

**Translating Fantasy Literature into Russian and Slovak:  
The Case Study of Catherynne Valente's  
*The Girl who Circumnavigated Fairyland in a Ship of her own Making*  
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*Abstract*

*The article analyzes the Russian and Slovak translations of the fantasy novel *The Girl who Circumnavigated Fairyland in a Ship of her own Making*. The goal is to highlight similar translation problems and their solutions in both languages, draw parallels, and note the degree of similarities and differences between the two translations. The approaches of naturalization and exoticization are observed based on the degree of adaptation of the source-text translation units to the target-text cultures and languages. The authors conclude that both translations are qualitatively adequate, although the degree of naturalization and exoticization varies with each language.*

*Keywords: Valente, novel, translation, strategies, analysis, comparison*

## **Introduction**

*The Girl who Circumnavigated Fairyland in a Ship of her own Making* is a fantasy novel by the acclaimed American author Catherynne M. Valente. First published in the United States in 2011 by Feiwel & Friends, Valente's novel has since become a popular book and has been translated into several languages. Followed by four more novels and a prequel in the series titled *Fairyland*, volume one has won several awards, most notably the Locus Award for Best Young Adult (2012), Andre Norton Award for Young Adult Science Fiction and Fantasy (2009, while published online) and Goodreads Choice Award Nominee for Best Middle Grade & Children's (2011), while being nominated for several others.

Responses to the book were mainly positive. Critics praised Valente's writing since the book has a "wonderfully commanding and joyous relationship with language, myth and fairy tale" (Moher 2013: 1) and a "powerful, evocative imagery, and the well-crafted prose" (Quealy-Gainer 2011: 494). Kirkus called it "complex, rich and memorable" (Kirkus 2011: 1) and compared it to works such as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* or the *Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. The novel was often categorised as a fairy tale with children as intended readers, since "on the surface it appears to be a book written for children, featuring childish things" (Moher 2013: 1). On the other hand, critics acknowledged that the books in the series "are not simple, and not simply for kids" (Fricke 2013: 1), and the themes the novel contained, such as death, made it "ill fit for its publisher's target audience" (Ingall 2011: 1).

Thematically, fantasy elements may be observed in the novel since the reader will encounter neologisms denoting fictional places, creatures, or other phenomena, arising from the "third" culture created by the author. The occurrence of the third, fictional culture conditions the appearance of previously non-existing lexemes needed to denote these phenomena (Djovčoš-Kraviarová 2010). Together with the fantastical aspects of the story, it is also necessary to mention the fairytale structure of the plot, manifesting in the traditional quest, "striking a delicate balance of profundity and playfulness" (Quealy-Gainer 2011: 494). Playfulness, wordplay and humour are inherent attributes of literature for children, often meant to entertain with an underlying moral aspect.

The complexity of the novel challenges translators and requires them to propose creative solutions. Its culturological density makes the novel a suitable example for observing the translation strategies used to convert fantastic literature for children into other languages. Clearly, it has not discouraged publishers around the world – a year after the 2011 American publication, Spanish, Czech, Portuguese, Italian, Chinese and Slovak translations appeared in 2012. In 2013, German, Finnish and Hungarian translations followed; in 2014, the Russian translation was published, and in 2015, Polish and Lithuanian translations became available on the market.

This article observes the translation strategies applied during the process of the translation of the novel. Within the scope of the article and the linguistic specialization of the authors, it is not possible to address all the mentioned translations. We have therefore chosen to compare the Russian and Slovak translations because of the typological proximity of the languages as well as the cultural comparability of the respective nations due to their shared history. This comparison is achieved through translation criticism informed by Katharina Reiss' theory, where translation criticism does not only relate to the negative aspects of translation, but also highlights positive solutions. As the author suggests, to achieve an unbiased and constructive criticism, "whether positive or negative, [it] must be defined explicitly and be verified by examples" (Reiss 2010: 4), which we provide in the analysis of the translations. We do not try to comment and denote the translation solutions in both languages as either "good" or "bad," but we rather lean to using the expressions "adequate" and "inadequate" translation. We are also aware of the subjectivity of the translation solutions and work both with the original and the translations to avoid one-sided criticism with no regard for the original, since "the judgment of a translation should never be made one-sidedly and exclusively on the basis of its form in the target language" (Reiss 2010: 9).

The overall aim of comparing the Russian and Slovak translations yields two research questions:

- Do the resulting translations lean more to naturalization or exoticization as defined in the Slovak school of translation?
- To what degree are the translation strategies used in both languages similar or different?

Our hypothesis is that the translation strategies used in both cases will be similar to a high degree because of the typological proximity of the languages. However, we expect problems arising from differently structured alphabets, since the alphabet plays a major role in the novel. We cannot estimate as to whether the translations will prefer the source or the target culture, resulting in the mentioned naturalization and exoticization, but due to the high degree of culture-specific realia we expect that the translations will take one or the other side.

## **Translation approaches and strategies**

The genre of fantasy shares its boundaries with fairy tales. According to Pamela Gates, "the direct ancestors of today's literary fantasy are traditional folk and fairy tales, which in turn can be traced to the myth-making of the classical oral traditions" (Gates 2003: 4). Therefore, the unusual and magic are innate to a fantasy story, in particular when it is intended for children and includes "a child protagonist, an adult character, or a humanlike protagonist – a talking animal, a toy come alive, some imaginary creature—with which a child can readily identify" (ibid: 9).

From the linguistic viewpoint, the fantastic constituents typical of the genre are often embodied in non-equivalent units as a result of the author's imagination. These units are comprised of the phonetic, lexical, or grammatical elements of the source language and rendering them into the system of a different language may become challenging for the translator.

The choice of the translation strategies depends on the nature of the respective translation unit, which we understand as any unit being sufficient for making a translation solution (Minyar-Beloručev 1999), whether it is a morpheme, a word, or a text. At the lexical level, translators face three major obstacles: the target language does not have any equivalent, the equivalent is only partial, and the different meanings of the translation unit correspond to different units in the target language (Fedorov 1999). These predicaments give rise to the notion of translativity, which "represents the salience of translation with foreign (alien) elements in form and/or content as perceived by the receiver" (Jettmarová 2016: 136). In other words, the translator has to decide whether they should rely more on foreign elements from the viewpoint of the target text reader or on familiar ones. The choice depends on the translator's understanding of the receiver's level of familiarity with the alien culture coded in the source text. Therefore, the translator may "ascribe different values to translativity: + (positive), 0 (irrelevant) or – (negative)" (ibid.: 137), where the former leads to exoticization or creolization of translation, while the latter results in naturalization (ibid), as fundamental approaches to the translation of foreign texts.

According to a leading authority of the Slovak translation school Anton Popovič (1971), naturalization leads to the prevalence of domestic elements in translation, which tilts Lotman's dichotomy of "we" vs. "they" (Lotman 1992) towards the culture of the target language receiver ("we"). On the other hand, exoticization means the prevalence of foreign elements of the source text culture and the domination of "their" culture in the target text. The middle ground or the healthy balance between the two is called creolization, when the boundaries between the domestic culture and foreign culture are arbitrary (Popovič 2000: 139).

The terms denoting either the dominance of source text elements or the dominance of domestic elements appear not only in Popovič's theory, but also in the theory of Viličkovský (1984), Venuti (2008) or Yang (2010): "Within the Slovak tradition of translation studies, these phenomena are discussed within so-called exotization[sic!] vs. naturalization strategies ... while in the context of Anglo-American translation culture, the terms foreignization vs. domestication, as propounded by Venuti, are preferred" (Gibová 2012: 71).

These approaches used by the translators at the text level are manifested in strategies, such as understood in the theories of Newmark (1980), Baker (2011), Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/1995) and other researchers. It is impossible to list all strategies and it is not our aim to do so, although we mention the most common ones observed in the analysis of the two translations. Strategies are used in order to achieve the highest level of equivalence, whether lexical, grammatical, textual or pragmatic (Baker 2011). However, equivalents in the meaning of "constant regular dictionary correspondences which are used in translation irrespective of a context and are interchangeable with each other in all their uses" (Chanysheva 2010: 107) hardly ever show full coincidence in both denotational and connotational aspects, requiring translators to look for partial equivalence. In other cases, the target language may have a ready-made *analogue*, understood by Leonid Barkhudarov (1975) as an "approximate equivalent" (101). Analogue translation is an effective means of naturalization of culture-specific units. Lack of equivalents and analogues in the target

language may also lead to naturalization through *descriptive translation* of the source language unit, which can function on its own or in combination with other translation strategies.

Imaginary proper names and neologisms in fantasy literature often lead to the prevalence of *borrowed translation* as a tool to copy the structures of the original language (Komissarov 2002) and bring them into the target language without alterations in spelling. However, if the source and target languages use different alphabets (e.g. Latin and Cyrillic), translators have to render the unit using the *transliteration* or *transcription* techniques, whereby the letters or phonetic image of the source unit are converted into the spelling of the target language. Otherwise, borrowed translation may result in *loaning* the foreign structure, which means that each element of a word or word combination is translated separately and then brought back together into an indivisible unit (Komissarov 2002).

Translators also have to bridge the typological differences between the languages. Roman Jakobson claims that languages differ in what *has* to be expressed in them, rather than what *can* be. He illustrates it through the category of gender, which does not have to be explicit in English, while in synthetic languages like Russian or Slovak the grammatical forms of the equivalents mandatorily incorporate the markers of masculine or feminine gender (Jakobson 1978). In translation, grammatical lacunae can be expressed through the grammatical or lexical means of the target language or omitted if the grammatical meaning is irrelevant under the given circumstances.

In the following section, we present an analysis of the Russian and Slovak translations. The focus is primarily at the lexical level of the text and on the typological differences between the languages, since both present the most relevant material for the investigation. As Reiss suggests, “it should be evident that the analysis and evaluation of a translated text can serve as the first stage, but it must be followed by the second and indispensable stage of comparison with the source text” (Reiss 2010: 10). After studying the original text we identified the most challenging aspects of the novel, namely the translation of proper nouns, such as personal names and names of places, cultural phenomena and the solutions to the difficulties arising from the structural differences of the languages. Subsequently, a comparison with the source text was undertaken, which yielded the translation processes and approaches which are then further compared at the level of Russian and Slovak.

### **The translation of proper nouns**

A proper noun, alternatively called a proper name, reflects “the name of an individual person, place, etc” (Crystal 2008: 392). From a formal viewpoint it is “a noun which is not normally preceded by an article or other limiting modifier” (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language 1990: 1550). From a functional viewpoint, the name identifies a certain person or object. In fictional books, however, “names... serve particular purposes or functions... such as amusing the reader, imparting knowledge or evoking emotions” (Coillie 2014: 123). A charactonym, one of the types of proper names, not only identifies a character, but also conveys their “distinctive trait” (Britannica). Etymological meaning or cultural determinant can also be included in the name. Under this section, we analyze the strategies used by the translators of *The Girl...* into Russian and Slovak in the two categories of proper nouns, that is personal names and the names of places, which are found in the original.

## Personal Names

In this section, we compare the strategies used by the Russian and Slovak translators to render the personal names into their respective target languages. The selection of personal names was based on the functional approach, whereby the names were categorized according to their intended purpose. Within this section all personal names are analyzed according to the translation strategies.

The majority of personal names in the book are charactonyms, which bear a certain meaning usually essential for understanding the character. The function of these names in the text leads the translators to opt for equivalence, full or partial, to retain the meaning of the names. Therefore, such names as *Hello*, *Goodbye*, and *Farewell* were rendered using their equivalents in Russian and Slovak. The name *Leaf*, a reference to autumn, is spelled with a mistake (*Leaf* instead of *Leaf*), which was also intentionally borrowed into the target languages. In some names, the equivalent translation was only partial. The original name *Greengallows* was fully rendered into Slovak as *Zelenošibenička*, whereas the Russian translator left only the *gallows* and omitted the *green* (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 *Equivalents in both languages*

Ahoj	<b>Hello</b>	Привет
Dovidenia	<b>Goodbye</b>	Пока
Zlatoústý	<b>Goldmouth</b>	Златождрал
Ani/Aj	<b>Neither and Nor</b>	Ни-Ни
Ani/Nie	<b>Not and Nor</b>	Не-Ни
Dĺžka a Šírka	<b>Latitude and Longitude</b>	Широта и Долгота
ZelenýVietor	<b>The Green Wind</b>	ЗеленыйВетер
Lyst	<b>Leaf</b>	Лиист
Zbohom	<b>Farewell</b>	Прощай
Tešilo ma	<b>Wellmet</b>	Доскорого
Sobota	<b>Saturday</b>	Суббота
BazalstonkováBetka	<b>Betsy Basilstalk</b>	БэтсиБазилик
A-po-L, El	<b>A-Through-L, Ell</b>	От-А-до-Л, Аэл
HenrikZelenošibenička	<b>HenrikGreengallows</b>	ХенрикВиселица

Both translators used the borrowed translation as a strategy to render the names such as *Rupert* or *Iago* (Table 1.2). The plural form of the *Anna-Marees*, which was borrowed into both languages, was reproduced using the grammatical means available in the respective languages.

Table 1.2 *Borrowed translation in both languages*

Iago	<b>Iago</b>	Яго
Rupert	<b>Rupert</b>	Руперт
Anny-Marie	<b>Anna-Marees</b>	ВсякиеАнны-Марии

In a number of cases, the Slovak translator opted for borrowed translation, where the Russian translator used equivalents and analogues (Table 1.3). In all such cases, the names incorporate a certain feature of the character, which is completely lost in Slovak translation and fully or partially rendered in Russian. The name *Mallow* of one of the main characters denotes a flower and the demeanour of kindness, which is translated through equivalence in Russian. The name of soap *Lye* denotes “alkali” and conveys the physical state of the

character, which is made of soap. Unlike the Slovak translator, who simply borrowed the name, the Russian translator found an analogue *Alkali*. However, this solution seems to be less successful, because the term is used mostly by chemistry professionals and maybe unknown to the target audience of the book. Besides, *Lye* is in homophonic relationships to the *Lie*, which are “word forms with different spellings but the same pronunciation” (Brown, Miller 2013: 212). In the context of the book, it is an important detail, because the character carries the inscription *Truth* on her eyebrow, which antonymously correlates with the homophonic forms *Lye* and *Lie*. In both translations this word play is lost.

The name *Mr. Map* stands out in this category as a name of the character specializing in map-making. As a charactonym, it was rendered through equivalence in Slovak, but the Russian translator used borrowing as his method with the only exception of the suffix “a” added at the end of the name to make it sound more natural. The Slovak translator also changed the title of the character from *Mr.* to *Sir*.

Table 1.3 Borrowed translation in one of the languages

Mallow	<b>Mallow</b>	Мальва
September	<b>September</b>	Сентябрь
Lye	<b>Lye</b>	Алкали
Dr. Fallow	<b>Doctor Fallow</b>	ДокторОхра
Rubedo	<b>Rubedo</b>	Рубин
Citrinitas	<b>Citrinitas</b>	Лимончик
Sir Mapa	<b>Mr. Map</b>	МистерМапа

The creativity of the author in naming her characters led to a number of examples, where translators reproduce the names using the means of their target languages (Table 1.4). The original name *Manythanks* was loan-translated into Slovak (*Nastokrát Ďakujem*), while the Russian translator decided to transliterate the same word combination in French *merci beaucoup*, since it is sometimes used by the Russian speakers in humorous situations. Moreover, it resembles a name more than a literary translation of the original.

The original name *Charlie Crunchcrab* was given to the character because it belongs to the sea. The Russian translator took this affiliation into account: both constituting parts of the last name (*Crunch+crab*) were translated into the target language. The translator also managed to render the onomatopoeia, incorporated into the name – Russian *Chrusi* is echoic to *Crunch*. The first name *Charlie* was rendered through borrowed translation. The Slovak translator used the same principle in rendering the last name (*Chrum* is also echoic to *Crunch*), but the first name was substituted with an analogue. *Charlie*, a typical American name, gave way to *Kubo*, a traditional Slovak name, and the alliteration of “*ch*” was lost. In a similar case, the Russian translator substituted the last name in *Agnes Buttercream* with *Glazing (Glazur)*, while the Slovak translator used an equivalent.

The character *Gleam*, a lamp, was renamed into a firefly (*Svetliachok*) in the Russian translation. The Slovak translator found an equivalent *Svit*. However, in both cases the gender of the target language version was changed from feminine to masculine, though the translators kept using the feminine pronouns with the character.

Table 1.4 Creative solutions

NastokrátĎakujem	<b>Manythanks</b>	Мерсибоку
Kubo Chrumkrab	<b>Charlie Crunchcrab</b>	ЧарлиХрустикраб
Roklina	<b>Leafglen</b>	Листикс
Agnes Maslokrémová	<b>Agnes Buttercream</b>	АгнесГлазурь

Svit	<b>Gleam</b>	Светлячок
Calpurnia Štvrťpencová	<b>Calpurnia Farthing</b>	КальпурнияФартинг
Penny Štvrťpencová	<b>Penny Farthing</b>	ПенниФартинг

### *Names of Places*

A considerable number of the names of places from the book were translated through equivalence (Table 2.1). Some of them are dictionary correspondences of the names borrowed from the folk stories, like *Brocéliande* or *Atlantis*, while the others are a produce of Valente’s imagination, such as *Autumn Provinces* and *Lonely Gaol*. In the latter case, the name contains a word form *Gaol*, which becomes increasingly obsolete and looks alien to American English (Merriam-Webster 2016). In Russian, it is rendered with the word *Temnica*, which sounds as obsolete as the original.

Table 2.1 *Equivalents in both languages*

Atlantída	<b>Atlantis</b>	Атлантида
Jesenné Provincie	<b>Autumn Provinces</b>	ОсенниеПровинции
Osamelé Väzenie	<b>Lonely Gaol</b>	Одинокаятемница
Čarokraj	<b>Fairyland</b>	Волшебнаястрана
Zlovestné a nebezpečné more	<b>Perverse and perilous sea</b>	Коварного и Каверзного моря
Priadzový les	<b>Worsted Wood</b>	ЧесаныйЛес

Several names of places were rendered into the the target language by means of borrowed translation (Table 2.2). *Island-country Buyan* was originally borrowed from Russian fairy tales; in this respect the original name *Buyan* is a borrowing from the Russian language, and in the translation of the book it was simply retrieved from the Russian cultural stock. The Slovak translator followed the same pattern. The attributive *Island-country* was translated through equivalence in both languages.

Table 2.2 *Borrowed translation in both languages*

Pandemónium	<b>Pandemonium</b>	Пандемониум
Mercurio	<b>Mercurio</b>	Меркурио
Brocéliande	<b>Brocéliande</b>	Броселианда
Buyan (ostrovná krajina)	<b>Buyan (Island-country)</b>	Буян (островное государство)

In other cases, the Russian translator used borrowed translation to render the names of places, while the Slovak translator opted for equivalents (Table 2.3). In the translation of *Barleybroom*, though, the Russian translator chose both borrowed translation and equivalent, with the former one being a primary option.

Table 2.3 *Borrowed translation in Russian and equivalents or analogues in Slovak*

Západná	<b>Westerly</b>	Вестерли
Ružov	<b>Briary</b>	Бриарий
Krupicometlárieka	<b>Barleybroom</b>	Барлибрум, она же Ячменный Веник

In a few cases, the translators made creative solutions often leading to considerable alterations or completely new names (Table 2.4). This creativity is conditioned by names that again are charactonyms, often having onomatopoeic features, such as *Janglynow Flats* or *Groangyre Tower*, both evoking sounds – the former jangling, clinging, and the latter howling, groaning. In case of the Slovak translation, *Valley of Jangling* and *Howling* (tower)

were created through equivalent descriptive translation, while in case of Russian translation we encounter *Wordiness Wasteland* and *Groaning Whirlwind Tower*. In both languages, the relation to sound was maintained, although the Russian translator added alliteration in *Wordiness Wasteland* (*Pustosh Pustoyvonnitsa*). On the other hand, the Slovak translator created one-word new names to denote these fictional places. This tendency of the Slovak translator to create one-word denotations is also apparent with locations *Idlelily*, *Seresong*, *Hallowgrum*, *Mallowmead*, where the Russian translator preferred two-word denotations. While both languages maintained the meaning of *Idlelily*, *Mallowmead*, and *Seresong*; *Hallowgrum* was translated as *Hallow Glue* in Slovak and *Sacred Pea* in Russian. With *Squamish Throughfare*, the Slovak translator chose wordplay and made it *Squeamish*, while the Russian translator created an entirely new denotation *Wide Driveway of Arctic Wind*. In a similar fashion, *Onionbore* became *Onion-drilled* in Slovak and *Onion Tide* in Russian, maintaining the relation to onion, though specifying the location as e.g. tide.

Table 2.4 Creative solutions

Citlivková ulica	<b>Squamish Throughfare</b>	Широкий Проезд Арктического Ветра
Záhaľaliovo, Zvädnospev, Svätolep, Slezolúka	<b>Idlelily, Seresong, Hallowgrum, Mallowmead</b>	Ленивая Лилия, Безмолвная Песня, Святой Горошек и Мальвовая Поляна
Rinčidol	<b>Janglynow Flats</b>	Пустошь Пустозвонница
Skuvíň	<b>Groangyre Tower</b>	Башня Стенающего Вихря
Cibuľovrtná	<b>Onionbore</b>	Луковый прилив

The creative approach was continued by the Russian translator, who in the following cases opted for creativity, while the Slovak translator chose borrowings and equivalents (Table 2.5). Consequently, *Morrowmoss well-water* became *Tomorrow Puddle Spring*; *Hallowmash Pharmacy* was expanded to *Halloween Potion Network of Pharmacies*; and *The House Without Warning* became *A small house with a surprise*. In all these examples, the Slovak translation used equivalent expressions and borrowings with no particular creativity or changes.

Table 2.5 Creative translations in Russian and equivalent translation in Slovak

Zajmokrads'ká pramenitá voda	<b>Morrowmoss well-water</b>	Источник Завтрашняя Лужица
Lekáreň Hallowmash	<b>Hallowmash Pharmacy</b>	Сеть аптек «Хэллоуинское эзелье»
Dom bez varovania	<b>The House Without Warning</b>	Домик с сюрпризом

This section focused on the analysis of proper names, specifically personal names and names of places. Within the category of personal names, the most common translation solution was that of a direct equivalence in both languages, since personal names are frequently converted from common names, e. g. *Saturday*. Borrowing as a strategy used in both languages simultaneously for the same instances was less common (Table 1.2), and prevailed in Slovak, as seen in the Table 1.3, where the Russian translator opted for a more naturalizing approach of adjusting the names according to their semantic connotations. The naturalizing approach of the Russian translator can be observed in the Table of creative solutions (1.4), where he decided to translate *Manythanks* as the word combination in French *merci beaucoup* transliterated into Russian. The Slovak translator's approach began to display inconsistencies, since he naturalized *Charlie Crunchcrab's* name, as well as the name *Farthing*. However, the exoticizing solutions can be observed in the cases of semantically functional names, which were borrowed into Slovak, fully or partially losing their meaning. In relation to the category of personal names, we can say that the Russian approach tends to



naturalize, and is more consistent, while the Slovak approach uses both strategies inconsistently.

With the names of places, the basic challenge was to translate new lexical units and the denotations of new fictional places. Equivalents were used in both languages (Table 2.1) in the cases of places which have origins in the English language, such as *Worsted Wood*. Borrowings in both languages are observable with words of non-English origin, such as *Pandemonium* (Table 2.2). Contrary to the approach seen in the category of personal names, it is the Slovak translation that tends towards naturalizing (Table 2.3), while the Russian opts for borrowings more frequently. When the names of places had semantic connotations, the Russian translator had to turn to naturalization as well (Table 2.4), achieved by a more descriptive translation (Table 2.5), or even the addition of information, e.g. *Hallowmash Pharmacy – A Chain of Pharmacies Hallowmash*, while the Slovak translator often created one-word denotations.

### Translation of Cultural Phenomena

Cultural phenomena require special attention in translation because their connotational component carries a thick layer of cultural information, which is specific to a certain linguistic community. Some phenomena can be substituted with analogues – similar cultural notions in the target language the reader can identify: “This strategy involves replacing a culture-specific item or expression with a target language item which does not have the same propositional meaning but is likely to have a similar impact on the target reader” (Baker 2011: 29). It often leads to generalization and narrowing of the scope of the notion. Other phenomena require borrowing as a translation strategy, because a similar phenomenon cannot be found in the target language. The author also uses cultural phenomena taken from mythology, which require translation solutions of their own. Below, we discuss the strategies used by the Slovak and Russian translators to render cultural phenomena.

The cultural phenomena listed in Table 3.1 originate in the culture of the source text, the American culture. All of them were translated through borrowing. The specific holidays such as *Halloween* were retained, along with the cultural realia like *Earl Grey* or the American cities *New York*, *Omaha* and places like *Hanscom Park*. The name of the game *Go* was retained in both languages and not substituted with a culturally-relevant game. The traditional fish stew *Bouillabaisse* has French origin, nevertheless just as the American realia, was translated by means of borrowing. This category is exceptional since both languages opted for the translation strategy of retaining the aspects of the American culture, thus making the novel more foreign to the target text reader.

Table 3.1 *Borrowed translation in both languages*

Halloween	<b>Halloween</b>	Хэллоуин
Go	<b>Go</b>	Го
Earl grey	<b>Earl Grey</b>	ЭрлГрей
Omaha, Los Angeles, Nebraska, New York, Kansas, Topeka	<b>Omaha, Los Angeles, Nebraska, New York, Kansas, Topeka</b>	Омаха, Лос Анджелес, Небраска, Нью-Йорк, Канзас, Топика
Bujabéza	<b>Bouillabaisse</b>	Буйабес
Hanscomský park	<b>Hanscom Park</b>	Хэнском-парк

Unlike *Bouillabaisse*, another dish of French origin *Vichyssoise* was substituted with more known *Chicken soup* in Slovak and *Ragout* in Russian (Table 3.2). Cultural analogues were also supplied for the translation of *Yuletide*. The Slovak translator used a common substitute *Christmas*, where the Russian translator used the correspondence *Svjatki*, the Twelve Days period after Christmas, which is a term typically used by the Russian Orthodox Church.

Table 3.2 Analogues in both languages

Kuracivývar	<b>Vichyssoise</b>	Рагу
Vianočnéoddelenie	<b>Yuletide Division</b>	СвяточноеОтделение

Some cultural phenomena in the original text posed difficulties for the translators and forced them to find a more creative solution (Table 3.3). Thus, *maryjane* in the source language, denoting strap shoes, is a realia non-existent in either of the target languages. The Russian translator used a descriptive translation *a nice shoe with a bronze buckle on a strap*. Trapped in the same predicament, the Slovak translator borrowed the word and transcribed it into the Slovak form *marijánky*, which has been till now non-existent. The Slovak translator decided similarly by selecting the word-combination *Postgraduálny študent*, which is less common in Slovak, to render the original *Graduate Student*. In the US, this notion includes both master's and PhD students, but not undergraduate students, which includes bachelor students. The Russian language does not have a separate category encapsulating both master's and PhD students, so the Russian translator decided to narrow the meaning of the *Graduate Student* to only a *PhD Student (Aspirant)* in his translation.

Both translators rendered *Rotary clubs*, professional membership clubs, though neither of the target languages has a ready-made equivalent, which resulted in descriptive translation being used by both translators. The Slovak translator also used the descriptive translation *Female Skirt* in order to render the one-piece garment *Kirtle*. The Russian translator, though, found a cultural analogue *Salop*. Realia denoting the mushrooms *chanterelles* and *portobellos* have been translated by equivalence. However, *oysters* have remained oysters only in the Slovak language, since the Russian translator decided to substitute them for another type of mushrooms, *pleurotus*.

Table 3.3 Creative Solutions

Marijánky	<b>Mary jane</b>	Хорошенькая туфелька с бронзовой пряжкой на ремешке
Intelektuálnekluby	<b>Rotary clubs</b>	Клубыпоинтересам
Kuriatka, šampiňóny, ustrice	<b>Chanterelles, portobellos, oysters</b>	Лисички, шампиньоны, вешенки
Postgraduálnyštudent	<b>A Graduate Student</b>	Аспирант
Rad ZelenejDámskejSukne	<b>Order of the Green Kirtle</b>	ОрденЗеленогоСалопы

The author inhabits her Fairyland with creatures taken from different mythologies, such as Greek or Japanese. These words have been integrated into the language either earlier, so we perceive them as a non-foreign part of both languages, or they were borrowed only recently, and so they evoke the novelty of a borrowed word (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4 Borrowed translation of mythical creatures

Hannibal	<b>Hannibal</b>	Ганнибал
Perzefóninaklauzula	<b>The Persephone Clause</b>	ПоправкаПерсефоны
Ondin	<b>Ondin</b>	Ундина

Pan	<b>Pan</b>	Пан
Kentaur	<b>Centaur</b>	Кентавр
Satyr	<b>Satyr</b>	Сатир
Trol	<b>Troll</b>	Троль
Dryáda	<b>Dryad</b>	Дриада
Excalibur a Durendal	<b>Excalibur and Durendal</b>	Эскалибур и Дюрандаль
Sfinga	<b>Sphinx</b>	Сфинкс
Marid	<b>Marid</b>	Марид
Nasnas	<b>Nasnas</b>	Наснас
Jann	<b>Jann</b>	Джинн
Tsukumogami	<b>Tsukumogami</b>	Цукумогами

However, in some cases the translators decided to select other translation strategies, where generalization was one of the most common ones. The Slovak translator chose *Fairy (Vila)* as a generalized translation of *Banshee* and an *Imp (Škriatok)* instead of more specific *Kobold* in the original, as well as the *evil imp* instead of *hobgoblins*. Generalization also occurred with *Wyvern*, which has in Slovak become a simple dragon. Similarly, the Russian translator generalized an Italian notion *Strega* and a Spanish phenomenon *Bruja* into *Sorceress* and *Werewolf*, respectively, removing the cultural component.

In two cases, the Russian translator combined equivalent correspondence with descriptive translation. *Hamadryad* was rendered through its correspondence in Russian with the addition that it is *a wood nymph*. *Lorelei* was specified with descriptor *River Lady*. In both cases, the Slovak translator used generalization as a translation strategy.

Table 3.5 *Generalisation and other translation strategies*

Víla	<b>Banshee</b>	Банши
Dryáda	<b>Hamadryad</b>	Из рода гамадриад, древесных нимф
Striga	<b>Strega</b>	Ведунья
Bruja	<b>Bruja</b>	Оборотень
Siréna	<b>Lorelei</b>	РечнойдевыЛорелеи
Škriatok	<b>Kobold</b>	Кобольд
Šarkan	<b>Wyvern</b>	Виверн
Zlomyseľníškriatok	<b>Hobgoblin</b>	Пугало
Pooka	<b>Pooka</b>	Оборотень

Creative translation strategies (Table 3.6) were also used for the translation of mythical creatures. The Russian translator substituted *Brownies*, originally borrowed from Scottish fairy tales, with the typical Russian analogue *Domovoi*, where the Slovak translation produced a rendition of the word *bee* with incorrect spelling. Cultural analogues were also used by the translators in order to convert the *Dwarves* and *Death* into the respective target languages. Though *Will-o'-wisps* have a cultural analogue in both Russian and Slovak, the translators decided to choose descriptive translations: *goblins with swamp sparks* in Russian and *souls of the wisps* in Slovak.

In two examples, the Slovak translator produced neologisms as an option to Russian borrowings. *Spriggans* as creatures relating to trees were translated as a male version for the Slovak word *branch*, while *Glashtyns* were translated by a neologism that has no semantic meaning, but a phonetic resemblance.

Table 3.6 *Creative solutions*

Všielka	<b>Brownie</b>	Домовой
Dušachumáča	<b>Will-o'-wisp</b>	Гоблин с болотными огнями
Smrt'	<b>Death</b>	Смерть
Trpaslík	<b>Dwarf</b>	Гном
Halúzok	<b>Spriggan</b>	Спригган
Šklál	<b>Glashtyn</b>	Глаштин

The examples given above provided for another major subject for analysis, that is cultural phenomena, which stem either from the original, American culture, or from the third, fictional culture. American realia like *Halloween*, or the table game *Go* were maintained in both languages, as well as the French *Bouillabaisse* (Table 3.1). However, both languages were inconsistent when translating such realia, exoticizing them as seen in the previous examples, and naturalizing them via finding an analogue (Table 3.2) as in the case of the French *Vichysoise*. With non-existent realia in both target texts, translators tended to describe them or substitute them (*oysters* for *mushrooms* in Russian), or create new words (*marijánky* in Slovak). In these cases, Russian leaned to naturalization to a higher degree than Slovak (Table 3.3).

The realia originating from the fictional culture mostly denote mythical creatures. These were translated via borrowings in both languages (Table 3.4), since to a degree they already existed in English, Russian and Slovak as well, and the translators had to make only minor changes in spelling. However, creatures from other mythologies were also maintained, such as the Japanese *Tsukumogami* or the fictional *Nasnas*, making the translations lean towards exoticization. Yet the approach towards mythical creatures was inconsistent in both translations, as seen in Table 3.4. The Slovak translator generalized words like *kobold*, *banshee*, *hobgoblins*, *wyvern*, while the Russian translator did the same with *strega*, *bruja*, *pooka*, *hobgoblins*, though borrowing in both cases would be a more consistent approach in line with the solutions in the other similar cases. Generalizations together with descriptive translations in either language, to the contrary, add to the naturalization of the translations. In several cases, source text units undergo creolization at the level of culture, whereby the Russian translator decided to borrow *hamadryad* from the English text and supplement it with a descriptor *wood nymphs*. The same strategy was used with *Lorelei*, borrowed through transliteration and described as a *river lady*, and *Barleybroom*, supplied with loan translation. Overall, it is not possible to estimate the translation pattern according to which the translators chose to maintain or adjust these phenomena in either case.

### Language typological differences

Translation difficulties arise not only because of incompatibilities at the lexical level, but also because of different language types. The three languages involved in this research, English, Slovak, and Russian, are found within the family of Indo-European languages. However, the English language is categorised within the Germanic branch (genus), while the Russian and Slovak are both Slavic languages demonstrating a higher degree of proximity. However, even the Slavic languages are different from each other, with one of them belonging to the Eastern branch, and the other one (Slovak) to the western branch (WALS Online).

For the purposes of this article, we concentrate on three typological differences between the languages. Firstly, we comment on the difficulties arising from the discrepancy

in the use of the alphabetic systems in Russian and Slovak. Secondly, the nouns denoting the same objects in different languages may have different gender which sometimes causes an adverse effect as well. Thirdly, we comment on the difficulties arising from the use of personal pronouns in different languages.

### *Translation in the Languages with Cyrillic and Latin Alphabets*

Of the three languages used in this research, English and Slovak both use Latin-based alphabets. Some of the phonemes in the system of the Slovak language are rendered with the help of diacritic signs, such as, for instance *č, š, á, ý*, etc. However, in most cases there is no problem in borrowing an English nomination into Slovak without any major alteration in spelling.

The Russian language is based on the Cyrillic alphabet, which means a different set of characters for the same or similar phonemes. It challenges translators, who have to choose between the techniques of transcription or transliteration or combine both, when they borrow a lexical unit.

The alphabetic difference between the languages leads to additional challenges, since one of the characters in the book knows only the words from A to L in the English alphabet. Hence, in their respective cases, the Russian and Slovak translators had to use only the translation variants beginning with letters from the first part of the alphabet. The Russian translator faced additional difficulties, because the order of letters in the Russian alphabet does not coincide with those in English and Slovak. For example, the letter V (spelled B in Russian) is the third letter of the alphabet, while Z (З in Russian) is the ninth. Conversely, the English F is found at the end of the Russian alphabet. Below, we analyze the issues, which stemmed from the alphabetic challenges.

#### *1. The use of synonyms and neologisms*

A predictable challenge is the lack of an equivalent in the target language, which would fall into the right part of the alphabet (from A to L). Therefore, the Russian translator had to render *Capital* as the *Main city* instead of *Stolitsa*, while the Slovak translator used *Fantasy* to render *Dream* and avoid its equivalent *Sen*. A major predicament had to be resolved by the Russian translator in order to convert a *Velocipede*, an obsolete name for a bicycle. The available Russian correspondence *Velosiped* could not be used, firstly, because the original text had both obsolete and modern nominations *Velocipede* and *Bicycle*, while in Russian there is only one name for a bicycle. Secondly, the Russian *Velosiped* starts with V, which is in the first half of the alphabet, when it should be in the last one. Therefore, the translator produced a neologism *Parnokopytniye* (*Cloven-Wheeled*) after the pattern *Cloven-Hoofed*.

#### *2. The reversal of the original meaning*

In some cases, the original meaning reverses or changes because of the non-corresponding alphabets. With a character exclaiming that all seasons except for autumn belong in the second part of the alphabet, the Russian translator failed to transfer the original meaning: “Truly, Autumn is my season,” the scarlet beast chortled. “Spring and Summer and Winter all begin with such late letters! But Autumn and Fall, I have loved best” (Valente 2011: 132). Consequently, in Russian: “Autumn is my season,” the scarlet beast chortled. “Spring and Summer and Winter are all in my part of the alphabet, but I love Autumn best,”

since the names of seasons follow as listed: *vesna, leto, osen, zima*. Since neither of the target languages has a synonymic pair similar to autumn and fall, both translators choose to use the one nomination available.

### 3. Omissions

The alphabetic challenge led to the omission of some words or word combinations from the original. The character in the source language referred to the *House Without Warning* remarking that there are too many *Ws* in the name, which are unknown to him because they are in the second half of the alphabet. The Slovak translation of the house as *Dom BezVarovania* contained the letters from the last part of the alphabet, but the translator merely omitted the reference to *Ws* (or *V* in translation) saying that the character *read the old version* of the dictionary, which did not have any information about the house.

### *Translation of Gender*

Unlike the synthetic Slovak and Russian, the analytical English language normally does not manifest the gender category within the word form. However, in both Slavic languages every noun is male, female, or neutral, and accordingly takes such grammatical forms. The problem arose from having to render English words into translation while giving them grammatical gender, which sometimes collided with the gender of the character, e.g. *Saturday*, which is a name for a male character. In Slovak and Russian, the translation reads the equivalent *Sobota* and *Subbota*, respectively, both of which are female. Consequently, they take male pronouns which conflict with the female name, and the word is declined as male, adding to the unnaturalness and unusualness of the case. The same case arose with the characters *Latitude* and *Longitude*, which are grammatically female, but male pronouns and male declination are employed in both languages.

A gender specification was necessary in the case of a female *leopard*, in the original used with female pronouns. Since the noun *leopard* is masculine both in Slovak and Russian, there was a need to specify the gender, as often the case with animate nouns that have both male and a female form. The Slovak translation used a typical suffix denoting female gender *-ica* (*leopardica*), while the Russian translator had to create a female form since it was nonexistent, and added the suffix *-a* (*leoparda*).

### *Translation of the English pronoun "You"*

In the course of historical development, the English pronoun *You* acquired the grammatical meanings of both singular and plural forms of the second person (English Grammar Today 2011: 420). However, Slovak and Russian retained separate forms for the singular and plural *-ty* and *-vy*, whereas *-vy* is used not only to two or more people, but also to an unknown or an older person, or in order to show respect. Hence, where the author freely uses *You*, the translators have to decide between the use of *-ty* or *-vy*. For instance, in Russian all the characters address *September*, the protagonist of the story, *-ty* because she is a small girl. With other characters, the address is always *-vy*, for example when *September* addresses the three witches, who are much older than her. When *September* meets wyvern A-to-L, in the Russian translation she first addresses him *-vy*. However, later the girl asks if she can call her new friend a short form *Ell*, and the Russian translator adds a question if she can address him *-ty*, because the short form of the name would sound unnatural along with the formal

address *vy*. At the same time, the Slovak translator kept *ty* in all the cases to show a greater proximity between the characters, which reads less naturally than using both *vy* and *ty*.

This final chapter addressed the typological differences of languages, namely the issues of gender, informality and alphabets. Since the analyzed novel has a strong theme of alphabet-based interactions and word play, it naturally proved to be a complicated translation problem. While English and Slovak use similar alphabets, with differences in a few letters, the Russian alphabet uses a unique order of letters different to that of the Latin alphabet. The problems arose from words having a correspondent in the wrong part of the alphabet. Both translators used either a synonym in the correct part of the alphabet or created a new word to maintain the meaning. Where it was impossible, the source-text meaning was modified, changed, or omitted.

With gender, both translators faced the same issue. It is interesting to note that again, the solutions are similar, since English usually does not ascribe grammatical gender to objects, but both Russian and Slovak do. Consequently, both translations contain words used with an incorrect grammatical gender since it collides with their gender as characters; e. g. *Saturday*, a male character, is grammatically female, but takes male pronouns.

The formal manner of address by using the plural form of the pronoun “you” is absent in English, but both Russian and Slovak actively use the pronoun to express politeness, usually to people higher in the social hierarchy. The Slovak translator did not use the formal manner of address even when there was a hierarchical or age difference between the characters. However, the Russian translator uses the formal approach until characters get acquainted better, switching later to informality. These different solutions to the same issue suggest that the Russian translator opted for a more naturalizing approach, while the Slovak translator used the exotic informality, which might feel unusual for the reader.

## Conclusion

The article analyses the Slovak and Russian translations of the novel *The Girl who Circumnavigated Fairyland in a Ship of her own making*. Since both languages belong to the Slavic language family and share cultural proximity, our interest was in the degree of similarity in the strategies applied during the translation of a novel that constitutes a challenge for translators due to its complexity. We have chosen Valente’s novel specifically because of its density at the lexical level, which manifests in a frequent usage of cultural phenomena, new words and made-up phenomena resulting from the third culture created by the author. The goal was to compare both translations, highlight the similarities and the differences between them, as well as to stress the common challenges both translators faced. We strived to determine whether it was naturalization or exoticization that prevailed in the Russian and Slovak translations as well as to answer the question as to what degree the translation problems and solutions are similar.

The research proceeded from the analysis of the source text of the book. We identified the text units which might challenge a translator and looked for the solutions undertaken by the Russian and Slovak translators in each case. In the second stage of the research, we compared the solutions found in both target texts. In order to streamline the comparison of the translation strategies, we classified the challenges into several groups, namely proper names, cultural phenomena, and the typological differences between the languages.

Upon analyzing each group separately, we concluded that our hypothesis that similar translation challenges and their solutions will appear in target languages was correct. Both translators faced similar challenges, which prompted analogous responses. In each of the three groups there was only a smaller portion of creative solutions (Tables 1.4, 2.4, 2.5, 3.3, 3.6), where translators disagreed on their solutions. In most cases (Tables 1.1-1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4) the solutions in both languages were identical. Contrary to our prediction, solutions arising from the different alphabetic systems of Slovak and Russian also showed a significant degree of proximity. Overall, both translations had a large number of examples where the right word was in the “wrong” part of the alphabet. It was equally surprising to discover different approaches to the “you” vs. “ty/vy” dichotomy, where only the Russian translator opted to use both pronouns depending on the context. On the other hand, given the fairytale character of the book, it is hard to say whether this approach was obligatory.

Based on the analysis, we observed a stronger tendency for the Russian translator to naturalize, yet the degree of naturalization is minimal and does not impoverish the target text of the cultural reality any more than the Slovak translation. On the whole, both translations can be described as having a higher degree of exoticization. At the same time, according to Popovič (2000), exoticization is a feature relevant to the original text as much as to the translated one. In the case of Valente’s book, the fairy-tale character of the narration predetermined a high degree of exoticization because of the numerous imaginary elements introduced into the narration. These elements make the original text foreign to the recipient of the source text. Therefore, a similar exoticization approach, which introduced alien features in both translations, helped to keep the spirit of the original text, which is one of the primary aims of the translator (Rait-Kovaleva 1965).

To conclude, we are able to say that both translations were qualitatively adequate, since we encountered no omissions or significant modifications of the original meaning. From the viewpoint of translation criticism, it might be of significance to compare translations of this text into languages belonging to the Slavic language family and observe whether the tendencies displayed in Russian and Slovak repeat themselves. Moreover, these tendencies could be sought in more distant languages, such as Chinese, in order to observe the methods adopted for bridging between cultures more distant from the original American.

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