

The Secret Garden:
English to Romanian
Interlingual Translations
(1992-2022)

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Abstract: This study focuses on interlingual translations of the novel *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett, aiming to analyse and compare four of its Romanian translations in order to reveal translation techniques, challenges for translators, differences between translations. We chose four Romanian translations of the novel: one by Cireașa Grecescu from 1992, one by Anca Silaghi from 2008, one by Maria Iliescu from 2020 and another by Andrei Covaciu from 2022. There are four sections which focus on the strengths and weaknesses of each translation, and a fifth section in which we compare the four translations of a certain phrase or sentence from the original. For the comparative section, we chose the examples that reflect difficulties related to cultural aspects.

Keywords: children’s literature, *The Secret Garden*, interlingual translation, culture, adaptation, omission.

Introduction

Frances Hodgson Burnett’s *The Secret Garden* (1911) has been translated multiple times into Romanian. The novel follows the story of Mary Lennox, who is born and raised in a British family living in India during the period of the British Raj (1858-1947). Her life changes when her parents die and she goes to England to live in her uncle’s manor in the moors. The novel focuses on her character development as she finds a secret, abandoned garden and wants to revive it.

For the purpose of this analysis, we selected four translations, based on their availability and the fact that they reflect the phenomenon of mass translations and retranslations that happened in Romania after the 1989 revolution. The novel is now in the public domain and each publishing house that wanted to publish it hired a different translator, so compared to other translated children’s books, it has not undergone frequent reediting.

We will look into the characteristics of each one of them, highlighting their semantic and cultural strengths (marked as “a.”) and weaknesses (marked as “b.” in our analysis). We will also compare them and examine the translation solutions used.

	Title	Translator	Year of Publication	Publishing House
1.	<i>Grădina tăinuită</i>	Cireaşa Grecescu	1992	Arta Grafică
2.	<i>Grădina secretă</i>	Anca Silaghi	2008	Maxim-Bit
3.	<i>Grădina secretă</i>	Maria Iliescu	2020	Corint Junior
4.	<i>Grădina secretă</i>	Andrei Covaciu	2022	Didactica Publishing House

Table 1: Overview of the selected translations

The novel poses a lot of challenges, translation-wise: the use of the Yorkshire dialect and colloquial speech, the cultural aspects related to the United Kingdom and India, or the various grammatical differences between English and Romanian. We base our analysis of translation techniques on Vinay and Darbelnet’s 1958 classification, according to which adaptation is the process of modifying cultural references from the source language to

integrate the translated text into the cultural and linguistic context of the target language. In the realm of children’s literature translation, adaptation is an important technique which ensures that the target audience of the text understands the terminology used and is able to enjoy the experience of reading the novel. The Romanian translators faced the challenge of adapting the novel in order to facilitate young children’s comprehension of the plot.

Translation 1. *Grădina tăinuită* (Grecescu, 1992)

This section focuses on the translation made by Cireașa Grecescu and published in 1992, a translation which shows her skills of accurately conveying the meaning of the original text, while also adapting it to the target audience in order to make it accessible and engaging for the Romanian-speaking readers, both children and adults.

a. Grecescu paid attention to the language registers and rightfully adapted the Yorkshire dialect to Romanian regional speech. The translator’s skills shined the most in the emotionally-charged passages of the book.

Example 1:

Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911)	Cireașa Grecescu (1992)	Literal Back-Translation ¹
<i>The fact was that the fresh wind from the moor had begun to blow the cobwebs out of her young brain and to waken her up a little.</i>	Dar vântul răcoros al mlaștinii începea să măture pânzele de păianjen din cugetul ei, deșteptând-o treptat la viață.	But the cool swamp wind was beginning to sweep the cobwebs from her mind, gradually awakening her to life.

Table 2: Grecescu’s translation of poetic speech

¹ All the literal back-translations into Romanian in the present paper are mine.

Through the choice of words, Grecescu conveys the poetic nature of this sentence. Instead of blowing, the wind is “sweeping the cobwebs” which creates the image of a metaphorical spring cleaning of the sad or angry thoughts from Mary’s mind. The noun “cuget”, which is more often used in poetic or idiomatic contexts, provides the translation with another layer of depth. The use of the adversative conjunction “but” at the beginning marks that this was a clear change for Mary’s way of being.

Example 2:

Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911)	Cîreșă Grecescu (1992)	Literal Back-Translation
<i>He's just fine, is that lad.</i>	Băiatul ăsta-i cu adevărat soi bun.	This boy's truly a good variety / species.

Table 3: Grecescu’s translation of colloquial speech

This is an instance of colloquial speech in the original text which expresses the idea that the “lad” (young boy) is a skilful person (in this context, the fact that Dickon is able to adapt in any situation). The phrase “soi bun” is formed based on the idiomatic phrase “soi rău” (bad variety / species). The use of the noun “soi” which can be employed to refer to types of plants is fitting in the larger context of the book, since it is part of the lexical field of the garden.

b. Grecescu’s work also contains some oversights or mistakes which affect the meaning of the text.

Example 3:

Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911)	Cîreșă Grecescu (1992)	Literal Back-Translation
<i>The guard lighted the lamps in the carriage</i>	Șeful de tren aprinse becurile din vagon	The conductor turned on the light bulbs in the carriage

Table 4: Grecescu’s semantic error

In this example, the translation of “lamps” as “light bulbs” can be considered an error, as the meaning of the text changes. The actions of lighting gas lamps and light bulbs are different. Also, “light bulb” is an anachronism, since it was not common in the period in which the action of the novel takes place.

Example 4:

Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911)	Cireașa Grecescu (1992)	Literal Back-Translation
<i>I'd like to get thee on a pair o' scales</i>	Mi-ar plăcea să văd cum te-ai cățăra pe-o scară dublă	I'd like to see you climb a double ladder

Table 5: Grecescu’s semantic error (2)

Grecescu’s translation fails to convey the meaning of the sentence because of a semantic error probably caused by a confusion of terms. The original text suggests the desire of getting Colin on a pair of scales in order to measure his weight. Meanwhile, the translation refers to the desire of seeing Colin climbing a double ladder, a statement totally unrelated to the context and the logical flow of the text. The translator might have mistaken “scales” for “stairs” and she interpreted it as Colin being strong enough to climb stairs (instead of Colin gaining weight).

Translation 2. *Grădina secretă* (Silaghi, 2008)

Anca Silaghi’s translation published in 2008 offers a different approach to Hodgson Burnett’s text.

a. There are certain meanings which were accurately expressed in Romanian.

Example 5

Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911)	Anca Silaghi (2008)	Literal Back-Translation
<i>and as he crumbled the rich black soil she saw he was sniffing up the scent of it</i>	și în timp ce sfărâma pământul negru și bogat, Mary observă că îl și mirosea	and as he broke up the rich black soil, Mary noticed that he also smelled it

Table 6: Silaghi’s accurate translation

This translation conveys the meaning of crumbling the soil and smelling it, though there is an omission of the personal pronoun “he” (in this case, however, the meaning can be extracted from the wider context of the chapter).

b. In terms of oversights, this translator had the tendency of avoiding writing pronouns, so, for example, instead of “she said” the translation only had “said”. The omission of pronouns or proper nouns related to who does the action can create confusion. Silaghi also struggles with respecting the principles of coherence and cohesion and there are many terminological errors.

Example 6:

Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911)	Anca Silaghi (2008)	Literal Back-Translation
<i>Very soon afterward a bell rang and she rolled up her knitting.</i>	Curând după aceea, sună un clopoțel și răsuci ciorapul croșetat.	Soon after, a bell rang and twisted the crocheted stocking.

Table 7: Silaghi’s omission of personal pronouns

In this particular instance, Silaghi omits once again the pronoun “she” and this distorts the meaning of the sentence. The translation lacks coherence since “a bell” appears to be the subject

of both “rang” and “twisted”, which creates the absurd imagery of a bell twisting the stocking. The verb “răsuci” (to twist) is also not a verb which renders the meaning of “rolled up” in an accurate way. By translating “knitting” as “ciorapul croșetat” the translator does make a reference to the stocking which Martha was said to be working on previously, but it also changes the technique from knitting to crocheting, which is a terminological error.

Example 7:

Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911)	Anca Silaghi (2008)	Literal Back-Translation
<i>In India she had always been attended by her Ayah, who had followed her about and waited on her, hand and foot.</i>	În India fusese mereu însoțită de Ayah, care o urmărea și o servea cu mâini și picioare.	In India she had always been accompanied by Ayah, who followed her and served her with hands and feet.

Table 8: Silaghi’s mistranslation of an idiom

Silaghi’s translation does not convey the meaning of the sentence because it fails to recognise “to wait on someone hand and foot” as an idiom which expresses the idea that the nanny was fulfilling each one of Mary’s requests. Instead, Silaghi translates the idiom literally into Romanian which creates a nonsensical sentence and it could awaken the image of the nanny serving Mary hands and feet on a plate.

Example 8:

Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911)	Tha’ looked like a young plucked crow
Maria Iliescu (2020)	Arătai ca un pui golaș de stăncuță
Literal Back-Translation 1	You looked like a featherless baby jackdaw

Anca Silaghi (2008)	Arătai ca o cioară belită
Literal Back-Translation 2	You looked like a skinned crow

Table 9: A comparison of Silaghi’s translation to Iliescu’s translation

For this example, we’ll compare Silaghi’s translation with Iliescu’s translation as well. The phrase “young plucked crow” is translated as “pui golaș de stăncuță” by Iliescu, a phrase which uses another bird from the Corvidae family, a jackdaw, as a solution to make it sound better to the Romanian audience, no longer having the connotation of the girl resembling a “crow”. But, at most, translating it as “pui golaș de cioară” (featherless baby crow) could have also been an option. Silaghi’s translation, on the other hand, is far from desirable because it uses two terms with negative connotation in Romanian: the word for crow and “belită”, a colloquial and pejorative term.

Translation 3. *Grădina secretă* (Iliescu, 2020)

We will now examine the translation work done by Maria Iliescu, looking at the characteristics of her Romanian version published in 2020.

a) There are many sections which were translated accurately by Iliescu.

Example 9:

Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911)	Maria Iliescu (2020)	Literal Back-Translation
<i>as if they had suddenly found themselves laughing in a church</i>	ca și când s-ar fi aflat într-o biserică, unde liniștea e sfântă	as if they were in a church, where silence is holy)

Table 10: Iliescu’s translation strenghts

In this scene, the children were in the garden and they decided to be silent in order not to disturb the birds building their

nesses and the whole harmony surrounding them. The author expresses this through the comparison with the atmosphere in a church, where laughing is out of place. Iliescu’s idiomatic translation reflects the idea that being noisy in a church is a sign of disrespect. She omits mentioning “laughing”, but she uses the techniques of addition and compensation in the phrase “unde liniştea e sfântă” (where silence is holy).

b. In this translation, there are also oversights and errors. Iliescu has the tendency of omitting parts of sentences and simplifying them – while most times the central meaning is conveyed, the consequence is that the text loses its charm. The translator also avoids using Romanian regional speech to translate the Yorkshire dialect, so the readers need to imagine that the characters are speaking in a non-standard way. Some readers might even be left thinking that “speaking Yorkshire” is something completely different from speaking English.

Example 10:

Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911)	Maria Iliescu (2020)	Literal Back-Translation
<i>If the pretty wife had been alive she might have made things cheerful by being something like her own mother and by running in and out and going to parties as she had done in frocks “full of lace.”</i>	Dacă ar fi trăit soția lui, probabil că în casă ar fi fost multă veselie și petreceri în rochii “pline de dantelă”.	If his wife had lived, there would probably have been much merriment in the house and parties in dresses “full of lace”.

Table 11: Iliescu’s mistranslation through omission

In this example, Ilescu omits most of the original sentence, not translating the idea that the wife could have resembled Mary’s mother or the fact that the wife was “pretty”. There is also a mistranslation, since the original mentions the wife going to parties, while the translation implies that the house is the place where parties would have taken place. Also, the wife is the one wearing the lacy dresses in the original, while the translation implies that the party guests would wear lacy dresses.

Example 11:

Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911)	Maria Ilescu (2020)	Literal Back-Translation
“ <i>Aye, that tha' mun,</i> ” said Mary quite seriously.	Da, trebuie să le vezi, zise Mary, foarte serioasă, în dialect.	Yes, you must see them, said Mary, very seriously, in dialect.

Table 12: Ilescu’s translation of regional speech

As mentioned before, Ilescu does not translate the Yorkshire dialect through the use of Romanian regional speech. In this example, she translates the phrase “Aye, that tha’ mun” in standard Romanian and then adds the intratextual gloss “in dialect” to compensate and to convey the idea that Mary did not speak in Standard English. This makes the text not as expressive as the original. Another change is the use of the adverb “foarte” (very) as a translation of “quite”, which suggests a higher degree of seriousness than the original.

Translation 4. *Grădina secretă* (Covaciu, 2022)

The 2022 translation of *The Secret Garden* is attributed to Andrei Covaciu, who also added many footnotes in which he explains the most difficult terms and some cultural aspects.

a. In terms of strengths, Covaciu’s translation is characterised by a rich vocabulary and a good rendering of humour. The presence of the Yorkshire dialect is translated through the use of many phrases and idioms which resonate well with the Romanian audience.

Example 12:

Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911)	Andrei Covaciu (2022)	Literal Back-Translation
<i>“My word! she’s a plain little piece of goods! ”</i>	Aoleu, ce mai podoabă mi-ați adus!	Oh my, what an ornament you've brought me!

Table 13: Covaciu’s translation of regional speech

This idiomatic translation conveys the meaning of the original really well and it sounds natural in Romanian. It expresses Mrs. Medlock’s surprise and her perception of Mary’s appearance. The original uses the derogatory phrase “piece of goods” and the Romanian word “podoabă” (ornament) is used here in a derogatory and ironic way, being an accurate and expressive translation.

b. The richness of the vocabulary is also Covaciu’s biggest weakness, because he uses obscure terms and mixes the languages registers in a way in which neologisms can be found next to regional terms. Regional terms are not only used when the characters speak in Yorkshire, but also when there is no particular need for them (“slapped” translated as “trage o scatoalcă”, even though “a pălmui” or “a da o palmă” could have been used as the standard Romanian terms which do not have any additional connotations). As a consequence, the text is not accessible to the target audience, Romanian children, who might become

discouraged by the need to search multiple words in the dictionary.

Example 13:

Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911)	Andrei Covaciu (2022)	Literal Back-Translation
<i>lulled by the splashing of the rain against the windows</i>	ploaia care bătea în geamuri având asupra ei un efect soporific	the rain beating on the windows had a soporific effect on her

Table 14: Covaciu’s use of neologisms

This sentence describes the calming effect that the rain has on the tired child, helping her fall asleep. Covaciu’s translation uses the verb “bătea” (beating) which describes a stronger sound made by the rain on the window than “to splash”. The use of the adjective “soporific” is not required by the context, since the original can be rephrased in multiple ways in Romanian without the need to use such a difficult word for the target audience. Moreover, the phrase “efect soporific” (soporific effect) is usually used in a medicinal context, and it is more often found on the labels of medicine or tea packages. Its use in this translation makes the text sound less metaphoric and more technical or clinical, changing the tone of the sentence.

Example 14:

Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911)	Andrei Covaciu (2022)	Literal Back-Translation
<i>Dickon worked Magic, of course good Magic</i>	Dickon era un fel de magician – unul benign, evident	Dickon was a kind of magician - a benign one, obviously

Table 15: Covaciu’s use of neologisms (2)

This translation rends the original meaning in a different way. The sentence “Dickon worked Magic” has a double meaning: it refers to the “Magic” which is mentioned in the text and it is based on the idiomatic expression “to work magic” which suggests an amazing skill at something and the power to bring positive change. The translation conveys the meaning of Dickon being similar to a magician, but it does not render it completely. The phrase “good Magic” is translated as “unul benign” (a benign one), having Dickon as its referent, not “magic”. Translating “good” as “benign” can be considered a mistranslation. While “benign” ultimately comes from the Latin adverb “bene” (good) and it suggests a positive characteristic or a positive effect, it is mostly used as a medical term and it feels out-of-place in the context of Dickon being on the side of the “good Magic”. Its most used collocation in Romanian is “tumoare benignă” (benign tumour), which makes the Romanian readers prone to react in a surprised way seeing the term “benign” used in this context. Finally, children might be left confused by the meaning of the sentence.

Comparison of the Translations: The Translation of Cultural Terms

The Secret Garden showcases elements of British culture, notably exemplified by the placement of the manor in the moors, a form of landscape characteristic to the United Kingdom. Besides that, there are elements of Indian culture, related to the period in which Mary lived there. Both type of terms represented a translation challenge.

Example 15:

Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911)	<i>He’s got a fine lordly way with him, hasn’t he? You’d think he</i>
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	<i>was a whole Royal Family rolled into one—Prince Consort and all.</i>
Cireașă Grecescu (1992)	Chiar că se poartă ca un mare boier. Ce zici? Parcă toată familia regală, Prințul consort și ceilalți sunt cuprinși în mica lui făptură!
Anca Silaghi (2008)	are o alură fină de gentleman, nu-i așa? Ai zice că e o întreagă familie regală concentrată într-un singur Prinț Consort, cu tot ce implică asta.
Maria Iliescu (2020)	se poartă ca un mare senior, nu crezi? Ai zice că întruchipează o întreagă familie regală – plus Prințul Consort.
Andrei Covaciu (2022)	Ce atitudine princiară, nu-i așa? Ai zice că o întreagă familie regală s-a reunit într-un singur om... cu tot cu prințul moștenitor.

Table 16: Translation of “Prince Consort” and “lordly”

The original sentence refers to a particular historical and cultural context: the British Royal Family and the existence of a Prince Consort (in this case, Queen Victoria’s husband). The term “Prince Consort” constituted a translation difficulty for the Romanian translators, since the concept of the husband of the queen who is not called “king” is foreign to the Romanian audience and it might also seem strange. Covaciu translates “Prince Consort” as “prințul moștenitor” (the crown prince), which obviously refers to another person from a Royal Family, to the child of the queen instead of to her husband. He either did not understand the cultural context behind the word or he might have wanted to use a term which is easier to understand by the reader. The others translate it as “Prinț Consort” (Prince Consort) and

they do not explain the term. The sentence is not correctly rendered in Silaghi’s translation, which implies that Colin was similar to a Prince Consort (“You’d think there was a whole royal family concentrated in one Prince Consort, with all that implies.”). The term “lordly” refers to the concept of “lords”, but their existence is not part of Romania’s history and culture. None of the four translators used the borrowed term “lord” in their versions. Grecescu translates this adverb as “ca un mare boier” (like a great boyar) referring to the existence of the class of the “boieri” on Romania’s territory, in medieval times. In Iliescu’s version the adverb is translated as “ca un mare senior” (like a big lord), referring again to medieval rulers, but, in this case, to rulers specific to Western Europe. Covaciu translates it as “princiară” (princely), making reference to the attitude of a prince. Silaghi uses the word “gentleman”, a borrowed term which exists in Romanian and it makes the reader think about the cultural landscape of the English people. However, the phrase used in Silaghi’s translation, “o alură fină de gentleman” (a fine gentlemanly allure) does not convey the meaning of the original which refers to Colin acting in an authoritarian manner, not to him having the characteristics of a gentleman.

Example 16:

Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911)	<i>five miles across Missel Moor</i>
Cireaşa Grecescu (1992)	opt kilometri prin mlaştinile Missel
Anca Silaghi (2008)	cinci mile prin stepa Missel
Maria Iliescu (2020)	cinci mile de mers prin Missel Moor
Andrei Covaciu (2022)	cinci mile prin mlaştina Missel

Table 17: Translation of “miles” and “Missel Moor”

Using the technique of adaptation, Grecescu translates “miles” as “kilometri” (kilometres) and converts the value, transforming it from “five” to “eight”. On the other hand, the other three translators keep the mile as the unity of measure, being more source-oriented. A translation problem is related to the word “moor”, because the terms “swamp”, “marsh” and “moor” are all under the same umbrella in Romanian, being all translated as “mlaștină”. The moor is a type of landscape which is particular to the British Isles and its referent has no direct equivalent in Romania. Grecescu and Covaciu translate “moor” as “mlaștină”, which is not entirely wrong, but it also does not render all the characteristics of the landscape, flora and fauna of the moor. Silaghi uses the term “stepa” (steppe), which shares the characteristic of being an open landscape as the moor, but it remains a vastly different form of landscape and one which is not characteristic for Yorkshire. Iliescu leaves the term “moor” as it is, not giving any details about what it means, which could make the readers think that “Missle Moor” is simply the name of the place where Mary is going.

Example 17:

Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911)	<i>a well-trained fine young lady's maid</i>
Cireașa Grecescu (1992)	o fată în casă bine instruită
Anca Silaghi (2008)	o damă de companie bine educată, a unei domnișoare finuțe
Maria Iliescu (2020)	o slujnică mai rafinată și cu mai multă experiență
Andrei Covaciu (2022)	o cameristă calificată

Table 18: Translation of “lady’s maid”

Some household functions mentioned in the novel are typical to British households. In this case, “a lady’s maid” is a

specific type of maid which had proper training to attend to a lady's needs. Grecescu's translation ("a well-trained girl in the house") uses the noun phrase "fată în casă" (girl in the house), commonly used in Romanian to refer to a young servant. The term does not convey the same meaning as a "lady's maid", since it is more general and it could refer to any young female servant in the house, but it remains a good translation choice, especially when compared to other translations. Iliescu's version (literally: a more refined and experienced maid) is accurate as well, though, once again, it uses a general term, since there is no direct equivalent for "lady's maid" in Romanian. On the other hand, Covaciu and Silaghi's translations use terms which are inaccurate in this context. Covaciu's version uses the adjective "calificată" (qualified) in combination with the noun "cameristă" (chambermaid), which sounds like a phrase someone would find in a 21st century résumé. The term "cameristă" has an out-of-use / archaic meaning which would be a good translation of "a lady's maid". However, nowadays the term is used to refer to hotel workers who clean the room and there is a high chance that this will be the first referent in the reader's mind. Silaghi's version (literally: a well-educated companion of a fine young lady) provides two subjects of analysis. First of all, the term "damă de companie" does not refer to a lady's maid in Romanian, but it is a quite old-fashioned term which refers to a person hired to entertain and take care of an elderly woman or an ill woman coming from a wealthy or aristocratic family. The term is sometimes used to refer to a female escort as well, which gives the phrase a problematic double meaning. Second of all, Silaghi interprets the sentence differently, as "a well-trained maid of a fine young lady" instead of "a lady's maid who is well-trained, fine, and young". Her interpretation is inaccurate when considering the larger context of the paragraph.

Example 18:

Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911)	<i>th' scullery-maid</i>
Cireaşa Grecescu (1992)	fata de la spălătorie
Anca Silaghi (2008)	ajutorul de bucătar
Maria Iliescu (2020)	fata de la bucătărie
Andrei Covaciu (2022)	fata care spală vase

Table 19: Translation of “scullery-maid”

This example presents a difficulty related to a certain position occupied by a servant in a British Manor, a position without direct equivalent into Romanian, but one which can be described as the person which washed the dishes and helped clean the kitchen. Covaciu’s translation is the closest to the original: “fata care spală vase” (the girl who washes the dishes). Iliescu’s translation (literally: the girl from the kitchen) expresses the idea that the young female servant was working in the kitchen, though it could have been anything from helping around to cooking. Silaghi’s translation (literally: the cook's helper) does not specify if it is a female or male worker and it is a term most often used to refer to someone who would prepare the ingredients and help the chef cook (in a restaurant). On the other hand, Grecescu’s translation (literally: the girl from the laundry) is misleading and inaccurate. While the Romanian word “spălătorie” comes from the verb “a spăla” (to wash) which is used both for “washing dishes” and “washing clothes”, the noun “spălătorie” refers strictly to the room in which people do the laundry.

Example 19:

Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911)	ayah	Mem Sahib	Missie Sahib	bungalow
Cireaşa Grecescu (1992)	ayah	Stăpâna	Mica Stăpână	casă
Anca Silaghi (2008)	Ayah	Mem	Missie	bungalou

		Sahib	Sahib	
Maria Ilescu (2020)	ayah	Mem Sahib	Missie Sahib	vilă
Andrei Covaciu (2022)	ayah	Mem Sahib	Missie Sahib	bungalow

Table 20: Translation of some terms related to India

Grecescu used the word “ayah” for the Indian nanny, explaining the term in the text after mentioning it for the first time. She did not keep “Mem Sahib” and “Missie Sahib”, preferring to translate these terms as the Romanian versions of “mistress” and “little mistress”, which shows an approach that is target-text oriented. Ilescu also adds an explanation after the first mention of the word ayah (“ayah – o dădacă indiană”, literally: “ayah – an Indian nanny) and she does the same for the other two terms, explaining that “Mem Sahib” is the way in which the lady of the house was called, while “Missie Sahib” was term in which Mary, the little mistress of the house, was addressed. Covaciu added a footnote in which he explained that “ayah” means “doică” (nurse) and it is a term used in India and Pakistan. He also translated “the ayah” as “ayaha”, adding an inflection to the word as if it was a Romanian word. He added a footnote for “Mem Sahib”, explaining that the term was used to name the wife of a British official, but “Missie Sahib” was left as such, without further clarification. In Silaghi’s translation, however, the terms are kept as in the original but without any further explanation related to their meaning, and “ayah” is capitalized and written as “Ayah”, which might create the confusion that this was the first name of the nanny. Keeping these terms as they are shows an approach which is source-text oriented.

As for the translation of “bungalow”, we can observe that Covaciu used the borrowed term “bungalow”, just like in the original. Silaghi used the word “bungalou”, a Romanian version

of the English term. Both Grecescu and Iliescu chose to make the term more accessible to the audience and translated it as “casă” (house) and “vilă” (mansion) respectively, though these choices lose a part of the local colour of the text and the specific characteristics associated with bungalows as opposed to regular houses.

Example 20:

Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911)	<i>They were of different sizes, and some had their mahouts or palanquins on their backs.</i>
Cireaşa Grecescu (1992)	Erau de tot felul: unii purtau pe spinare palanchinul, un fel de jilț cu streășină și înconjurat cu perdele, ce ține loc de șa, iar pe grumazul lor gros era așezat cornacul, cum se numește conducătorul acestor animale uriașe.
Anca Silaghi (2008)	Erau de diferite mărimi și unii îi aveau pe conducători sau pe palanchini în spinare.
Maria Iliescu (2020)	Erau de diverse dimensiuni, iar unii aveau în spate palanchine.
Andrei Covaciu (2022)	Aveau diferite dimensiuni, iar unii purtau în cârcă mahuți sau palanchine. “mahut – (India) persoană însărcinată să poarte de grijă elefanților (n.trad.)” “palanchin – lectică folosită în Orient (n.trad.)”

In the original sentence, the terms “mahouts” and “palanquins” represented a translation challenge, since the terms are not often used in Romanian and they come from a different cultural background. Grecescu’s approach is to explain the objects (the ivory elephants) using a lot of details, more than the original, in order to make the text more approachable for the target audience. She explains the term “palanquin” as “un fel de jilț cu streășină și înconjurat cu perdele, ce ține loc de șa” (a sort of chair that has a roof and it is surrounded by curtains, one that takes the place of a saddle), then she translates “mahout” using the term “cornac”, the correct Romanian equivalent, then giving further explanations – “conducătorul acestor animale uriașe” (the guide of these huge animals) – and mentioning that the mahout sits on the elephant’s neck. Meanwhile, Silaghi’s translation can be misleading, as she translates “mahout” as “conducător” (leader) and she phrases the sentence in such a way that it might be interpreted as if the palanquins are also some kind of people who ride elephants. She does not explain the terms. Iliescu’s translation also does not give further explanations and, moreover, it omits the terms “mahout”, avoiding its translation. On the other hand, Covaciu uses the terms “mahuți” and “palanchine” in the text, using footnotes to explain the words, as he usually does. The word “cornut” could have been used in this context, but Covaciu’s choice was to borrow the term “mahout” and coined a Romanian version, “mahut”. A problem would be that “mahut” exists with other meanings in the Romanian dictionary (it refers to a type of fabric or to a type of bird), and this could confuse the readers.

Conclusion

This analysis presented a series of examples from four Romanian translations of the novel *The Secret Garden*. We looked at the words, phrases and sentences which proved to be difficult to

translate from English into Romanian. Our research can serve as a valuable resource for a diverse audience, including translators, language teachers, linguists, and professionals engaged in intercultural studies. We found inspiring translation solutions and creative wordplay in the analyzed translations. We also focused on translation oversights or mistakes, in order to understand the differences between the two languages and for translators to avoid similar situations in the future.

We find Grecescu's translation the most successful one because it is well-adapted to the target audience, it respects the original, it renders poetic language and humour well, it expresses the linguistic charm of the original, and it has the smallest number of mistakes. Iliescu's translation was the second most successful. It conveyed the meaning of the English novel in a way in which readers who did not read the original would feel satisfied. The omission of certain phrases and the lack of regional speech when it was needed mark this translation as less expressive and colourful than Burnett's text. Covaciu's translation had a really big potential to be a fun reading experience. Covaciu's text is very expressive, humorous, full of life. The great majority of sentences are rendered in a natural way in Romanian. However, the mix of old-fashioned terms and neologisms, of regionalisms and bookish terms, make it difficult to follow by children. His peculiar word choices make the text seem outlandish at times, even for adult readers. Silaghi's translation is unfortunately deficient in various aspects, which makes it the least successful one out of these four. As shown in our analysis, there were many inaccuracies, terminological and semantic errors, misuse of language registers and lack of research. Many errors are caused by her misunderstanding the source text, which implies a limited proficiency of the source language.

The comparison of the translation of cultural aspects focused on a number of translation difficulties and the ways in which they were solved (or not). It further showcased each translator's approach and the fact that each translation has its own strengths and weaknesses.

Interlingual translations are met with many challenges related to the specific ways in which actions are expressed in the two languages, but also related to the different cultural backgrounds. These translations introduce the Romanian audience to elements of British culture, playing an important role in intercultural education. Our analysis and comparison of the four translations has practical applications in the field of English to Romanian translation studies. It could be used by teachers as a didactic material, by translators who can learn from the successes and mistakes of other translators, by linguists who study the similarities and differences between the two languages.

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