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Translating realia:

Gentleman Jack

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ABSTRACT

Considering that the quality of translation may highly influence the quality experience of the target audience, this work analyses translations of realia from the TV series *Gentleman Jack* from English to Hungarian, to determine whether or not these often-troublesome elements were translated successfully, to what extent and by which means. Comparing the source- and target-language versions shows that translators were relatively successful at translating the realia found in the texts. The dominant methods of translation were omission and generalization.

Keywords: dubbing, realia, transfer operations, English, Hungarian

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1. INTRODUCTION

Translation to no surprise is closely related to culture. Each language has its specific sayings, proverbs, which are intertwined with the lives, habits, everyday reality of the people who speak that specific language. Translations and translators play a vital role in our society, as they help us cross the boundaries of human language and understanding. In our highly-globalized world, although machine translation may help them, it is the translators who do the work of adapting all the information we might need to a broad palette of languages. Although, one might argue that machine translation can do that as well, the current state of these programs cannot adequately handle double meanings or meanings behind the actual words (e.g., metaphors, irony or humour), not to mention highly specialized areas, where human translation is a must (e.g., medical or legal).

Translation is encountered on a daily basis by anyone in these days. The proof lies in all the books, movies, research, or global news we could not have access to without having them properly localized or translated. After all, one cannot learn every single language. However, the question whether the core-meaning and true message remains without loss is justified. Amongst translators, there is a category of words known to them as culture specific words, culturemes, realia, or they have been even coined as ‘untranslatables’. More simply, words, expressions that are extremely closely related, inseparable from the specific culture of a particular language. These words usually bring along a secondary, ‘implied’ meaning. More than that, most of the time they only exist in the given (source) language and do not have an exact equivalent in the target-language either. The justified question is what is to be done in these cases.

When a translator encounters such words while translating written texts, the task seems to be easier, as there is the option of not translating the culture specific word(s) but transcribing them according to the linguistic rules of the target-language. Thus, they can explain the given term in an appendix or in the footnote section, therefore providing the necessary background information. However, this is not a viable option in the case of audio-visual translation, more precisely dubbing or subtitling, leading to the topic of the author’s research.

In the theoretical chapters the author would like to discuss the meaning of culture-specific items, present various definitions, and issues a translator might encounter while trying to translate them and possible methods of translation which are most commonly used to handle these terms.

In the practical part of this paper, the author will examine and compare the Hungarian dubbed version of the 8-episode historical drama series *Gentleman Jack* directed by László Aprics and translated by Ádám Schultz of the original English version directed by Sally Wainwright, focusing on the collected culture-specific items.

2. DEFINITIONS OF REALIA

In order to have a general understanding of what culture-specific items are, first we need to look at some of the definitions that linguists have offered us in the past. The definitions of culture-specific items usually have varied from linguist to linguist throughout the course of history. This section tries to offer an insight into differentiating culture-specific items and words which do not carry an ‘additional’ meaning.

The challenge is pinpointed by Newmark: “Translation is a craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in one language by the same message and/or statement in another language” (Newmark, 1981, p. 7). With culture-specific items, this task – most times than not – may look like an impossible, futile undertaking to be done, for the reason that the meanings which fall outside these phrases are almost always inextricably linked to a specific cultural background or context.

If we want to understand the significance of culture-specific items in translation we need to discuss the notion of *culture*, which is fundamental, since it carries most of the connotative meanings. Larson (Larson, 1997, p. 431) determines culture as “a complex of beliefs, attitudes, values, and rules which a group of people share”. The translator has to fully understand these beliefs, attitudes values and rules of the culture to which the original, to be translated text is related if they wish to translate it, according to the best of their knowledge, for people who have a different set of beliefs, attitudes, values and rules.

Even among the famous personalities of translation theorists, in the literature of translation, these items are given multiple names, thus any of the following terms are all acceptable: realia, culture-specific items, cultural words or culturemes. Firstly, we will discuss the culture-specific items or cultural words/terms, then we will move onto the concept of *realia*.

Newmark (1988, p. 95) categorizes *cultural terms* in the following way:

1. ecology:	• flora • fauna • hills • winds • plains
2. material culture:	• food • clothes • houses and towns

	• transport
3. social culture	• work and leisure
4. organizations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts:	• political and administrative • religious • artistic
5. gestures and habits	-

Table 1. Newmark's categorization

In his point of view, culture is no more than the traditions, lifestyle and its embodiments which are unique to a given linguistic community that uses a given language as a way of self-expression. Following this logic, we can draw the conclusion that every single language group, linguistic community has its own culturally specific features that are distinct from the ones found in other linguistic communities.

A source-language word may express a concept that is unknown in/to the target culture, according to Baker (2018). It could be a religious belief, a social custom, or even a type of food, and it could be abstract or concrete.

As reported by Gambier (Gambier et al., 2007), these items/words are associated with various aspects of life, including education, history, art, institutions, legal systems, units of measurement, place names, foods and beverages, sports, and national pastimes.

According to Valló (2000) and Vermes (2004), these culture-specific items can only be comprehended in the correlation of two languages. It is pointed out by both that culture-specific items are heavily dependent on context, for the reason that any type of text element is able to turn into a culture-specific item given that it holds a connotative, secondary meaning in the source text's culture.

Sergej Vlahov and Sider Florin (1980) were the first to mention the term *realia* and discuss its possible categories systematically (cf. Tellinger, 2003, p. 1):

1. geographical	• natural geographic formations • man-made geographical objects • flora and fauna that is special to a given place
2. ethnographic	• food and drink • clothing • places of living • furniture

	• pots • vehicles • names of occupations and tools
3. art and culture	• music • dance • instruments • feasts • games • rituals and their characters
4. ethnic	• names • nicknames
5. socio-political	• administrative territorial units • offices and representatives • ranks • military realia

Table 2. Vlahov's and Florin's categorization

A much broader definition is offered by Tellinger, stating that “*realia* contain all which is related to a culture of a nation” (Tellinger, 2005, p. 124). Moreover, Simigné states that the term *realia* is of Latin origins and it denotes not only the imaginary terms that exist in our minds, but also the objects that exist in the real world and their names (Simigné, 2006, p. 104).

Klaudy believes that the term *realia* itself can be “ambiguous”: it can either be used describe items, ideas, symbols, or customs (mostly related to eating and drinking) that are unique to a particular linguistic community, or it can be used to label, name these. Feasts, historical events, names, and titles all fall under the umbrella of *realia*. “The term is used in two meanings. It may refer to a thing or concept specific to a given cultural/linguistic community, or to the name that we assign to that particular thing.” (Klaudy, 2003, p. 205).

Both Newmark's and Vlahov and Florin's categorizations lack the category of history, which is a key component of shaping a nation's culture. In the following chapters of this work the author will refer to culture-specific words as *realia*, as the definition associated with the term as well as the term itself ‘refers to something real’, hence it suits/describes the linguistic phenomenon better.

All of the definitions above are correct in their own way, since the problem is that it cannot be well defined whether or not a specific term or phrase belongs to *realia*. It is known that it is not always clear why a term or phrase should be treated as a candidate for *realia*.

Irrespective of the how we refer to this concept, the basic issue remains. Concepts and things intertwined with the reality, the culture of the people who speak a given language, and these concepts most often carry a 'secondary' meaning. Moreover, following the logic of Larson's statement, we could argue that even in the communication of two individuals who speak the same language the concept of culture can vary, hence the speakers may not fully understand one another.

3. TRANSLATING REALIA

Translators often encounter hard times when faced with various categories of realia. They can use certain translation methods to help their work. I believe it is primary to discuss some of these methods in order to successfully analyse the translation process of realia. In this chapter we will discuss some of the most known techniques.

“Translators are not only linguistic but many times also "cultural mediators" in the broadest possible sense of the word. It is also part of the translators' professional competence that they know two cultures, and can compare and assess the geographical, historical, social, and cultural aspects of two language communities. Thus they do not merely have language pair specific transfer strategies, but they have also developed strategies to bridge the gaps between different cultures.” (Klaudy, 2003, p. 175).

Translators typically devise their own strategies for overcoming challenges posed by the differences in the languages they work with. It is a part of their professional skill set “to move freely between the two languages, to be able to move from the thought to the linguistic form and from the linguistic form to the thought in two different ways” (Klaudy, 2003, p. 174). They are familiar with both cultures and can compare the geographical, historical, social, and cultural aspects of the respective language communities. Translators can bridge the gap between cultures by employing specific transfer operations. Of which the most commonly used, besides replacements with TL equivalents, will be listed and discussed below in the following paragraphs.

The order of presentation tries to follow a possibly logical list of options based on what a translator could think of first when encountering these challenging elements during their work. Obviously, omission is listed first, because it might seem to be the least troublesome method to use.

3.1 OMISSION

Klaudy’s definition of the term “omission” is as follows: “the relatively smaller quantity of expression forms required in one language for conveying the same content which is expressed by more words in another language” (Klaudy, 2003, p. 236). This may give an explanation to why omissions are not used as often as additions, since it implies that some connotations are lost during the process of translation. However, when a term does not carry

key-information in relation with the storyline, it may be easily omitted, thus simplifying the translator's job. Other reasons why a translator might use the technique of omission to resolve a translation problem, could be that they cannot find any equivalents for the given realia or they need to 'standardize' certain elements (e.g., taboo) based on further (un)written rules and best practices.

Translators in general may tend to avoid the omission of realia out of fear that they are robbing the reader of information. For example, in cases when the realia could serve possible metaphoric or poetic functions. This could occur in the description of a character in a book, or the element brings something way too important to the storyline. Also, if it gives information about the culture and life of the linguistic community of the source-language. If they used omission in these cases, the reader would in fact be robbed of information. (Klaudy 2003:248).

Omission can 'declutter' texts, make them more accessible to the readers, but it is key to use it in moderation. If possible, the translator must strive to not take away vital components from the source text.

Example of omission:

EN: "*Oy, your majesty you - need a new groom...*"

HU: „*Fenség, szükség volna egy új inasra...*” (14)¹

3.2 ADDITION

Omissions result in losses, whereas additions result in gains, so additions are the opposite of omissions. When talking about lexical addition or addition, it denotes the process of a transfer operation in which new meaningful elements are introduced into the translation that were not present in the original, which aid the readers of the translated text in understanding what it is about. The target text's word count increases as a result. Because the background knowledge of source-language and target-language readers differs, new meanings must be added. Subsequently, if the goal of this operation had to be told in a nutshell, then is to provide additional information and background knowledge to readers who are reading in the target-language (Klaudy, 2003, p. 249).

¹ Henceforth the numbers in brackets refer to the examples from *Gentleman Jack* discussed in details in the practical part.

3.3 EXPLICITATION

Explicitation is the process of revealing something in the translation, that the source-text contains implicitly, which can be expressed by multiple words. It is frequently used to offer a more detailed description of an item in the target-language, notably when it comes to ‘untranslatable’ linguistic items such as realia, and it can make just the difference for the target-language readers. It is similar to when we open a dictionary, multiple entries are listed and each entry is given a definition and is explained, but in this case the ‘dictionary’ is in the book in an appendix or a footnote, provided to us by the translator (Klaudy, 2003, p. 171).

Example of explication:

EN: *He's the Lord Lieutenant of the County.*

HU: *A Király megyei megbízottja.* (28) (the king's county trustee)

3.4 GENERALISATION

"If the source-language is characterised by a more detailed segmentation, and there is no dictionary equivalent in the target-language, generalisation is unavoidable"(Klaudy, 2003, p. 201). The term "generalisation" refers to the process of replacing a source-language unit of a more specific meaning with a target-language unit of a more general meaning. Differences in the way the people of different cultures perceive the world lead to differences in language lexical systems, which can be explained by this transfer operation.

Example of generalisation:

EN: *I'm going to Jackson's. For flannel.*

HU: *Jacksonékhöz megyek anyagért.*(6) (material)

3.4 TOTAL TRANSFORMATION OF MEANING

“A standard lexical transfer operation whereby meanings of the SL text are replaced by other meanings in the TL text, which do not seem to show any logical relation with the SL meaning” (Klaudy, 2003, p. 282) is how the transfer operation of total transformation is defined. Klaudy also notes that “the more a SL text is tied to time, place or culture, the greater the need for total transformation” (Klaudy, 2003, p. 300). Deductively, total transformation is required more often in literary texts and works than in scientific texts. This transfer operation is often the key, if we want to produce a good, even great adaptation of the source-language in

the target-language that we do not take the source-language culture as a base and consider it to be the same in every culture, but keep in mind that we have to find elements of similar meaning in the target-language culture to replace them with, so the people that read it can truly relate and understand.

Example of total transformation of meaning:

EN: *She's swallowed **a load of** gin.*

HU: ***Egy akó** gint megivott.* (21) (a 12-gallon cask)

3.5 TRANSLITERATION/TRANSCRIPTION

Graphological (written; phonological or spoken in the case of audio-visual content) units from the source-language are sometimes replaced by graphological units from the target-language. This process is known as transliteration (Klaudy, 2003, p. 290).

4. ISSUES OF TRANSLATING REALIA

As seen in the previous chapters, these realia or culture-specific items are quite hard to identify, since almost anything can become a culture-specific item as long as it has enough significance in terms of cultural background and aspects. This chapter will include a discussion about the possible reasons why realia could be troublesome to translate, stemming from Vlahov and Florin's full categorization.

The most pressing issue is that, since there is not exact way to define realia in which every single aspect can be included, they are hard to identify and even the most skilled translators, but mostly beginners are sometimes prone to miss them, resulting in an incomplete, faulty translation. At the same time the extent of how well a translator can handle the translation of these items reflects on their translations' overall quality (Tellingier, 2003). Identifying realia is in itself a humbling task and tests the spirits of the translators.

Another problem is that these items most often than not do not have a perfect equivalent in the target-language, it is entirely up to the translator to decide which course of action would be better fit to resolve the given 'situation', therefore the concept of 'perfect answer' does not exist in this case. Each translators' solutions will most probably differ from one another and so will their work.

Now the author will present Vlahov and Florin's categorization (cf. Klaudy, 2003, p. 205–208), but completed with the author's own examples:

- I. Geographical realia
 1. Geographical formations: *Lake District*
 2. Man-made geographical entities: *East-Yorkshire*
 3. Indigenous animals and plants: *Hungarian Grey*
- II. Ethnographical realia
 1. Realia from everyday life
 - a) Dishes, beverages: *kocsonya* (cold-cut meat in aspic), *pie*
 - b) Dressing: *Hungarian matyo*, *bonnet*, *Sunday's best*
 - c) Habitat, furniture, houseware: *imperial*
 - d) Means of transport: *chaise*, *gig*
 2. Realia of work
 - a) Occupations: *magistrate*, *postillion*, *lady's maid*

- b) Tools: *lasso*
 - c) Workplace: *tanya*
- 3. Art and culture
 - a) Music and dance: *csárdás*
 - b) Musical instruments: *kereplő* (a type of rattle)
 - c) Theatre
 - d) Holidays and games: *Guy Fawkes Night*, *backgammon*
 - e) Customs, rituals and their participants: *busójárás*
- 4. Ethnic realia
 - a) Ethnonyms: *romans*
 - b) Nicknames: *Island of Hope* (Ellis Island)
 - c) Name related to residence: *buckeye* (residents of Ohio)
- 5. Measurement units and coinage
 - a) Measurement units: *akó* (roughly 50 litres)
 - b) Coinage: *Forint*, *Rupee*
 - c) Popular nicknames: *garas* (roughly translates to dime)
- III. Social and political realia
 - 1. Administration and organisation
 - a) Administrative units
 - b) Settlements: *Shibden*
 - c) Part of a city
 - 2. Political bodies
 - a) Governing bodies: *Tories*
 - b) Rulers: *Tzar*
 - 3. Political life
 - a) Political activity and its participants: *Whigs*
 - b) Social organisations and their participants
 - c) Social movements and their participants
 - d) Rank, titles and addresses: *Earl*, *Lord*, *Duke*
 - e) Institutions of learning: *nursery school*
 - f) Classes, social strata, castes
 - g) Political symbols
 - 4. Military realia

- a) Military units: *84th Yorks and Lancs*
- b) Arms: *katana* (samurai sword)
- c) Uniform: *bearskin* (Queen's guard's hat)
- d) Military ranks and assignments: *Colonel, ensign*

5. METHODOLOGY

The author will compare the original English version of the 8-episode historical drama series *Gentleman Jack* (directed by Sally Wainwright) and its Hungarian dubbed version (directed by László Aprics and translated by Ádám Schultz). The comparison relies on collecting culture-specific items, discussing translation methods and successful cases. The examples presented in this paper are exclusively from the above-mentioned series and are categorized into groups, to be discussed in another chapter. As the corpus consists of 141 entries, only the most relevant ones will be presented, organised in various subcategories. Furthermore, when there are repetitive terms, various Hungarian translations will be cross-examined if different renditions are observed.

The author's initial assumption was that the series should contain various entries belonging to realia due to the setting of the storyline, which unfolds preceding globalization, in 1832, Halifax (Calderdale; West Yorkshire), England, so it is supposed to draw inspiration from rural English life. It follows the life of Anne Lister, a British landowner, which was unusual back then, because of her gender but so was her behaviour, as described in the series she was 'a bit like a man', outspoken and brave, someone who did not heed to the social norms of the era concerning the fairer gender, which in itself could be considered a taboo topic. These realia terms could be mistranslated/misinterpreted in case the translators have no or little insight into the socio-cultural background, and view these terms as simple words, especially on a tight deadline. Moreover,

When analysing the examples, I rely on Vlahov and Florin's categorization of realia, but follow a broader definition of the concept. The following list contains some of the more relevant examples from the corpus:

- I. Cultural (everything that is directly connected to the people):
 1. Archaisms: *gaol, dropsy*
 2. Buildings:
 - a.Meeting spot: *coaching inn*
 3. Clothing:
 - a.Container: *imperial, trunk*
 - b.Material: *flannel*
 - c.Neutral: *Sunday best*

- d. Women's clothes: *frock*
 - 1. Signifies social status: *birds of paradise, bonnet, parasol*
 - e. Men's clothes: *waistcoat, jacket*
 - 1. Signifies social status: *greatcoat*
- 4. Culinary:
 - a. Beverage: *brandy, Madeira*
 - b. Food: *pies*
- 5. Dialect: *bugger, aye, oy*
- 6. Fauna: *carrion crows*
- 7. Measurement:
 - a. Goods: *a corve*
 - b. Money: *pound, pence, shilling*
 - c. Land: *per/an acre, per square yard, a yard*
 - d. Liquid: *a load of*
- 8. Names:
 - a. People: *Mary, Henry*
- 9. Nicknames:
 - a. Geographical: *the Continent*
- 10. Occupations: *footman, postillion, groom, lady's maid*
 - a. Signifies social status: *Lord Lieutenant of the County, Lord Chancellor, magistrate, constable, banker*
- 11. Sayings (extremely culture-specific):
 - a. Greetings: *How do you do; How do.*
 - b. Sayings: *no oil painting, not quite the full shilling, dark horse, to knock the skin off a rice pudding, to run rings around someone, God knows, It's uncanny, well well, willy-nilly.*
- 12. Tools:
 - a. Houseware: *paper-knife*
 - b. Transportation: *hand-cart*
- 13. Transport: *gig, chaise, carriage, high flyer, cart, caleche, gondola*
- II. Geographical:
 - 1. Man-made:
 - a. Counties: *East Yorkshire*

- b.Settlements: *Langton, Scarborough, Halifax*
 - 2. Natural: *Lake District*
- III. Historical (remnants of the past, with evidence):
 - 1. Battles/Revolutions: *Tea Party, Agincourt*
 - 2. Buildings: *Shibden Hall, Shibden (referred to as: the hall, the manor), Manorial courts*
 - 3. Politics: *Reform Bill, Reform Act*
 - 4. Rulers: *Henry the Fifth, Charlemagne*
- IV. Social (typical of the upperclassmen):
 - 1. Buildings: *chaumière*
 - 2. Games: *backgammon*
 - 3. Social status: *Earl, Duke*
 - 4. Word usage: *liaison, levee (public court reception for men)*
- V. Military:
 - 1. Units: *Duke of York's, 84th Yorks and Lancs*
 - 2. Ranks: *Captain, ensign, infantry man*

We can see that realia terms are present in almost every aspect of people's lives. Therefore, it is especially important to translate them accordingly. In the following chapter, the author will present the aforementioned examples from the first category in their original context (as they appear in the series) and will attempt to identify the methods the translator(s) have used while translating them.

6. CULTURAL CHALLENGES IN *GENTLEMAN JACK*

In the practical part, some of the more significant realia translations found in the series will be discussed. Furthermore, the author will attempt to identify the method(s) used by the translator(s). Since there are a lot of examples in the corpus that should not be missed, and due to the limitations of this paper, only examples from the first (I. Cultural) category will be discussed, divided into sub-categories.

6.1. Archaisms

- (1) EN: *Outside York gaol.*
HU: *A yorki börtön előtt.*

In this case the Hungarian translator **replaced** the English word *gaol* with the Hungarian equivalent in use today. However, this solution does not reflect the now archaic meaning of the word, which fits right into the thematic of the series, since it plays in the 19th century. *Gaol* was slowly replaced by the 21st century by the variant used today, namely by *jail*.² We would recommend two alternative solutions, namely *fogda* or *tömlöc*, considering that these expressions are rarely used in Hungarian, therefore they have the ‘power’ to invoke the ‘feeling of old’, similarly to *gaol*.

- (2) EN: ***Dropsy***.
HU: *Vízkór*.

Dropsy (shortening of *idropesie*, derived from the Greek word *hydrops*)³ is the old, dated term for the illness Oedema, which was **replaced** by its equivalent in the target-language. In this case it is appropriate and well done, since the term *vízkór* is scarcely used, even obsolete in Hungarian today therefore it fits into the overall theme of the series.

² <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/archived/booksandarts/jail-or-gaol-how-should-australia-spell-it/7532694>, 19.11.2021.

³ <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/cambridge-world-history-of-human-disease/dropsy/C58BF7044399EE1E911299B54E39E484>, 20.11.2021.

6.2. Buildings

(3) EN: *At the **coaching inn**.*

HU: *A **postakocsinál**.*

Here the equivalent the translator chose, out of all they could have chosen from, for *coaching inn* is not the best, we could even say **omission** was used, since it has a completely different meaning in the target-language. A coaching inn was used to store carriages, means of transport and also the horses, which were changed during longer trips.⁴ Whereas *postakocsi* in the target is a noun that denotes a type of cart, literally it is the name for stage-coach, but it can be used to name other types of carts as well depending on the context. However, it can also be viewed as a ‘pars pro toto’ translation, in which case it is a clever solution. Our suggestion for *coaching inn* in this case would be *postafogadó* as it is close to the meaning of the source-language word.

6.3. Clothes

6.3.1. Container

(4) EN: *I’d like you to pack my **imperial**.*

HU: *Pakold be az **utazóládámat**.*

(5) EN: *And I had to lug that **imperial** on the hand-cart.*

HU: *Én pedig kézikocsin hoztam el a **poggyászt**.*

Since the meaning of *imperial* is the same in both of the above-mentioned examples, we will discuss them together. The translator in both cases replaced the word with the target-language equivalent(s). However, even though *utazóláda* and *poggyász* can be viewed as synonyms in terms of authenticity and consistency it would be advised to choose one equivalent and use that for every scenario it appears in. Therefore, if the translator had been made to choose in-between these two variants, it would have been ill-advised not to choose *utazóláda*,

⁴ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/coaching-inn>, 20.11.2021.

since *poggyász* is very much in use today in Hungarian, whereas the former is not, and *imperial* with the meaning of ‘baggage container’ is dated in English itself.⁵

6.3.2. Material

- (6) EN: *I’m going to Jackson’s. For **flannel**.*
HU: *Jacksonékhoz megyek **anyagért**.*

Flannel is a soft fabric, usually made out of wool, it is used to make clothes and undergarments.⁶ Here the translator used **generalisation**, because *anyag* does not have any specific meanings to it, it can mean any type of material that different objects can be made out of. Our suggestion would be to preserve the source language variant completed with transcription/transliteration, resulting in *flanel*.

6.3.3. Gender-neutral clothes

- (7) EN: *He’s in his **Sunday best**.*
HU: *Talpig **ünneplőben** van.*

Sunday best refers to one’s best attire, the one they wear for very special occasions only.⁷ Therefore the Hungarian translation is accurate, *ünneplő* translated literally into English would roughly mean ‘celebratory’ so it bears the same meaning.

6.3.4. Women’s clothes

- (8) EN: *A fella in a **frock**.*
HU: *Egy férfi **női ruhában**.*

The word *frock* is an old-fashioned term for a woman’s dress. The translator used **explicitation**, because in the target-language version of the sentence it is clearly stated that they are talking about *women’s* (női) dress, a simple *ruha* would have sufficed.

- (9) EN: *How many **bonnets** are you packing?*

⁵ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/imperial>, 20.11.2021.

⁶ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/flannel>, 20.11.2021.

⁷ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/sunday-best>, 20.11.2021.

HU: *Hány kalapot csomagolsz fel?*

The translator used **generalisation** in order to translate *bonnet* into the target-language. Bonnets are a type of hat usually worn by women or babies, they are identifiable with ease by their rims that frame the face of the wearer and because they are tied with a ribbon under the chin.⁸ *Kalap* in the target-language can refer to any type of hat, but it is mostly used to name men's headwear. Our suggestion would be to use *főkötő* instead of *kalap*, because it is not only an older term, but also has a connotative meaning of 'women's hat' and it also implies that the headgear needs to be tied by the wearer.

(10) EN: I had two **birds of paradise** in my hair. One of them fell out.

HU: Két **paradicsommadarat** tettek a hajamba. Az egyik kiesett a kocsiban.

Here *birds of paradise* refer to the plumage of the bird, it was a popular hair accessory of the noblewomen in the 19th century.⁹ The translator proceeded correctly by **replacing** the name of the bird with the Hungarian equivalent. Our suggestion would be to use explication or addition here and add *toll(at)* (feather) in the target-language version, since the target audience might perceive it as the actual bird without it, and not as the plumage itself.

6.3.5. Men's clothes

(11) EN: *I will provide two waistcoats, two jackets, two pairs of trousers, one overcoat, one pair of boots, a hat.*

HU: *Kapsz tőlem két mellényt, két kabátot, két nadrágot, egy köpenyt, egy pár csizmát és egy kalapot.*

Overcoat is the name for a winter coat made out of wool or another type of textile that is usually worn over regular clothing.¹⁰ In the target-language the translator's choice is **generalised** one, *köpeny* does not necessarily refer to a winter coat, it can refer to a plethora of loose-fitting clothing made out of light textiles as well. A better choice of words would be

⁸ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/bonnet>, 20.11.2021.

⁹ <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/80094675?img=1>, 20.11.2021.

¹⁰ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/overcoat>, 21.11.2021.

felöltő since it refers to a type of textile-coat worn over something, usually during the colder months of the year.

6.4. Culinary terms

6.4.1. Beverages

- (12) EN: *Do you have some **brandy** or smelling salts?*
HU: *Van itt **brandy** vagy repülőőő?*

The translator used **borrowing**, they took the English spirit's name and inserted it into the target-language, therefore it has exactly the same equivalent in both of versions.

6.4.2. Food

- (13) EN: *And then they become the finest **hams** and **sausages** and **pies** in Halifax.*
HU: *Ráadásul a legjobb **sonkát** és **szalámit** készíti belőlük egész Halifaxban.*

The translator relied on **localization** the food names *hams* and *sausages* with their closest equivalent in the target-language. However, *sausages* could have also been translated as *kolbász* which would have been better, considering that in the series we are talking about Yorkshire sausages which are not breakfast sausages, the latter's equivalent is indeed *szalámi*. However, in the case of *pie*, the translator used **omission**, they completely ignored the dish. A possible solution could have been *húsospite*, since pies in England are usually filled with meat.¹¹

6.5. Dialect

- (14) EN: *“**Oy**, your majesty you - need a new groom...”*
HU: *„Fenség, szükség volna egy új inasra...”*

¹¹ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/pie>, 21.11.2021

The translator used **omission** in the target-language variant, they ignored the ‘exclamation’. A possible solution could be *hé*, it is as informal as *oy*, and it is also used to attract someone’s attention.

6.6. Measurements

6.6.1. Goods

- (15) EN: *You sell your coal in Halifax at eight pence **a corve**.*
HU: *Halifaxban a szenet **kosaranként** nyolc pennyért adják el.*

The translator **replaced** the old measurement of coal *a corve* (corf) with its target-language equivalent. A *corf* (pl. *corve*) was formerly used to name the wagon(s) or basket(s) used in mines.¹²

6.6.2. Money

- (16) EN: *Since I said I wanted **a hundred and sixty pounds and ten shillings** for the upper bed.*
HU: *Mióta közöltem, hogy a felső leőhelynek **kölön ára van**.*

In the case of translating *a hundred and sixty pounds and ten shillings* the translator used **omission, or a ‘gross’ overgeneralisation** to translate it into the target-language, they focused entirely on the meaning of the whole sentence, but nevertheless they resolved the situation creatively. Perhaps a better solution would have been *százhatvan font és tíz shilling az ára*.

- (17) EN: *She has **two and a half thousand a year**, two of it entirely at her own disposal.*
HU: *Évente **két és félezer font** a jövedelme, ebből kétezerrel szabadon rendelkezik.*

¹² <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/corf>, 23.12.2021

While translating *two and a half thousand a year* which clearly refers to money, based on the context, the translator used **explicitation** in the target-language, they specified the currency. *Font* is the Hungarian equivalent of *pound*.

6.6.3. Land

(18) EN: *You may not, Miss Walker, and how many rolling **acres** and tenants have you got?*

HU: *És ön sem, Miss Walker, pedig hány **hektár** földje és hány bérlője is van?*

(19) EN: *I value the upper bed - if you want it - at one hundred and sixty pounds **per acre**.*

HU: *A felső lelőhelyet, ha kibérelnék százhatvan fontos **holdankénti** árra értékelem.*

In both cases the translator used the method of **localization** to translate *acre*. However, the main difference between the two examples is that while the same term is used in the source-language, a pair of synonyms is found in the target-language. The first equivalent, *hektár* is the term in use in Hungarian, while *hold(ankénti)* is the dated one. Taking into consideration the setting of the series, the dated term would be the better choice, although the translator might have opted for the newer version based on the explicitation hypothesis.

(20) EN: *Or twenty-two pence - **per square yard**.*

HU: ***Négyzetyardonként** tehát huszonkét penny hasznos termelnek.*

The translator used **borrowing** in the case of *yard*, but they used the target-language equivalent of *per square*. This is not a very fortunate rendition, since the target audience might be puzzled when seeing *yard*, as the metric system is used in Europe. Another explanation might be that due to globalization and the Internet, it is very easy to check a conversion table from yards to meters (1 yard = 0.9144 meter); besides, the most common conversion tables are built in the *Calculator* application of the most popular operation systems:

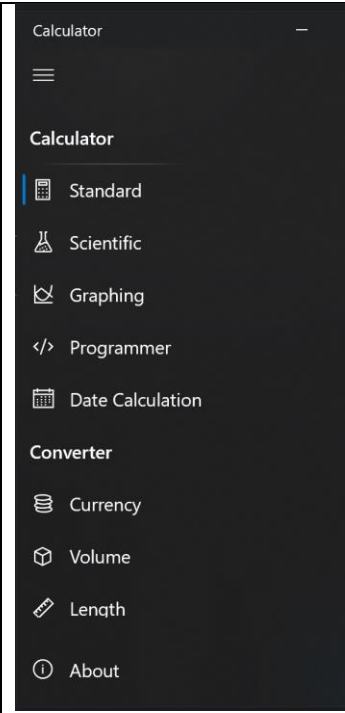
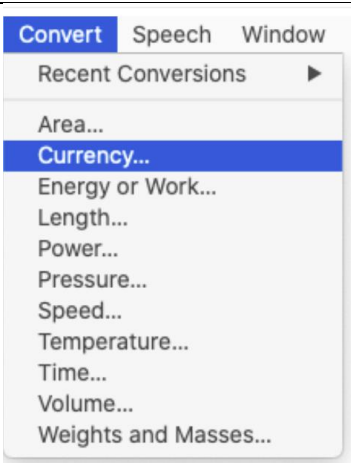
	
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Table 3. Calculator conversion menu for Windows and Mac OS

6.1.6.4. Liquid

(21) EN: *She's swallowed **a load of** gin.*

HU: ***Egy akó** gint megivott.*

The method of **total transformation** was used in the case of *a load of*. The translator's choice is a clever one, since *egy akó* (approx. 50 litres) bears a similar meaning in this scenario as the source-language variant. Moreover, it can be considered a dated term, therefore it fits the theme of the series.

6.7. Names

6.7.1. People

(22) EN: *How's little **Henry**?*

HU: *Hogy van a kis **Méri**?*

There is no plausible explanation to the example above, expect for the possibility that the translator did not read the episode's script, as a male name is changed to a female one

(which is supposed to be partial borrowing based on pronunciation). Therefore, they could have misheard, thus misinterpret the name.

- (23) EN: *Hello **Mary**.*
HU: *Szervusz **kishúgom**.*

The translator used **explicitation** in the target-language version, since *kishúgom* (my little sister) refers to kinship. The greeting is uttered by Anne Lister, addressing to her sister Marian Lister, whom she often calls Mary during the course of the series.¹³

6.7.2. Geographical:

- (24) EN: *I wanted to ask you, when we come back from **the Continent**, whether...*
HU: *Szeretnék kérdezni valamit. Akkor akartam megkérdezni amikor már visszaértünk **Európából**.*

While translating *the Continent* (a typically English perspective), the translator opted for a more **explicit** version by naming the continent, which is obviously Europe.¹⁴

6.8. Occupations

- (25) EN: *Eugénie? I'm Joseph. Booth. **Footman**.*
HU: *Eugénie? Én Joseph vagyok. Booth. **Az inas**.*

The translator replaced *footman* with its target-language equivalent.

- (26) EN: *Let the **postilion** bate his horses.*
HU: *A **kocsis** kifoghatja a lovait.*

Postilion refers to the person who rides near a coach without a coachman and acts as its guide; therefore, the translator simplified the situation by using *kocsis* (coachman) with the

¹³ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/profiles/3GKBx23bDdpd7f3714Rngy/marian-lister>, 19.02.2022

¹⁴ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/the%20Continent>, 19.02.2022

method of **generalisation**. Our alternative solution would be the Hungarian *fullajtár*, as it is closer in meaning to *postillion*, referring to the same action.¹⁵

- (27) EN: *William Bell. Our **groom**.*
HU: *William Bell, a **kocsisunk**.*

The translator replaced *groom* with its target-language equivalent, which is why the previous example should use a different word, for the terms not to overlap in translation.

6.8.1. Signifying social status

- (28) EN: *He's the **Lord Lieutenant of the County**.*
HU: *A **Király megyei megbízottja**.*

In the source-language *Lord Lieutenant of the County*, specifically the title of *Lord Lieutenant* is given to a representative of the Crown per County.¹⁶ **Explicitation** was used to translate it into the target-language, since the target culture does not have a term for this highly specific title. *A Király megyei megbízottja* ('the' + 'King' + 'county' + 'agent') is a reasonable solution. Nevertheless, we would suggest the use of *helytartó(ja)* instead of *megbízott(ja)*, since *megbízott* is a word for an agent, whereas *helytartó* (approx. 'governor') is closer in meaning to the title of *Lord Lieutenant*.

- (29) EN: *He's a **magistrate**, he's a justice of the peace.*
HU: *Ő a **békebíró**, a városi tanács tagja.*
- (30) EN: *And with him being the **magistrate** himself...*
HU: *És mivel ő maga is **elöljáró**.*

In the case of example (29), the translator replaced *magistrate* (someone who acts as a judge)¹⁷ with its target-language equivalent, knowing that *békebíró* is an old-fashioned term

¹⁵<https://www.arcanum.com/hu/online-kiadvanyok/Lexikonok-magyar-etimologiai-szotar-F14D3/f-F2003/fullajtar-F2216/>, 19.02.2022

¹⁶<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/lord%20lieutenant#:~:text=1%20%3A%20an%20official%20of%20the,keeper%20of%20the%20county%20records>, 20.02.2022

¹⁷<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/magistrate>, 20.02.2022

for a judge. In the second example, the translator's choice is less convincing, since *előljáró* by itself is closer in meaning to 'mayor' than to 'magistrate'.

6.9. Greetings

(31) EN: Mrs. Briggs. **How do you do?**

HU: Mrs. Briggs, *üdvözlöm*.

(32) EN: **How do.**

HU: *Örvendek*.

In both of the above-mentioned cases, the translator **replaced** the specific greetings with their closest target-language equivalents, *üdvözlöm* (more formal) than *Örvendek* (more colloquial).

6.10. Sayings

(33) EN: *And by all accounts not quite the full shilling.*

HU: *És szerintem nincs ki mind a négy kereke.*

EN: *And certainly, no oil painting.*

HU: *Egyik sem egy Vénusz festmény.*

(34) EN: *John Booth, you dark horse.*

HU: *John Booth, te igazi lóköőtő vagy.*

In all of the above-mentioned cases the method of **total transformation** was used in order to render them in the target-language. If someone is *not the full shilling*, it means that the individual is slightly mentally challenged.¹⁸ In the target-language the phrase *nincs ki mind a négy kereke* bears a similar meaning, it refers to someone who is not 'normal', out of the ordinary.

To be no oil painting is said of an individual who is not the most attractive.¹⁹ In the target-language this meaning is expressed by the whole sentence. *Vénusz festmény* (a painting of Venus) can be interpreted as the ideal of beauty, therefore saying that someone is not a painting of Venus means that the individual is unattractive.

¹⁸ https://www.lexico.com/definition/not_the_full_shilling, 22.02.2022

¹⁹ https://www.lexico.com/definition/be_no_oil_painting, 22.02.2022

And finally, the fact that someone is referred to as a *dark horse*, it means that they are secretive, they keep to themselves.²⁰ However, the translation of that phrase is not the closest possible equivalent, as *lókötő* refers to someone who lies a lot, a scoundrel or a rogue. In this case, for instance, the expression *Tele vagy meglepetésekkel* (You are full of surprises) could have been a better solution.

6.11. Tools

6.11.1 Houseware

(35) EN: *She gave me **that paper-knife**.*

HU: ***Egy kést** is kaptam tőle.*

In this example **generalisation** is observed in the translation of *that paper-knife*. The term *paper-knife* is mostly used in U.K. English, but it is typically used to open letters, it is a blade that is not sharp, and it may also serve decorative purposes. Its U.S. English, or ‘more modern’ variant would be the letter opener.²¹ However, in the translated version it is replaced by *kés* which is the most general term for any type of knife. Moreover, in the source-language, a demonstrative pronoun precedes the object, while in the target-language that is replaced by an indefinite article. Thus, the sentence ‘*Azt a levélbontót tőle kaptam.*’ could have been a more faithful rendition.

6.12. Transportation, vehicles

(36) EN: *And I had to lug that imperial on the **hand-cart**.*

HU: *Én pedig **kézikocsin** hoztam el a poggyászt.*

(37) EN: *Not in the **gig** again today, sir?*

HU: *Nem a **bricskával** jött, uram?*

(38) EN: *You were facing the **gig**.*

HU: *Akkor szemből látta a **bricskát**.*

(39) EN: *Do you know any more about the fool driving the **gig**?*

²⁰ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/dark-horse>, 22.02.2022

²¹ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/paper-knife>, 22.02.2022

HU: *Tud valamit az őrült kocsisról?*

(40) EN: *Sounds like the idiot driving the **gig** didn't know how to handle the thing.*

HU: *Mintha az az idióta nem tudta volna fékezni a lovakat.*

Backtr.: 'As if + that idiot + could not have been able to + stop/bridle the horses.'

Example (36) contains a rather restricted or outdated item, whose target-language equivalent was correctly identified. However, in the following examples a most interesting situation develops, being able to collect 4 instances of *gig*, which is an archaic term for a two-wheeled carriage drawn by one or two horses.²² In the case of the first two examples – (37) and (38) –, the translator replaced *gig* with its closest possible equivalent in the target-language, as there is no exact equivalent in Hungarian.



Figure 1. *Gig and bricska.* © Wikipedia and archivum.mtva.hu

Bricska refers to a four-wheeled, tall carriage, without a folding head. A possible solution would be *kétkerekű*, but even that would be considered as a generalisation, because it can refer to multiple two-wheeled means of transport.

The last two examples may be viewed as **generalisation** and **omission**. In the case of example (39), the *gig* 'driver' (*kocsisról*) could have been replaced by *bricskásról* in order to preserve consistency, although this is a generalised term, as *kocsis* (groom) refers to any person driving a cart or carriage. In the case of example (40) the translator used omission, although another interesting solution is favoured, visible from the word-for-word backtranslation (transfer of meaning, possibly exchange of actor for object, cf. (Klaudy, 2003, p. 262— p. 268).

²² <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/gig>, 22.02.2022

A possible solution could be *Mintha az az idióta nem tudta volna fékezni/irányítani a bricskát/kétkerekűt.* ('As if that idiot couldn't have stopped the gig.').

(41) EN: What is the **chaise** doing out?

HU: Miért áll kint a Lister **cséza**?

The example above might look like transliteration, but the translator simply replaced *chaise* with its Hungarian equivalent and used **addition** to specify the owner of the vehicle. The two words do look similar, but there is a difference in their etymology. The English *chaise* was borrowed from the Old French word *chaïere* (chair) and it was altered later,²³ whereas the Hungarian *cséza* comes from the Latin *cisium* (light, four-wheeled carriage, without a folding head).²⁴ Nevertheless, both of them refer to the same type of carriage, not to mention that they have a similar sounding.

(42) EN: And his **cart**. Why'd he not go over to the **big house** and fetch his **cart**, eh?

HU: És a **kártya**? El tudod képzelni, hogy itthagya a **zsugát**?

In the case of the example above, a serious **misinterpretation** is visible, the two versions have nothing in common from the point of view of the meaning. A *cart* is a two- or four-wheeled vehicle used for transportation, usually drawn by horse(s) or ox(en). In contrast, *kártya* is the Hungarian word for *card*, and *zsuga* is a jargon term for card. The only possible explanation is that the translator had no access to the original transcript/subtitle, therefore they probably misheard *cart* for *card*.

A possible solution could have been: *És a szekere? Miért nem vitte el a szekerét a gazda/földesúr házatól, mi?* It is important to note, that *big house* in this case does not refer to the prison, but to the local landowner's property.²⁵ Its meaning as *jail* developed much later, stemming from U.S. English.

(43) EN: And she drove the **high flyer** back over from Wibsey, somebody was telling me.

²³ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/chaise#h1>, 22.02.2022

²⁴ <https://wikiszotar.hu/ertelmezo-szotar/Cs%C3%A9za>, 22.02.2022

²⁵ https://www.lexico.com/definition/big_house, 22.02.2022

HU: *Kipenderítette Wibseyt a földjéről.*

Another grievous **misinterpretation** unfolds in example (43). Firstly, Wibsey is a village situated in West Yorkshire, between Halifax and Bradford. Sadly, the Hungarian borrowing of *Wibsey* makes it clear that it refers to a person. Then comes the issue of the verb, in the English version it is *to drive*, whereas in Hungarian it is *to throw out*. The two sentences do not have anything in common. A possible reason for this misinterpretation could be that the translator did not know the meaning of *high flyer* therefore tried to use **omission** to resolve the situation.

The English four-wheeled *high flyer* is another name for the English *phaeton*, its shortened name being *high flyer*. Its body consisted of a seat for two, upon two sets of springs and it could be reached by a ladder.²⁶ It used to be a popular means of transport in the 18th and 19th centuries.

We suggest the following alternative: *A madarak azt is csiripelték, hogy idáig vezette Wibsey-ből a postakocsit/phaetont.*



Noun [[edit](#)]

zsuga (*plural* **zsugák**)

1. (*slang*) **card** (for playing card games)

Figure 2 High flyer and zsuga © [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phaeton_\(carriage\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phaeton_(carriage)) and <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/zsuga>

²⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/technology/phaeton-carriage>, 22.02.2022

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It is close to impossible to avoid certain hard-to-translate elements during translation. The presented examples bring along meanings that – in the majority of the cases – are inseparable from the source language culture. Translating these items may constitute a real challenge for most translators. Therefore, they need certain methods and solutions to successfully deal with them and the result reflects the quality of their work; moreover, it affects the target audience's quality of experience. The examples presented in this paper were selected from the realm of *realia* because we considered them problematic to render without certain losses.

Chapter one underlines the importance of translators and translations in our society, as well as possible challenges of translating *realia*, yet the importance of these 'untranslatable' terms, due to their 'additional' meanings. As items of *realia* are often hard to identify, Chapter two includes some of the most notable definitions of several theorists and it serves as a guide to specify what *realia* are.

The following chapter contains a set of translation strategies translators can rely on while encountering *realia* in their works. These methods are listed based on our idea of what a translator could think of first when needing to solve the issue of translating cultural items.

Chapter four presents a few issues translators could have with *realia* and Sergej Vlahov and Sider Florin's categorization completed with our own detected examples, since we offer a categorization stemming from their system. Chapter five deals with the methodology, including our explanation for collecting the particular examples from the chosen TV series, as well as the most notable examples of a corpus of 141 entries, grouped into various categories.

Chapter six focuses on the analysis of cultural translation challenges found in *Gentleman Jack*, also trying to identify the method of translation used in each case. In the case of less acceptable solutions, alternative translation versions are offered.

In most cases, the translator(s) could successfully render the majority of the selected examples. However, there were some issues with consistency (most notably examples 37–40), as they used multiple more or less acceptable equivalents in the target-language version, all the while the source-language text uses the same term consistently (*gig*). However, we tend to believe that inconsistency may cause confusion for the target viewers. The setting of the storyline was not always taken into consideration, dated terms in the source-language were

often replaced by modern-day versions in the target-language, possibly taking away from the audience's quality of experience.

The most favoured translation methods were omission and generalisation, which is more or less reasonable, since it can be challenging to find a satisfactory solution when translating realia; the former was followed by total transformation of meaning (in the case of sayings).

Another category worth mentioning is the measurement units, in which case the translator(s) used localization to solve the situation, although for consistency reasons they should have decided on only one version; moreover, using borrowing to translate *yard* is rather unfortunate, because the target audience might get puzzled by hearing it.

On the other hand, there were some examples of translation for which we could not find any plausible explanation other than it could have been stemming from following the TV series only by hearing, without the script at hand. This method can lead to some improper renditions, as examples 22, 42 and 43 in Chapter six demonstrate, and should be avoided by all means possible, since the translations produced are often of poor quality and can completely mislead the target audience, ruining their quality of experience. It is important to mention that the source-language and the target-language variants in examples 42 and 43 have little in common.

Overall, it can be said that the translator(s) have done a fine job of rendering the source-language realia, except for the previously highlighted cases. This was possible with the help of omissions, generalisation and total transformation, trying to reduce the inevitable losses to a minimum.

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