changes from "and ever so his foes shall fall" in the first stanza to "and ever so our foes shall fall" in the seventh stanza, while in Estonian "nii surevad vaenlased ta ees" ("so die his foes before him") changes to "ning surgu vaenlased ta ees" ("and may his foes die before him"). It can be seen that *ta,* 'him' in English, remains the same and does not change into *me*, 'us' in English, as it did in the original poem. In the source text, the tense changes from present to past and back to present, and it is mirrored in the translation. In other words, the time in which certain actions take place has not changed, and the memories of what once was still remain in the past. While the story has remained the same, the narrative sequence of the poem has changed, due to several changes made during the translation.

In the first stanza, the mountain being dark and tall is emphasised in the first line "Under the Mountain dark and tall", while the Estonian emphasises being under the mountain and inside it "Nüüd kõrge Mäe all kalju sees" ("Now under the tall Mountain inside the rock"). In the second line, in original line is "The King has come unto his hall!", but in Estonian line is "taas kuningas on võimumees!" ("the king is once again in power!"), thus implicating that he has already once lost his power. The original third line is "His foe is dead, the Worm of Dread," but in Estonian the line is "Ta naasis paost, maa priiks sai Maost:" ("He returned from exile and the land was freed of the Worm:"). This once again suggests that the king has returned from exile and has not been in power for a time, while no such thing is apparent in the original. Additionally, the Worm has lost his title in the translation.

In the fourth line, the original “And ever so his foes shall fall.” and the translation “nii surevad vaenlased ta ees.” (“so die his foes before him.”) carry the same narrative.

In the second stanza, the English second line is “The arrow swift, the Gate is strong;” and the translation is “nool kiire, värav korralik,” (the arrow swift, the gate decent). It can be seen that while in English the gate is strong, in Estonian the gate is decent. The original third line is “The heart is bold that looks on gold;” but the translation is “kuld valve all on kindlalt tal;” (“he has the gold locked down securely;”). While the English version is primarily describing the mental state of having gold, the Estonian version focuses more on the physical aspect of having gold. In the fourth line, the original is “The dwarves no more shall suffer wrong.” While the translation is “võib vabalt elada päkapikk!” (“a dwarf can live freely!”). If the dwarves will not have to suffer any more in the English version, then in Estonian the dwarves can just live freely, and there is no mention of any suffering.

In the third stanza, the breaking of the narrative is most prominent. In English, the first line is “The dwarves of yore made mighty spells,” but in Estonian the first line is “Siin muiste päkapikusool” (“here the dwarves of old”), and the spells are only mentioned in the fourth line “ning nõidust appi võttis hool” (“and witchcraft was helping them”). The second line of the original is “While hammers fell like ringing bells” the equivalent of which can be found in the third line of the translation “kus päev kui öö, virk sepatöö” (“during day and night, constant metalsmithing”), which further breaks the narrative. The third and fourth lines of the original “In places deep, where dark things sleep, / In hollow halls beneath the fells.” can both be found in the second line of the Estonian version “käis sügaval koopais igal pool,” (“was going on in deep caves everywhere,”).

In the fourth stanza there is also some breaking of the narrative. The original poem uses enjambment through the stanza, so the lines do not just have meaning on their own, but their meaning changes or expands when read with the following line(s). The first and second

English lines “On silver necklaces they strung / The light of stars, on crowns they hung” have both been put into the second line of the translation “et tähed hõbekeesse said” (“that stars were put into silver necklaces”). It can be seen that the translator has, in this instance, chosen not to use enjambment and instead used a single line for the meaning. Furthermore, the first line of the translation is “Ja suutis mõnegi meistri taid,” (“And the wit of several craftsmen managed to make it so,”) which does not correspond to any of the lines in the original. The third line of the original continues the thought that started in the second line “The dragon-fire, from twisted wire”. The translation continues to not use enjambment, so the line is “ja kroonikuld – see pildus tuld” (“and the crown gold – it spewed fire”). The line uses the full meaning started in the second line and finished in the third line, although instead of hanging dragon-fire on crowns, in Estonian the crown being gold is emphasised and the fire seems more animated or dangerous. The fourth line of the original is “The melody of harps they wrung.” which concludes the thought started in the previous line. The translation of the line is “ja laotas kandlehelinaid.” (“and spreads the sounds of a *kannel* [Estonian string instrument].”) The twisted fire, from which the sounds were wrung from in the original, has been omitted in the translation and thus it seems like the sounds were also spreading from the crown gold mentioned in the previous line.

In the fifth stanza, the first line of the English version is “The mountain throne once more is freed!”. The translation is “Mäe troon on jälle vaba nüüd!” (“The mountain throne is once again free!”) which makes it seem as if the throne had simply become vacant, while in the original emphasis was more on some actually freeing the throne themselves. The translation from the second line onwards is more interconnected, since in the last three lines enjambment is used, and thus parts of the narrative have changed lines. The original second line is “O! wandering folk, the summons heed!” and the translation is “Ja kogugu taas me kutsehüüd” (“And may our summons once again gather”). It can be seen that once again

there is a small change to the narrative. While the original is just asking for the folk to gather, the translation is asking them to gather again. The third line in English is “Come haste! Come haste! across the waste!” and the Estonian line is “kõik ekslev hõim, et kestvaks võim” (“the wandering folk, to ensure that the power endures”). Coming quickly, which is repeated in the original, is not mentioned in the translation, which changes the seeming urgency of the dwarves. The fourth line of the original is “The king of friend and kin has need.” and the translation is “saaks kuningal, see on me püüd.” (“with the king, that is our goal.”). In the translation, the king seemingly has no need.

In the sixth stanza, the original first line is “Now call we over mountains cold,” and the translated line is “Ja kajavad hõikeist sünged mäed:” (“And the grim mountains echo from the calls:”). Once again, the implication of the Estonian line differs from the original, as instead of calling over the mountains the mountains themselves are echoing, and the cold mountains have become grim instead. The third line of the English version is “'Come back unto the caverns old'!” and the translation is “„Taas koopais liitugu me väed!“” (“’May our forces join again in the caverns!’”). The translation focuses on the fact that forces are joining together, thus deepening the war-like mood, while the original I merely beckoning the dwarves to come back. Furthermore, in the English line the caverns are old, but in the translation that has been omitted. The original third line “Here at the Gates the king awaits,” has been split up between lines three and four in the translation, once again using enjambment “Ning väraval on kuningal / teid oodates täis kulda käed.” (“and at the gate the king has / arms full of gold while waiting for you.”). The fourth line of the original “His hands are rich with gems and gold.” is reflected in the translation, but the king no longer has any gems in his hands. It can be seen that information has changed lines, and thus also changed its place in the narrative.

The seventh stanza has no notable changes to the narrative, since it is essentially the same as the first stanza, with a few changes of words and reordering of the lines.

This is a narrative poem and thus tells a story, and since the focus of the translation was on keeping the rhyme and metre as close to the original as possible, some of the actions have changed lines in translation. While the Estonian translation changes the narrative, in the context of the narrative of the novel as a whole, it does not change the narrative inaccurately. The English poem does not mention the king being in exile, but based on the story of the novel, it is still accurate to the overall narrative, just not as accurate in the narrative contained in the poem itself. It can be seen that while the main ideas of the lines remain roughly the same, the details of the narrative have still changed, therefore also changing the undertones and implications of the original poem. Though the changes have mainly been small, they still break the narrative and rearrange the story of the original.

### 2.2.3 Lexical Similarity

There is a large amount of lexical similarity, but also a considerable number of changes. An example for keeping the lexical similarity can be seen in the second stanza, where the first line and the first half of the second line carry the approximately the same lexical meaning in both languages. “The sword is sharp, the spear is long / The arrow swift, the Gate is strong;” in the original, “Mõõk terav on ja oda on pikk, / nool kiire, värav korralik,” (“The sword is sharp and the spear is long, / The arrow swift, the gate is decent,”) in the translation. Largely the words are not translated literally and instead the meaning of the verse or stanza is recreated, thus changing the literal meaning (as can be seen in the analysis above). For example, in the third stanza the second line of the original “While hammers fell like ringing bells” and the third line of the translation “kus päev kui öö, virk sepatöö” (“during day and night, constant metalsmithing”) carry the same approximate meaning. While the words themselves have changed, there is still lexical similarity between

the original and translated line. Another example can be seen in the fourth line of the sixth stanza, where the original line is “His hands are rich with gems and gold.” but the Estonian line is “teid oodates täis kulda käed.” (“hands filled with gold while waiting for you.”). In this example, the gems have been omitted from the translated text.

While the lexical similarity or lack of it seems to be driven from the need to find similar words that fit into the metre and rhyme scheme better, there is also an example of changing the exact meaning of words in order to make the text more familiar to the Estonian reader. The example is in the fourth line of the fourth stanza “The melody of harps they wrung.” The translation of which is “ja laotas kandlehelinaid.” (“and spreads the sounds of a kannel.”). The translator has chosen to use the word *kannel*, an Estonian instrument, instead of a harp, although both could have fit into the metre. The choice most likely stems from the fact that for Estonians harps are less common, and using the word for a more common, and local, instrument makes it possible for the readers to relate to the text more.

It is clear, that the focus of the translation was not lexical similarity. Due to the focus on rhyme and metre, the lexical similarity has lessened, since not every element is translated. When the translator omits some words and replaces them with other ones with different meaning, the focus can greatly change.

### 2.2.4 Conclusion of the Analysis

It is clear the translator has tried to keep as much of the original rhyme and metre of the source language as possible when translating the text, which means the method used is clearly equimetric translation. As a result, there have been major changes to the narrative and while there is no lexical equivalence, lexical similarity has been achieved by replacing terms. The narrative has undergone a lot of changes, from omitting details to changing them, as well as changing the position of the information in the stanza and thus somewhat changing

the sequence of events. This is important since this is a narrative poem, and the narrative is an important part.

In regard to ‘Under the Mountain dark and tall’, the main focus or translation dominant has been on rhyme and metre, which suggests that the translator used the strategy of rhymed translation from Lefevere’s (via Bassnett 1980: 84) categories, since in that strategy the translator focuses on the form (metre and rhyme) and is not prioritising the narrative and lexical similarity.

Since the translator of the poem has tried to retain as much of the same form as possible, it falls under the approach propagated and practiced by Kaalep. When looking at the time at which the translation and consequent publication in Estonian occurred, the choice of strategy seems logical. Consequently, it also follows the ideas that the original author most likely had.

## 2.3 Analysis of ‘Chip the glasses and crack the plates’

### 2.3.1 Metre and Rhyme

The original poem consists of four stanzas, the first three of which are quatrains and the last is a couplet. There are four stressed syllables in each line, but the number of unstressed syllables in the lines varies from three to six depending on the line, which suggests that the poem is written in accentual verse. The poem uses end rhyme throughout, through the rhyme scheme changes between the second and third stanza. The first two stanzas use the ABAB rhyme scheme, while the third and fourth stanza use the AAAA, or AA, scheme. Additionally, the original poem uses masculine endings.

In the Estonian translation the stanzas remain the same. Stanzas one, two, and four retain the rhyme scheme of the original, but the rhyme scheme for the third stanza differs from the original and is ABAB (like the first two stanzas) instead of AAAA (as in the original). The rhyme scheme of the translation (ABAB CBCB DEDE FF) makes the poem

almost look like an English sonnet, with an ABAB CDCD EFEF GG rhyme scheme, or a Spenser sonnet, with an ABAB BCBC DEDE FF rhyme scheme. It should be noted that this is most likely accidental since it does not have the exact rhyme scheme. Additionally, the poem does not have the traditional metre and semantic content of a sonnet. The translation still has four stressed syllables in each line, and the number of unstressed syllables varies less than in the original, with each line having either five or six unstressed syllables. The translation seems stricter that the original, with one additional (unstressed) syllable at the end of a few lines. Additionally, in the translation the lines containing ten syllables instead of nine are the first and third lines of all the stanzas, as well as both the lines of the fourth stanza. While the original poem uses masculine endings, the Estonian translation mixes feminine and masculine endings.

### 2.3.2 The Narrative

In the case of this poem, the changes to the narrative and lexical similarity in the translation are connected, and in some instances a change does not fall under just one of these categories and instead is connected to both. Thus these two categories are interlinked and, in these instances, they will be viewed in relation to each other.

During the translation, there have been several changes to the narrative of the poem. The first stanza has remained largely the same in translation, with the exception of the last line of the stanza. The first part of the fourth line of the first stanza “Smash the bottles and burn the corks!”, has moved to the first line of the second stanza during the translation. The translated line “Pudelid katki, seintele plekid!” (“Break the bottles, stain the walls!”) includes the smashing of the bottles from the original (line four, stanza one), but adds staining the walls, which is not present in the original. Furthermore, the burning of the corks from the original line has been lost in the translation.

In the second stanza, in addition to the change mentioned above, multiple changes have been made to the narrative. The first line in the original “Cut the cloth and tread on the fat!” has once again somewhat changed lines, and its first half can be found in the third line of the translation “Ribadeks rätid, vaibad ja tekid!” (“Cut the cloths, rugs, and rugs into shreds!”). The second half of the original line is not present in the translation. The second line of the original “Pour the milk on the pantry floor!” has changed lines and is the second line of the third stanza “Piimaga valgeks põrand ja pliit!” (“Paint the floor and stove white with milk!”).

An example of narrative and lexical changes being interlinked is the first line of the original, “Chip the glasses and crack the plates!”, which may have changed lines in the translation. The first line of the translation is “Tassid ja liuad klirinal maha!” (“Throw the cups and saucers on the floor with a clatter!”). It seems as if the word *glasses* has been simply changed into *cups* in the translation and the narrative has remained the same, though that is not a certainty. Matters are complicated with the translation of the first line of the third stanza “Keevaveekatlas kildudeks klaasid!” (“Break the glasses in the kettle of boiling water!”). The line is “Dump the crocks in a boiling bowl;” in the original. It can be seen that having little lexical similarity has also led to a possible change in the narrative.

The previous changes have been examples of the narrative elements changing places within the poem, yet there have been more changes to the narrative, since several of the translated lines do not correspond to the lines of the original. The first example of this is in the original is the third line of the second stanza “Leave the bones on the bedroom mat!” which has so similar equivalent in the translation. The second example is the second line of the third stanza “Pound them up with a thumping pole;” which also does not appear in the translation. Instead, the translation has two lines which have no corresponding lines in the original. It should be mentioned that the lines with no match in the other version do not occur

on the same lines and differ in meaning. The first example is the fourth line of the first stanza “Sodige hästi ära kõik toad!” (“Mess up all the rooms well!”), which has no similar line in the original, though it conveys the main meaning of the whole poem. The second example is the second line of the second stanza “Paisake lakke poti seest oad!” (“Throw the beans in the pot to the ceiling!”), which also does not have a corresponding line in the original.

### 2.3.3 Lexical Similarity

As mentioned before, the translation of the poem bares little lexical similarity to the original. Since multiple elements of the poem (and its narrative) have been changed, there is occasionally no similar meaning between the lines. Instead the general idea of breaking things and making a mess has been carried on to the translation, and not the ways things were broken or how a mess was made. In the instances where the same (approximate) meaning has been retained, lexical similarity will be analysed.

The second line of the first stanza is an example of strong lexical similarity, since the original “Blunt the knives and bend the forks!” and the translation “Kõveraks kahvlid, nüridaks noad!” (“Bend the forks, blunt the knives!”) have the same lexical meaning, though in the original it is a command but in translation the structure is impersonal and passive. What is more, the order of the commands has been changed. An example of the opposite can be found in the second line of the second stanza. The original line is “Splash the wine on every door!” and the translation is “Riiuleilt jooksma siirupijoad!” (“Let rivers of syrup run on the shelves!”). It can be seen that while the general meaning is the same, instead of wine the translation mentions syrup, and instead of doors the shelves are mentioned. Another example of lexical dissimilarity is in the third line of the first stanza that is also repeated in the first line of the fourth stanza “That's what Bilbo Baggins hates!”, since the translated line is “Seda just Bilbo Baggins ei taha!” (“That’s what Bilbo Baggins doesn’t want!”). As can

be seen, the degree of unwantedness differs between the two versions, and thus creates lexical dissimilarity.

### 2.3.4 Conclusion of the Analysis

During the translation process, the poem has retained its metre and rhyme, as well as most of the rhyme scheme. In terms of lexical similarity, there have been multiple instances, in which the is little lexical similarity between the words, which has in certain places also led to changes in the narrative. Although there have also been many changes to the narrative that do not stem from a lack of lexical similarity, and as a result of all the changes the narrative has been broken in several instances.

As with the previous poem, it seems like the focus of the translation has been on retaining the original metre and rhyme as much as possible, which means that there is less lexical similarity and more changes to the narrative. This translation as well seems to fall under Lefevere's (via Bassnett 1980: 84) category of rhymed translation. As with the first poem, the method fits into the norms of poetry translation that were present during the translation. This also suggests that whether knowingly or unknowingly the poem was translated in a way which the author would have most likely agreed with.

## 2.4 Comparison of the Poem Translations

While the two poem translations use the same strategy, they have different changes in regard to all aspects. While for 'Under the Mountain dark and tall' the translation has a less strict metre than the original, the translation for 'Chip the glasses and crack the plates' has a stricter metre. Additionally the rhyme scheme of 'Chip the glasses and crack the plates' has been changed in the third stanza to keep it even more orderly. It can be seen that the effects of the same strategy on the metre and rhyme are different for the two poems. This has most likely stemmed from the fact that the metre for 'Under the Mountain dark and tall'

is a strict iambic tetrameter while ‘Chip the glasses and crack the plates’ is written in a freer accentual verse with four stressed syllables.

In terms of narrative changes, in ‘Under the Mountain dark and tall’ information changed lines within the stanzas, but no information had moved between different stanzas. This is not the case in ‘Chip the glasses and crack the plates’ since multiple elements of the narrative changed both lines and stanzas. Since the primary focus of the translation was the form and retaining the metre and rhyme of the original, then the narrative of both the poems has undergone several minor or major changes.

When looking at lexical similarity in the poem translations, it is clear that is has been an afterthought in both instances. While in ‘Under the Mountain dark and tall’ there are instances of little lexical similarity, then the dissimilarity is more obvious in ‘Chip the glasses and break the plates’. In the translation the changes made to somewhat keep the lexical similarity has also led to more changes in the narrative.

## CONCLUSION

The translation of poetry comes with its own issues and problematic aspects, which often emerge when analysing translations. The most prominent poetry translation approaches at the time of the translation of *The Hobbit* focus mainly on the prosody of the poem. Approaches differ in whether to keep the metre of the original or whether to change the original metre to one that is more suitable in the target language. Using an equimetric approach when translating poetry into Estonian comes with its own problems due to different properties of the language.

Harald Rajamets has used an equimetric translation strategy when translating both ‘Under the Mountain dark and tall’ and ‘Chip the glasses and crack the plates’. He focused on keeping the metre and rhyme of the original, as was norm at the time. Although the form of the original poems has not been kept fully, since that is one of the hardest aspects of poetry translation. As a result of the choice of strategy, the narratives of the translated poems have multiple changes from the original, and thus the narrative has been broken in several instances. Also due to the focus of the translation strategy, there is often little lexical similarity. While the two poem translations of Harald Rajamets have the same focal points and strategies, the effects on the two translated poems are different in a few areas. In the case of ‘Under the Mountain dark and tall’ the metre has become less strict in the translation, but in the translation of ‘Chip the glasses and crack the plates’ the metre has become stricter, although the same approach was used.

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## Appendix 1: ‘Under the Mountain dark and tall’ and “Nüüd kõrge mäe all kalju sees”

Under the Mountain dark and tall
The King has come unto his hall!
His foe is dead, the Worm of Dread,
And ever so his foes shall fall.

The sword is sharp, the spear is long,
The arrow swift, the Gate is strong;
The heart is bold that looks on gold;
The dwarves no more shall suffer wrong.

The dwarves of yore made mighty spells,
While hammers fell like ringing bells
In places deep, where dark things sleep,
In hollow halls beneath the fells.

On silver necklaces they strung
The light of stars, on crowns they hung
The dragon-fire, from twisted wire
The melody of harps they wrung.

The mountain throne once more is freed!
O! wandering folk, the summons heed!
Come haste! Come haste! across the waste!
The king of friend and kin has need.

Now call we over mountains cold,
'Come back unto the caverns old'!
Here at the Gates the king awaits,
His hands are rich with gems and gold.

The king is come unto his hall
Under the Mountain dark and tall.
The Worm of Dread is slain and dead,
And ever so our foes shall fall!

Nüüd kõrge Mäe all kalju sees
taas kuningas on võimumees!
Ta naasis paost, maa priiks sai Maost:
nii surevad vaenlased ta ees.

Mõõk terav on ja oda on pikk,
nool kiire, värav korralik,
kuld valve all on kindlalt tal;
võib vabalt elada päkapikk!

Siin muiste päkapikusool
käis sügaval koopais igal pool,
kus päev kui öö, virk sepatöö
ning nõidust appi võttis hool.

Ja suutis mõnegi meistri taid,
et tähed hõbekeesse said
ja kroonikuld – see pildus tuld
ja laotas kandlehelinaid.

Mäe troon on jälle vaba nüüd!
Ja kogugu taas me kutsehüüd
kõik ekslev hõim, et kestvaks võim
saaks kuningal, see on me püüd.

Ja kajavad hõikeist sünged mäed:
„Taas koopais liitugu me väed!“
Ning väraval on kuningal
teid oodates täis kulda käed.

Nüüd kuningas on võimumees
taas vägeva Mäe all kalju sees.
Maa priiks sai Maost, ta naasis paost –
ning surgu vaenlased ta ees!

## Appendix 2: ‘Chip the glasses and crack the plates’ and “Tassid ja liuad klirinal maha”

| | |
|---|---|
| Chip the glasses and crack the plates! | Tassid ja liuad klirinal maha! |
| Blunt the knives and bend the forks! | Kõveraks kahvlid, nüridaks noad! |
| That's what Bilbo Baggins hates— | Seda just Bilbo Baggins ei taha! |
| Smash the bottles and burn the corks! | Sodige hästi ära kõik toad! |
| | |
| Cut the cloth and tread on the fat! | Pudelid katki, seintele plekid! |
| Pour the milk on the pantry floor! | Paisake lakke poti seest oad! |
| Leave the bones on the bedroom mat! | Ribadeks rätid, vaibad ja tekid! |
| Splash the wine on every door! | Riiuleilt jooksma siirupijoad! |
| | |
| Dump the crocks in a boiling bowl; | Keevaveekatlas kildudeks klaasid! |
| Pound them up with a thumping pole; | Piimaga valgeks põrand ja pliit! |
| And when you’ve finished if any are whole, | Ikka veel terved lambid ja vaasid?! |
| Send them down the hall to roll! | Akendest välja saatkem nad siit! |
| | |
| That's what Bilbo Baggins hates! | Seda just Bilbo Baggins ei taha! |
| So, carefully! carefully with the plates! | Poiss, ära pilla taldrikuid maha! |

# RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL
ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

**Anne-Mari Abroi**

**Tolkien's *The Hobbit*: The Translation of Poems from English to Estonian/Tolkieni "Kääbik": luuletuste tõlge inglise keelest eesti keelde**

Bakalaureusetöö
2023
Lehekülgede arv: 31

Bakalaureusetöö eesmärk on uurida J. R. R. Tolkieni teoses „Kääbik" olevate luuletuste tõlget eesti keelde. Selleks on analüüsitud kahte teoses olevat luuletust 'Under the Mountain dark and tall' ja 'Chip the glasses and crack the plates' ja nende eestikeelseid tõlkeid, mille on inglise keelest tõlkinud Harald Rajamets.

Töö koosneb kahest peamisest osast. Esimene osa on teoreetiline ja annab ülevaate peamistest luuletõlke meetoditest ja raskutest, mis ilmnevad eesti keelde tõlkimisel. Töö teine osa on praktiline ja selles analüüsitakse nii algseid ingliskeelseid luuletusi ja nende tõlkeid võrdluses.

Töö käigus selgus, et tõlkimisel on kasutatud ekvimeetrilist lähenemist, milles on suurim tähelepanu algteksti vormi säilitamisel, mille tulemusena jäid tahaplaanile narratiiv ja leksikaalne sarnasus.

Märksõnad: luuleanalüüs, tõlkeanalüüs, luuletõlge, tõlketeadus, Tolkien, Kääbik

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