

# JAMES JOYCE'S WRITING STYLE TRANSLATED INTO ROMANIAN THROUGH ANDRA URSA'S LENS<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

Andra Ursa conducts research in the field of literary translation. She explores literary translation as a process of linguistic and cultural interpretation which does not reproduce the source text. Her investigation highlights the idea that translation is a dynamic process. In her book she examines the way in which Romanian translators and retranslators interpret James Joyce's linguistic and stylistic innovations and complexities.

**Keywords:** literary translation; retranslation; James Joyce; style.

Andra Ursa's book titled *Aspects of James Joyce's writing style translations into Romanian: An analysis regarding the evolution of James Joyce's writing style in Dubliners, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, and Ulysses* (2025) is divided into two parts: part one focuses on theoretical aspects, while part two deals with practical aspects and comprises six chapters preceded by an "Introduction" and followed by "Conclusions". The "Preface" is written by Professor Felix Nicolau. The book has its origin in the author's doctoral research and analyses James Joyce's work building on theories of translation studies. In the Introduction the author mentions her five research objectives and the hypotheses she aims to demonstrate. The originality of her research lies in adding a literary insight. The author analyses concepts, strategies, theories from Translation Studies, but at the same time she incorporates into her investigation elements which pertain to literary analysis thus offering a complex and comprehensive picture on James Joyce's work and on the Romanian translations of Joyce's work.

Before embarking on a translation-oriented analysis of the Romanian translations, the author contextualises and localises Joyce's work. Furthermore, she situates the translation of James Joyce's work within its broader context. The glamour of literary translation is best captured and investigated by Andra Ursa.

Chapter one "Aspects of James Joyce's Writing Style" provides an insight into Joyce's style, Andra Ursa conducts a fine-grained analysis of style as a core concept of stylistics. Additionally, she identifies the multiple perspectives style is grounded in: sociological, cognitive, pragmatic, literary. She carefully investigates the interplay between style and language and her examination unveils the way figures of speech are woven into the narrative and their rhetoric role. Andra Ursa provides information on James Joyce's style and background, firstly in order to familiarise the readers with the author she investigates and secondly because Joyce's education, origin and background had imprints on his literary work.

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Chapter two is titled “Theoretical Approaches to Translation” and theorises on translation strategies and methods. The author scrutinises the major approaches to translation strategies and methods and analyses the myriad of taxonomies proposed by scholars in Translation Studies. The translation perspective is enriched with a linguistic analysis which integrates syntactic, semantic and pragmatic analyses and their proponents.

While rendering texts from a source language to a target language, translators mould them via additions, omissions and deletions. Andra Ursa carefully investigates the theories which propose these strategies and she also draws on key concepts pertaining to Translation Studies, such as domestication and foreignisation, translation and retranslation, translatability and untranslatability. For a better understanding of these phenomena, she illustrates the theory with examples. The phenomenon of untranslatability is examined in close conjunction with the phonological layer of language. In the last part of the chapter the author provides a comprehensive picture of Joyce’s Romanian translations during the communist period. This section represents a very documented insight into the ideology of the communist period with focus on the aspects which influenced the production of Romanian translations.

Chapter three “Methodological framework” outlines the theoretical approach the book builds on and describes the corpora and sub-corpora compiled by the author for this analysis. The author describes the contents of the corpus populated with target texts and source texts by Romanian translators. In her undertaking Andra Ursa relies on corpus and she combines qualitative and quantitative research. The research methods Andra Ursa adopts consist of case studies, as the author believes these methods would contribute to enrich and complement the theories formulated in the field by adding new insights and perspectives. Andra Ursa analyses the layers of language in the source texts and in the target texts.

In the Introduction to Chapter four “An Analysis of the Romanian Translations and Retranslations of *Dubliners*” Andra Ursa provides a short insight into *Dubliners* and contextualises it. The chapter offers an overview of the translation and retranslation of James Joyce in Romanian after WWII.

In this chapter the author compares the way in which the Romanian translators Frida Papadache and Radu Paraschivescu applied foreignisation and domestication in their translations of *Dubliners*. She conducts a statistical analysis on the use of pronouns of politeness in Frida Papadache’s and Radu Paraschivescu’s translations. In this chapter the author also examines how the strategies addition, omission, deletion and their effects on the meaning of the translated versions and on Joyce’s style are applied on the stories of adolescence “Eveline”, “After the Race” and “The Boarding House”. This analysis consolidates the author’s earlier research on three Romanian renditions of “A Little Cloud”, examined from the perspective of intercultural mediation within the context of retranslation aimed at achieving greater translator invisibility (Ursa, 2021).

Chapter five focuses on the translation and reception of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. The author carefully compares and analyses the translation and retranslation of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* by two Romanian translators: Frida Papadache and Antoaneta Ralian, identifying similarities and dissimilarities. The analysis encompasses the use of syntactic, semantic and pragmatic strategies applied by the two translators.

The first part of chapter six entitled “James Joyce’s stylistic features as they appear in *Ulysses* and their rendition into Romanian” deals with the translation of *Ulysses* into French, German, Czech and Polish, Joyce’s involvement in the translation process and its impact on the translation. As Andra Ursa points out the Romanians first encountered Joyce’s *Ulysses* via French and German translations. The chapter examines the strategies used by Mircea Ivănescu in the translation of *Ulysses*. Before focusing on the Romanian translations of *Ulysses* by Mircea Ivănescu, Andra Ursa carries out a linguistic analysis which pays heed to linguistic innovations, neologisms, word plays, repetitions. She analyses stretches of texts retrieved from *Ulysses* and

compares them with Mircea Ivănescu's translated version. The investigation is substantiated by a statistical layer of analysis in which the author observes the lexical structures in the source text and their equivalents in Mircea Ivănescu's translation.

The conclusions formulated by Andra Ursa align with the research hypotheses the author established at the outset of the research. She combines theory with practice in her endeavour to analyse and identify the stylistic mechanisms through which James Joyce reshapes narrative forms. Her subtle investigation captures the stylistic variation in James Joyce's work as well as in its Romanian translation. The book is followed by four appendices which aim to support and substantiate the theoretical part. The appendices include parallel texts from the original work and the translation and retranslation. They provide clear examples of lexical and stylistic choices, the use of strategies such as omission, addition, deletion.

Andra Ursa assesses the way in which the Romanian translators and re-translators negotiate and render Joyce's linguistic and stylistic innovation and density. She carefully embeds theory in her research undertaking, which is at the same time applied, descriptive and statistically oriented. The book further serves as a conceptual foundation for the author's subsequent studies by the author in the field of literary translation, among them a study dedicated to identifying translation errors that hinder readability in recent Romanian translations of literary works (Ursa, 2025b).

One of the merits of the book is that the author analyses and identifies nuances in the translations and retranslations. Additionally, she reveals the ways in which cultural, linguistic, and historical factors impact on translators' decisions. Andra Ursa's book brings a valuable contribution to the translation theory and practice and at the same time it enriches and enlarges the Romanian translation history.

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