

## **“Do you ever stop talking?”**

A comparative analysis of idiolects in Casey McQuiston’s *Red, White & Royal Blue* and its  
Finnish translation *Punaista, valkoista ja kuninkaansinistä*

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Master’s Thesis

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The subject of this thesis is the translation of idiolects in Casey McQuiston’s 2019 novel *Red, White & Royal Blue*, translated into Finnish by Johanna Auranheimo with the name *Punaista, valkoista ja kuninkaansinistä* (2022). Idiolect refers, in this context, to a literary character’s individual linguistic variety in dialogue, more specifically recurring features that are used as characterisation cues. The aim of the study is to examine how lexical idiolectal features in the novel are translated into Finnish, and how the translation impacts characterisation.

The theoretical background for the thesis draws on studies in fictional characterisation, literary dialogue and the translation of fictional speech varieties. The most important authors for the formation of theory were Culpeper (2001) and Eder et. al (2010) with their works on characterisation, Page ([1973] 1988) and Hatim and Mason (1990, 1997) on literary dialogue and idiolects, and Berezowski (1997) and Rosa (2012, 2013) on the translation of non-standard speech. As for Finnish studies on literary dialogue and its translation, Nevalainen (2003), Tiittula and Nuolijärvi (2013) and Koivisto and Nykänen (2013) are referred to.

The material for this thesis consists of 123 lines of direct speech selected from dialogues between the main characters of the novel, Alex Claremont-Diaz and Prince Henry. The lines were categorised according to the ‘speaking’ character, after which the idiolectal lexis in them was classified into three categories: swearwords and vulgar slang, regional features and recurring words and phrases. The analysis is qualitative and comparative, examining features from the source text and comparing them to their translated equivalents. The translation strategies were partly based on Berezowski’s (1997) classification of strategies used in translation of dialects, namely colloquialisation and neutralisation. Three additional strategies – equivalent translation, omission and recategorization – were named.

The results indicate that, in spite of equivalent translation being the most prevalent strategy, the translator has not preserved idiolectal features in either their recurrence or uniqueness to a certain character. As the speech presentation of the characters becomes less individualised in translation, the indirect characterisation provided by the dialogue is reduced. Further studies are required to discover how well the findings of this thesis correspond to other Finnish translations of literary idiolects.

**Key words:** characterisation, fiction, idiolect, literary dialogue, prose, translation of dialogue

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## 1 Introduction

Literary characters are constructed as persons through multiple methods, with one of the most central means being their ‘voices’ in dialogue (Brumme and Espunya 2012, 23). A character’s voice, that is, the fictional impression of their ‘real’ speech (e.g. Page [1973] 1988, 3) may represent a certain dialect, sociolect or other non-standard variety of language. The author may also opt for more individual voices, or idiolects, which do not have ‘real’ counterparts outside of the fictional universe. This thesis studies such literary idiolects in Casey McQuiston’s novel *Red, White and Royal Blue* (St Martin’s Griffin 2019) and its Finnish translation *Punaista, valkoista ja kuninkaansinistä* (Tammi Publishers 2022) by Johanna Auranheimo. The aim of this study is to examine how idiolects are used in the novel to characterise and distinguish between its two central characters, and how those idiolects are recreated in translation. I intend to answer the following research questions: how are lexical idiolectal features translated, and what is the translation’s impact on characterisation?

The theoretical framework for this thesis is a combination of studies on fictional characterisation, literary dialogue and the translation of fictional speech. Studies concerning fictional characterisation include Culpeper (2001) and Eder et. al (eds., 2010). The field of literary dialogue has been influenced by Mikhail Bakhtin’s writings from the 1930s (published in Bakhtin and Holquist (ed.) [1981] 2008) and further defined by Page ([1973] 1988). Finnish research on the subject has been carried out by Nykänen and Koivisto (eds., 2013) and Tiittula and Nuolijärvi (2013), to name a few. The translation of fictional dialogue and non-standard varieties has been studied, among others, by Hatim and Mason (1990, 1997), Brumme and Espunya (eds., 2012) and Rosa (2012, 2013). Finnish translation of literary speech has been the subject of research by Nevalainen (2003) and Tiittula and Nuolijärvi (2013), for example.

This thesis is a contribution to the abundant number of studies focusing on the translation of fictional speech. However, studies concerning the translation of literary idiolects, as compared to dialects and sociolects, are still few and far between. A few include Hatim and Mason’s (1997) analysis of the translation of idiolectal tags in Shaw’s *Pygmalion* and López-Narváez’s 2023 study on the translation of characterising speech features in Hardy’s *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*. Recent studies on the translation of idiolects with Finnish as the target language seem to be lacking. Most notably, my research material is from a novel that has not been a subject of academic discussion so far.

This thesis is a case study on character dialogue in *Red, White & Royal Blue*, a contemporary romance novel focusing on the unexpected relationship between the son of the U.S. President and a prince of England. By studying the individual and contrasting idiolects of the novel's main characters Alex Claremont-Diaz and Prince Henry of Wales, I analyse how they are characterised through the dialogue and its translation. My research material is compiled of 123 lines selected from direct, quoted conversations between the two characters, i.e. speech presentation called *direct speech* by Page ([1973] 1988, 25). It is dialogue that “quotes both form and content of the character's discourse” (Rosa 2013, 231) and is therefore ideal for the present study.

Although the main object of my research is direct speech presentation in *Red, White & Royal Blue*, I also refer to the narrative when it is relevant for character analysis. The novel is very dialogue-driven, yet the characters' speech is constantly interjected by the narrator's voice, as the narrator is the “mediator of dialogue” (Koivisto and Nykänen 2016, 6). Moreover, since characterisation is at the centre of this study and the characters are not only defined by their quoted dialogue, but narrative descriptions as well, it is important to take the narrative into account.

This is a comparative and qualitative study that examines differences between the characters' idiolects, both in the original novel and the translation. For the purposes of this study, only lexical and phrasal features are taken into account. I discuss these idiolectal features in three categories: swearwords and vulgar slang, regional features and recurring words and phrases. Based on the analysis, I have divided the results according to five translation strategies, partly after Berezowski (1997): equivalent translation, neutralisation, colloquialisation, omission and recategorization.

This thesis consists of five chapters. The second chapter presents the theoretical background to my research, defining the central terms and concepts based on previous research in the fields of literary characterisation, fictional dialogue and the translation of fictional speech, especially the translation of idiolects and other non-standard varieties. Chapter 3 lays out the research material and the methods used in the analysis. It introduces the novel and its translation, as well as the categories of the analysis and the translation strategies. Chapter 4 is dedicated to discussing the results of the analysis, beginning with a brief character study on Alex and Henry, followed by a comparative analysis of the characters' idiolects, illustrating the differences in their speech through examples from the original dialogue and the

corresponding translations. The fourth chapter ends with a discussion of the results, summarising the distribution of the translation strategies and explaining the translation's impact on idiolects. Finally, chapter 5 presents the conclusions of the thesis, answering the research questions, recognising limitations of the study and suggesting possible directions to pursue in the future.

## 2 Theoretical background

### 2.1 Fictional characterisation

The term ‘characterisation’ can be defined in multiple ways. In the narrowest sense, it is used to refer to the “stable properties” of a character, mainly personality traits and physical features that are described directly (Eder et al. 2010, 30–31). However, characterisation can also include the character’s circumstances, actions and relationships, which are often depicted more indirectly (ibid.). Most broadly understood, characterisation includes all the aforementioned character traits, as well as the story’s temporal and spatial settings and events as they connect to the character – in short, everything related to the character in some manner (ibid.). In this thesis, I use the second definition when examining characterisation, as in addition to personality traits, it also accounts for the character’s status and relations to other characters, which are significant in my material.

Chatman ([1978] 1986, 125–127) describes a character as a “paradigm of traits”, traits being adjectives that can be used to describe a certain character. These adjectives can be explicitly used in the story or implied through the character’s actions. Chatman ([1978] 1986, 126) also notes that the character may not possess the same traits throughout the story, as changes in their environment and circumstances can lead the character to become braver, wiser or more open-minded than they were at the beginning of the narrative, for example.

As mentioned above, characterisation is often divided into direct and indirect characterisation, or modes of characterisation (Eder et al. 2010, 32). In direct characterisation, information about a character is stated explicitly in the text (ibid.), as in “[h]e knows he talks too much, hopeless at moderating his feelings, which he usually hides under ten layers of charm” (McQuiston [2019] 2022, 69). Indirect characterisation, in contrast, provides information in a more implicit manner, so that it can be inferred from a character’s actions whether they are smart, heroic or morally corrupt, for example (Eder et al. 2010, 32). However, direct and indirect characterisations are not strict opposites but rather exist on a continuum (Eder et al. 2010, 33).

Culpeper (2001, 75–76) presents a model of three social category groups, which can be used in perceiving real people as well as characters. These groups are *personal* categories, *social role* categories and *group membership* categories. Personal categories concern the most individual attributes, such as a person’s traits, habits, interests, preferences and goals.

The second of Culpeper's (2001, 76) groups is social role categories, which consist of kinship (family) roles, relational roles (what people are to each other, e.g. classmates, spouses) and occupational roles. Naturally, social roles are subject to frequent change and inevitable overlap. One may become an aunt in addition to being a sister, business partners may become business rivals and a dancer might change careers and become an actor. The final group is group membership categories, which includes information regarding a person or character's sex, age, nationality, race, social class and religion (Culpeper 2001, 76). While Culpeper does not list gender or sexual orientation (it should be noted that his list is not meant to be exhaustive), I would include them in this group, as the latter is especially relevant in the present study. I return to these categories in Chapter 4.1.

Characters can be subject to *self-characterisation* or *altero-characterisation*, depending on who is describing them and connecting properties to them (Eder et al. 2010, 33). Self-characterisation occurs when a character describes their own traits, while in altero-characterisation, it is the other characters, or the narrator, who characterise another character (ibid.). These modes of characterisation often occur concurrently, as subjective altero-characterisation implicitly reveals something about the speaker as well (ibid.). Culpeper (2001, 167–172) uses the terms *self-presentation* and *other-presentation* for the same devices, noting that the context where characters speak about themselves or others is crucial in judging their reliability. Using Shakespeare's plays as examples, Culpeper differentiates between self-presentation given when other characters are present, and self-presentation of a character who is alone (such as in a soliloquy). Regarding other-presentation, Culpeper remarks that it is important to evaluate the motivation of the characteriser: if, for example, they are established as a rival of the character they are describing, they could well be lying about that character for their own advantage. The characterisation is more likely to be 'true' if it is repeated consistently by multiple characters.

## 2.2 Fictional dialogue

Fictional dialogue is a term used for the representation of speech in all forms of fiction, such as the novel, drama, film and television. As my study concerns dialogue in a novel, I primarily refer to research discussing speech representation in prose fiction. Literary dialogue is defined by Koivisto and Nykänen (2013, 11) as a discussion between two or more

characters whose lines are conventionally distinguished from the narration by quotation marks or other signifiers of quoted speech.

A major influence in the field of literary dialogue were the writings of Mikhail Bakhtin, a Russian literary critic and philosopher (Thomas 2012, 4). In his essay “Discourse in the Novel” (English translation published in Holquist (ed.) [1981] 2008), Bakhtin introduces the term *heteroglossia* (*raznorečie*), which refers to the diversity of voices present in the novel. To Bakhtin, this variation of linguistic and stylistic elements is the very definition of the novel as a genre (Bakhtin [1981] 2008, 262–263). Another defining factor is the presence of a “speaking person” with a discourse of their own (Bakhtin [1981] 2008, 332–333). The opposing force to heteroglossia is *unitary language*, or ‘correct,’ normative language. However, as Bakhtin notes, a centralised, “unitary” language is itself a part of the heteroglossia of languages, rather than separate from it or above it (Bakhtin [1981] 2008, 270, 272). What sets novelistic heteroglossia apart from “real-life” diversity of languages, according to Bakhtin ([1981] 2008, 300) is its artistic intent.

Bakhtin ([1981] 2008, 301, 315) presents character speech as one “compositional form” for constructing fictional heteroglossia. For him, character speech is not only found in direct quotations, but also in “authorial speech” or narration (e.g. Bakhtin [1981] 2008, 319–320). Bakhtin uses the term “character zone” to refer to the vast “field of action for a character’s voice” (Bakhtin [1981] 2008, 316) that crosses the boundaries of quoted dialogue between the characters. Bakhtin distinguishes between three methods of representing character dialogue: *direct speech*, *indirect speech* and *quasi-direct speech* (Bakhtin [1981] 2008, 320). However, he does not further define or explore these terms.

While I agree that the scope of fictional characters’ speech representation is broader than just their direct dialogue, I disagree with the idea of “authorial speech” that blends in with character speech (Bakhtin [1981] 2008, 316). After all, almost everything in the literary work is constructed by the author, including the character dialogue. But it should not be assumed that even ‘neutral’ narration not interspersed with a character’s voice represents the author’s thoughts and opinions.

Literary dialogue always serves a function in the context of the novel or other fictional text. Koivisto and Nykänen (2013, 16–18) categorise dialogues as having episodic, characterising, thematic and argumentative functions. Episodic dialogue carries the purpose of telling the

story and moving the plot forward by revealing the aims of the characters and the relationships between them. Characterising dialogue, which is the focus of this study, exposes a character's traits and is often linguistically non-standard. Thematic dialogue has symbolic functions and explores the theme(s) of the fictional text, while argumentative dialogue represents, on one hand, literal arguments between the characters, but on the other hand, may also represent the ideology of the work as a whole (Koivisto and Nykänen 2013, 18–19). These functions naturally overlap and appear simultaneously.

Fictional dialogue always serves as a representation of 'real' speech, even if it seems 'authentic' – as Tiittula and Nuolijärvi (2013, 11) state, there are no real-life counterparts for literary speech, as it is a construction in the world of fiction. Page ([1973] 1988, 7–10) presents three reasons for the 'inaccuracy' of fictional speech. The first reason is the spontaneity of real conversation, with its errors and filler words, being difficult for the writer to reproduce and the reader to understand. The second explanation concerns the presence of context: in real life this is usually provided by the situation, so that the speakers are spared the need of explicating everything they refer to, whereas in fiction more context is needed, making the dialogue more 'unnatural'. The third and final reason is that the written medium cannot recreate all the phonological elements in spoken language (ibid.).

Fictional speech representation can take various forms that serve different functions. The categories of speech representation, as named by Page ([1973] 1988, 37), are presented in the next subsection, followed by a further examination of direct speech.

### 2.2.1 Direct speech

Page ([1973] 1988, 37) expands on the categories of fictional speech representation. While Bakhtin ([1981] 2008, 320) only mentions direct, indirect and quasi-direct speech, Page presents eight types of fictional speech: direct speech, *free direct speech*, indirect speech, *free indirect speech*, 'submerged' speech, 'parallel' indirect speech, 'coloured' indirect speech and 'slipping', which takes place when indirect speech turns into direct within a sentence (Page [1973] 1988, 37). As can be seen, most of these are types of indirect speech. The focus of this study, however, is dialogue presented as direct speech, or utterances that are typically quoted exactly as 'spoken' by the characters (Page [1973] 1988, 25). Direct speech is often indicated by the use of quotation marks and a verb of speech (McHale 2014, 813), as in ““For Christ's sake,” Henry says” (McQuiston [2019] 2022, 272).

Page ([1973] 1988, 30–33) lists three conventions typical for direct speech presentation. The first one is that direct speech is usually assumed to be ‘accurate’ in conveying the exact utterances of the characters, even when they are depicted to have been ‘spoken’ a long time before the narrative takes place. The second convention concerns textual cues, such as quotation marks, and the presumption that their use always denotes ‘spoken’ dialogue. The third convention is that the sentences contained inside quotation marks do not necessarily represent a continuous, uninterrupted utterance, as “the novelist is permitted to conflate into a single speech what must probably [...] have been uttered as several separate speeches” (Page [1973] 1988, 31).

Direct speech gives more focus to the characters’ voices when compared to other forms of speech representation, such as indirect speech and free indirect speech (Rosa 2013, 236). However, like all fictional speech, direct speech is used deliberately by the author and as such, is not free of narrational interference (McHale 2014, 813).

### 2.2.2 Idiolects in fiction

Idiolect is concisely defined in *A Dictionary of Varieties in English* by Hickey (2014, 151) as “[t]he language of an individual as opposed to that of a group”. While every person’s speech is impacted by their social, regional and generational environment, each individual’s style of speaking is distinct from that of others. A person’s idiolect is formed by their use of grammar, recurring lexicon and phonological features (Page [1973] 1988, 97). According to Hatim and Mason (1997, 102), “[a]n idiolect subsumes features from all the other aspects of variation and [...] has its origin in straightforward dialectal use of language envisaged along geographical, historical, or social lines”. Thus, rather than being completely distinct from dialect or other speech variants shared by a group of people, idiolect often includes features from such variants.

In fiction, idiolects serve many purposes, perhaps the most obvious being distinction between different characters (Page [1973] 1988, 99). With no visual elements, a character can only be constructed via language, and, according to Page (ibid.), who I am inclined to agree with, dialogue is a more powerful method of characterisation than narrative description. Identifying characters through their style of speech was favoured by nineteenth-century writers, such as Charles Dickens, whose novels were often initially published serially in magazines, making readers wait for the continuation (ibid.). As such, it was beneficial for the readers to recognise

and remember characters through their idiolect. The distinguishing speech feature can be, for example, a certain repeated word or phrase, a particular register, use of unique syntax, or a combination of the above (Page [1973] 1988, 100).

Hatim and Mason (1997, 103) categorise idiolects into transient and durable, referring to idiolectal recurrence in the character's speech, as well as functional and non-functional, meaning the purposefulness of a certain idiolectal feature. A functional feature is one that is important to characterisation and has a systematic purpose for appearing in a character's speech (*ibid.*). The focus of this thesis are functional features that are often recurring as well, such as the intensifier *fucking* in the protagonist Alex's speech.

It must be noted that the character's idiolect is not always 'realistic' in the sense of reflecting the character's stated background. Using the novels of Charles Dickens as an example, Page ([1973] 1988, 104) describes the use of speech "determined not by environmental factors but by innate moral qualities". In other words, the character's idiolect, or lack thereof, reflects their status as a heroic or villainous character, rather than the social status they have within the story (Page [1973] 1988, 103–105).

It is evident that idiolects play a significant role in characterisation. So far, I have only examined the subject from a literary perspective. In the next section, I discuss possible strategies in translating idiolects and other varieties marked as non-standard, and also review selected translation studies on non-standard and idiolectal language.

### **2.3 Translating idiolects and other non-standard varieties**

Characters always speak in a non-standard variety for a reason. In translation, it is highly unlikely that a perfectly equivalent variety of speech is found in the target language (Brumme and Espunya 2012, 21). As the style and degree of the variety is altered, so is the characterisation contained in the dialogue.

A prevalent strategy in translating fictional non-standard varieties is *normalisation* (e.g. Rosa 2012, 87). In a normalised translation, source text (ST) varieties that are seen as less prestigious are translated into a standard variety in the target text (TT) (*ibid.*). This naturally affects the characters' individual voices in dialogue by rendering them more neutral. Rosa (2012, 88) even states that the normalisation strategy turns characterising language non-characterising. As Tiittula and Nuolijärvi (2013, 247) note, normalisation cannot be

considered a “neutral” strategy, as the translator consciously decides to reduce or omit ST variation, which consequently alters the meaning carried by that variation.

Rosa (2012, 89–92) also lists two other strategies, namely *centralisation* and *de-centralisation*. Centralisation occurs when a non-standard variety, such as a dialect, still retains non-standard features in the translation (Rosa 2012, 89–90). These features can be colloquial and not representative of any specific regional variety of the target language (TL), or they can be characteristic of a certain TL dialect (*ibid.*), which, however, is less marginalised than the ST variety and closer to the ‘centre’, meaning the society’s linguistic standard (Rosa 2012, 92). De-centralisation is a strategy opposite to normalisation where, usually for politically and ideologically motivated reasons, an ST standard variety is rendered into a non-standard and less prestigious variety (Rosa 2012, 91–92).

I present another classification of translation strategies in subsection 2.3.2, but first, it is useful to discuss previous research on the translation of fictional non-standard dialogue from the Finnish context. I begin with Nevalainen’s 2003 corpus study, where he compared the use of literary colloquialisms in fiction written originally in Finnish and fiction translated into Finnish. His research material consisted of 64 translations and 60 original Finnish works (Nevalainen 2003, 6). After determining which words and features occurred most frequently in the corpora, Nevalainen (2003, 8–9) selected 14 categories of colloquial features. These categories combined phonological, morphological and lexical elements (Nevalainen 2003, 10). The results of the corpus study indicated that while Finnish writers frequently used phonological features to represent colloquial speech, Finnish translators were more inclined to use lexical colloquialisms. Overall, the translated corpus contained fewer colloquial features compared to the original works (Nevalainen 2003, 19–20).

Tiittula and Nuolijärvi (2013, 251) present a study based on interviews conducted by Tiittula in 2010, where she asked five Finnish editors and one publishing director of translated literature about their views on the use of colloquial and non-standard language in translations. While the translator has the right to decide on the linguistic varieties included in the TT, they should discuss the matter with the editor, whose opinion also holds significant weight (Tiittula and Nuolijärvi 2013, 254). According to the interviews, the editors had varying views on how non-standard ‘speech’ should be translated (Tiittula and Nuolijärvi, 255). Some preferred strategies that were mentioned were the use of general colloquialisms, especially lexical ones (*ibid.*). This preference corresponds with the findings of Nevalainen’s (2003) study, where

lexical features were the most commonly occurring colloquialisms. One of the editors mentioned that the idiolectal differences present in the dialogue of different characters tend to be “levelled” in the translation and become more similar to each other (Tiittula and Nuolijärvi 2013, 256).

Tiittula and Nuolijärvi’s report on the editor’s views also mentions that maintaining the differences in the speech of individual characters was seen as important (2013, 258). The acceptance of non-standard language also depended on the character’s age and status, as colloquial language was viewed as more suitable for teenagers and lower-class characters (*ibid.*). The acceptance of a certain variety was also based on its comprehensibility (Tiittula and Nuolijärvi 2013, 260–261), which is one reason why the use of regional dialects might be *risqué* – it cannot be expected that every reader is familiar with Turku dialect, for example.

Before proceeding on to discuss the translation of idiolectal features on a more specific level, I briefly present a recent study on the topic of idiolect translation. In her 2023 article, López-Narváez examines and compares idiolectal features in the speech of two male characters in Thomas Hardy’s *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* with three Spanish translations of the novel. Her analysis shows that although the translations vary in their strategies both internally and among each other, there is a prevalence of neutralisation, which corresponds to the normalisation strategy discussed above, but compensation is also used by all of the translators (López-Narváez 2023, 274). By using the compensation strategy, translators are “highlighting some linguistic properties that may not appear in a specific fragment in the original but are characteristic of their [the characters’] speech” (*ibid.*).

### 2.3.1 Translating swearwords and vulgarities

A significant aspect of a person or character’s idiolect is how they use swearwords and other vulgar lexis, and as it is also part of my analysis, the translation of swearwords is worth a brief discussion here. Swearwords, according to Hjort (2015, 320) are colloquialisms used for various purposes. They can be, on one hand, characterising features denoting, for example, a certain social status or regional origin, gender or age, but also signifiers of emotions such as anger or surprise, as well as providers of humour (*ibid.*). With these numerous functions often linked to individual characters, the translation of swearwords undoubtedly has an impact on fictional characterisation.

In Nevalainen's 2003 corpus study discussed in section 2.3, one of the categories he examined was swearwords and vulgarities. The comparison between the original and translated Finnish fiction material indicated that the translators generally used milder expletives, such as *hitto* (comparable to 'damn') and *hemmetti* (milder version of *helvetti*, 'hell'), while the Finnish writers favoured stronger words like *saatana* ('Satan') and *vittu* ('cunt') (Nevalainen 2003, 18). This finding might imply that many of the translations neutralised stronger swearwords, although as Nevalainen (*ibid.*) notes, the lack of source texts in the study limits conclusions regarding translation tendencies.

In a research questionnaire conducted by Hjort (2006), Finnish literary and audiovisual translators were asked about their strategies and attitudes towards translating swearwords. Most of the translators agreed that it is more important to maintain the function of swearing rather than use the most literal translation. Hjort also mentions standard pairs (*vakioparit*), or swearwords that have different literal meanings but similar connotations in their respective languages, and are thus regularly used as translations for each other. As an example, Hjort (2006, 77–78), mentions the words *fuck* and *vittu*, which are further examined in Hjort (2015).

An overwhelming majority of the literary translators replying to Hjort's questionnaire felt that it was important for the translated swearwords to be as coarse as the original words (Hjort 2006, 78). However, whether this is possible can vary according to the target culture and genre of literature. As an example, Sinner (2012, 121, 126–127) studied the German editorial requirements of romance novels translated from English, and his analysis revealed, for example, that profanities in the original dialogue should, according to the editors, be softened, indirectly described in the narration or omitted completely by translators, especially in the speech of the heroic characters. This naturally affects characterisation and lessens the social and idiolectal variation. Similarly, the German editors expected less explicit language in sex scenes and softening of 'vulgar' expressions used by the main characters (Sinner 2012, 131–132). The limitations imposed upon the translators result in 'unnatural' TT dialogue, where the characters do not, for example, speak explicitly about their bodies during sex scenes (Sinner 2012, 130).

Swearwords are a varied category and their translation is heavily dependent on context. Although there are conventional counterparts for certain expletives, Finnish translations are often based on the situation and the suitability of the TT swearword, as can be seen from Hjort's (2006) study. The preference of functionality over literal equivalence might mean that

specific ST swearwords are not translated consistently throughout a fictional work. Consistency is arguably more crucial when translating regional varieties, a subject further examined in the next subsection.

### 2.3.2 Translating regional varieties

The translation of regional dialect is a particularly challenging task. Defined by the *OED* as a “form or variety of a language which is peculiar to a specific region”, dialect has been at the focus of much discussion in translation studies. In most cases, there is no equivalence between dialects of different languages and societies (Brumme and Espunya 2012, 21), with Arhire (2022, 338) even stating that translation “cancels the very point of using a dialect”. No matter which strategy or strategies a translator uses concerning dialect, an inevitable alteration of characterising dialogue occurs with the linguistic change.

As Tiittula and Nuolijärvi (2013, 347) state, translating an ST dialect to a TL one is potentially problematic, as regional dialects carry different connotations to different people. For this reason, Finnish translators often opt for more general colloquialisms (*ibid.*). Helsinki slang is also a recurrently used variety for translating city dialects (Tiittula and Nuolijärvi 2013, 342).

Berezowski (1997, 89) distinguishes between ten strategies in translating dialect (it should be noted that his definition of ‘dialect’ also includes social variation). The first strategy is *neutralisation*, or the translation of ST dialectal features into standard TL (Berezowski 1997, 50). The aforementioned definition of normalisation by Rosa (2012, 87) corresponds with the neutralisation strategy. The second strategy is *lexicalisation*, which refers to neutralisation on all other language levels except the lexical (Berezowski 1997, 53). Berezowski (*ibid.*) notes that this strategy leads to “an inconsistent use of the TL” as it uses only certain features of a TL dialect (or other variation). The third strategy is *partial translation*, where lexical items from the ST are directly transferred to the TT (Berezowski 1997, 60–61). The maintained words or phrases can be from a third language (e.g. a Swedish character in a Finnish novel might use occasional Swedish phrases) or be so specific to an SL dialect that the translator has opted to maintain them. The fourth strategy is *transliteration*, which is the same as partial translation, but with the preserved ST lexis spelled in a manner that follows TL norms (Berezowski 1997, 61–62). The fifth strategy, *speech defect*, occurs on the phonological level.

A character's non-standard speech is marked in the TT by 'spelling errors' intended to evoke a deviant pronunciation of certain phonemes (Berezowski 1997, 62–64).

The other five strategies named by Berezowski (1997, 89) are *relativisation*, *pidginization*, *artificial variety*, *colloquialisation* and *rusticalization*. In relativisation, the only features of the ST dialect remaining in the translation are honorifics and terms of address, i.e. features denoting social relations between the characters (Berezowski 1997, 66–68). Pidginization, as the name suggests, is the strategy of translating ST non-standard dialogue into an existing pidgin variety of the TL, the author using the example of Pidgin Polish (Berezowski 1997, 72–74). Berezowski (1997, 75) states that “the implementation of such a strategy should be limited to the SL texts employing pidgin varieties of the SL themselves”. Artificial variety refers to a fictional TL dialect invented by the translator, for which Berezowski (1997, 75–76) uses as an example the Polish translation of Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*. Colloquialisation indicates the rendering of an ST dialect to a general colloquial variety of the TL, with few or no features representing a geographical dialect. In the translations examined by Berezowski (1997, 78–80) lexical and syntactic colloquialisms were much more common than phonological and morphological features. The Finnish equivalent to this would be the translation of a geographical ST dialect to *yleispuhekieli* or general colloquial Finnish (e.g. Tiittula and Nuolijärvi 2013, 16). Finally, there is the strategy of rusticalization. With this strategy, ST non-standard speech is translated as an existing rural dialect of the TL (Berezowski 1997, 82).

In analysing my research material, I employ five categories of translation strategies. I apply two of the dialect translation strategies listed by Berezowski (1997, 89): neutralisation, or rendering an idiolectal non-standard feature as standard (this includes the rendering of swearwords as 'neutral' words) and colloquialisation, which I use here to mean the translation of regional ST features as general TL colloquialisms. The three additional strategies are equivalent translation, i.e. translation that is functionally similar to the ST feature, recategorization, where a translated feature moves to a different idiolectal category (e.g. a regional feature becomes a swearword) and omission of the idiolectal feature, where the examined ST feature has no counterpart in the translated line. I further discuss these categories in the methodology section.

## 3 Materials and Methods

### 3.1 *Red, White & Royal Blue*

My thesis is a case study of the novel *Red, White & Royal Blue* (henceforth *Royal Blue*) by American author Casey McQuiston. First published by St. Martin's Griffin on 14 May 2019, *Royal Blue* was McQuiston's debut novel (Goodreads). It appeared on the New York Times Best Sellers list in June 2019 (*The New York Times* Best Sellers 2 June 2019). In 2022, a Collector's Edition of the novel was published, featuring illustrations of the main characters and an additional chapter (Goodreads). The novel's success led to a film adaptation of the same name, directed by Matthew López and released on Prime Video in 2023 (Amazon Studios).

For my analysis, I have selected material from a paperback edition of *Royal Blue* printed in the UK and published by Macmillan. It is based on a US edition published in 2021. The UK edition has 440 pages, including the author's "Acknowledgments" section and an excerpt from McQuiston's 2021 novel *One Last Stop*. The novel itself ends on page 418.

In 2022, the novel was translated into Finnish and published by Tammi Publishers with the title *Punaista, valkoista ja kuninkaansinistä* (henceforth *Punaista*). It was translated by Johanna Auranheimo. According to an interview with the translator on the website *Kirjavinkit* (11 January 2023), this was Auranheimo's first published literary translation. For the translated dialogue, I refer to a hardcover edition from 2022 which consists of 400 pages, including the author's acknowledgments which take up three pages.

*Royal Blue* is a contemporary LGBTQ+ romance story set in 2019 and 2020, in an alternative reality where Americans have elected their first female president in 2016. According to the author's acknowledgments, McQuiston's objective was to create an "escapist, trauma-soothing, alternate-but-realistic reality" (McQuiston 2022, no page number) following Donald Trump's election as president.

The novel centres on Alex Claremont-Diaz, the 21-year-old son of President Ellen Claremont. The entire novel is told in present tense from the third-person point of view of Alex, giving the reader intimate access to his thoughts and emotions. Alex has an "archnemesis" (*Royal Blue*, 7) in Prince Henry, the youngest grandson of Queen Mary of England. Despite only

having met Henry a couple of times, Alex is convinced that they harbour a mutual hatred for each other. After a fight between the two causes a media scandal at Henry's brother's wedding, Alex is forced to feign a friendship with Henry to mend the diplomatic strain between their countries. As they get to know each other better, Alex begins to change his perspective on Henry, forming a genuine friendship that quickly turns into a sexual and romantic relationship. All the while, Alex's mother is running for re-election, so although Alex wants a future with Henry, they decide to keep the relationship a secret until the Presidential Election is over. However, the narrative spirals out of the young couple's control as intimate photographs and emails are leaked out. Faced with another, more consequential scandal, Alex and Henry must decide how they want to be remembered by history.

In this study, I analyse lines appearing in the dialogues between Alex and Henry. 'Line' here means an instance of quoted speech inside one paragraph. Thus, one line can consist of several sentences, such as "What the fuck. Seriously?" (*Royal Blue*, 164), or be 'cut' by narration, as in "'I am sorry about that," Henry says. "I-I wasn't ready to hear it.'" (*Royal Blue*, 279). I have left out conversations Alex has with other characters, such as his family members, since the novel is told from Alex's point of view, including him in nearly every dialogue scene. I also exclude scenes where another person participates in Alex and Henry's conversations.

I have chosen twelve dialogue scenes from seven chapters (chapters 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 12). *Royal Blue* has fifteen chapters, so the material contains dialogue roughly across the novel. I selected 123 lines for analysis, with 69 lines from Alex and 54 from Henry. For the purposes of narrowing down the material, I only chose dialogues that contained at least two lexical or phrasal idiolectal features from both characters. I further define the idiolectal features below.

### **3.2 Methodology**

In the analysis, I distinguish between three categories of the characters' idiolectal lexical features. The first category is comprised of swearwords and other vulgar slang. The second category is regional (i.e. American and British) lexis, while the third group is other recurring, characteristic words and phrases.

I made an Excel file where I listed the lines chosen for analysis, marked them either as Alex or Henry's and classified them into the three categories. After that, I copied the lines into two Word tables, one for Alex's lines and the other for Henry's, along with their corresponding

Finnish translations. Then I determined the translation strategy (or strategies, if there were several idiolectal features in one line) used for each line. The five strategies, briefly presented in subsection 2.3.2 and illustrated here by examples I have composed for the purposes of this chapter only, are the following:

- Neutralisation: defined by Berezowski (1997, 49–50) as the translation of written dialect into standard TL, neutralisation strategy applies to such features that are originally non-standard but unmarked in the translation. For example, if the sentence *Sam and David's wedding reception was lit* was translated as *Samin ja Davidin häätöjuhlassa oli hauskaa* [it was fun at Sam and David's wedding celebration], that would be a neutralised translation, since *lit*, according to *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, is a colloquial word meaning that something is, for example, “fun, exciting”, while the word *hauska* [fun(ny)] is standard Finnish. In addition, neutralisation is also used for instances where swearwords and vulgarities are translated as significantly ‘weaker’ words, e.g. if *I lost the goddamn keys* was translated as *kadotin ne pahuksen avaimet* [I lost the darn keys].

- Colloquialisation: another strategy taken from Berezowski's classification, colloquialised translation avoids equating an ST dialect with a specific TL regional variety and instead utilises general colloquial features to create the impression that the character is speaking in a non-standard variety (Berezowski 1997, 80). In my analysis, the colloquialisation strategy applies when a lexical feature denoting British or American dialect is translated into a general, widely used Finnish colloquialism, e.g. a sentence such as *did you see how lashed Emily was last night?*, (*lashed* being a British slang word for ‘drunk’ (*OED*)), could be translated as *näitkö miten kännissä Emily oli eilen illalla?* [did you see how wasted Emily was last night?], since *kännissä* is one of the most common Finnish colloquial expressions for ‘drunk’.

- Equivalent translation: this strategy applies both to cases where a word or phrase is translated literally, e.g. *what the hell does he want?* is translated as *mitä helvettiä hän haluaa?* [what the hell does he want?], as well as instances where the translation is not literal, but functionally carries a similar meaning or force, as in *she told me to shut the fuck up* being translated as *hän käski minua olemaan saatana hiljaa* [she told me to be satan quiet]. The words *fuck* and *saatana* are not close in denotational meaning, but as strong swearwords, they fulfil roughly the same function in this context.

- Omission: when the relevant idiolectal feature is left out of the translation completely, it is categorised as a case of omission. If, for example, the word representing the character's

idiolect was *honey* (as a term of endearment), a translation of the sentence *see you soon*, *honey* as *nähdään pian* [we'll see (each other) soon] would be representative of the omission strategy.

- Recategorization: I use this strategy for instances where a TT feature represents a different idiolectal category than its original ST counterpart. If the ST line contained a regional word, as in *the President's speech contained a whole lot of bull*, *bull* being an “originally U.S.” slang word meaning “nonsense” (*OED*), and it was translated as *presidentin puhe oli täynnä paskaa* [the president's speech was full of shit], I would classify it as an example of recategorization.

I find this categorisation of translation strategies suitable for the analysis, as the strategies are, for the most part, easily recognisable and distinct from each other. There seems to be no classification of strategies formulated especially for idiolect translation, which is why I turned to strategies used in the translation of dialect. Still, I believe that these strategies are applicable to the analysis of individual idiolectal features. In cases where the strategies occur concurrently, I categorise the relevant feature under the strategy I deem the most suitable and discuss the potential overlap afterwards. The examples are structured in the analysis in the following manner:

(1a) line from the source text, with the relevant lexical or phrasal feature marked in **bold** (contextualised with preceding lines and/or narration if required)

(1b) corresponding line from the target text, with the relevant feature (if not omitted) marked in **bold**  
[English back-translation of the TT line].

In the following chapter, I introduce the characters at the centre of this study, before applying the strategies and methods presented above to the selected examples.

## 4 Analysis and Discussion

### 4.1 "[Y]oung icons of their nations": on the characters of Alex and Henry

Before presenting the analysis of their idiolectal features and their translations, it is useful to examine the overall characterisation of Alex and Henry to better understand the context in which they use language. Most importantly, I present their backgrounds, their most dominant personality traits, their sexualities and finally, their relationship to each other. To summarise the characters, I use Culpeper's (2001, 75–76) model of social categories (Table 1). I have named the categories as follows: *personal attributes* (this includes their key personality traits and main goals or dreams), *social roles* (their familial, public and occupational roles and changing relationship to each other) and *group membership* (their gender, age, race, social class and sexual orientation).

Alexander Gabriel Claremont-Diaz (Alex) is the protagonist of *Royal Blue*. He is the son of President Ellen Claremont and Senator Oscar Diaz and strives to become a politician himself. His parents have divorced and his mother is remarried to a former entrepreneur called Leo (no last name given). Alex's main public role is being the First Son of the United States (FSOTUS) and part of the "White House Trio" along with his older sister June and Nora Holleran, the granddaughter of the Vice President Mike Holleran. In contrast to Prince Henry, Alex does not hail from a wealthy family, as stated in the narration, told from Alex's point of view: "He was born in the hill country of Texas to the daughter of a single mother and the son of Mexican immigrants, all of them dirt poor" (*Royal Blue*, 8). Through his father's Mexican descent, Alex is biracial and bilingual, although he uses so little Spanish in his direct speech that it is not included in my analysis. Alex describes himself as "brown" (e.g. *Royal Blue*, 270) and is conscious that his ethnicity puts more pressure on him, as seen in this excerpt from my material: "I'm the son of the first female president. And I'm not white like she is, can't even pass for it. People will *always* come down harder on me" (*Royal Blue*, 50–51, italics as in the original).

Embedded in the novel's love story is Alex's journey of realising his bisexuality. After Henry kisses him for the first time, Alex begins to question his previously held belief that he is heterosexual: "[H]e always assumed if he weren't straight, he would just *know* [...]. He thought he was smart enough about his own identity that there weren't any questions left" (*Royal Blue*, 111–112, italics as in the original). This quotation also demonstrates a central

aspect of Alex's personality, namely his confidence in his own intelligence. In general, Alex is a proud person, which often leads him to be self-centred and ignorant of other people's feelings. However, he is deeply loyal to the people closest to him. Alex is driven by ambition, which shows in his dream of becoming the "youngest congressman in US history" (*Royal Blue*, 113). Around halfway through the novel, Alex graduates from Georgetown University with a bachelor's degree in Government. He briefly works on his mother's re-election campaign but is forced to step out after telling her about his relationship with Henry. At the end of the story, Alex has developed into a more considerate, patient and self-reflective character.

Alex's eventual romantic partner, Prince Henry of Wales, or Henry George Edward James Fox-Mountchristen-Windsor (Henry), is the youngest son of Princess Catherine and Arthur Fox, a deceased English actor. Henry is also the youngest grandson of Queen Mary. In real life, the Prince of Wales is a title given to the monarch's eldest son (*OED*) but Henry is the "spare" (*Royal Blue*, 263) to his older brother Prince Philip. He also has an older sister called Beatrice (Bea). Prior to his relationship with Alex, the people closest to Henry are Bea and his best friend, philanthropist Percy "Pez" Okonjo. Since Alex initially sees Henry antagonistically and does not know him yet, the characterisation of Henry is negatively biased and unreliable at first. When Alex begins to see his true character, Henry's altero-characterisation shifts to a more positive and nuanced direction. In contrast to the outspoken Alex, Henry is introverted and uncomfortable being in the public eye. This is partly because of his concealed homosexuality. Most of Henry's self-characterisation revolves around him feeling undeserving of love or living truthfully, as he tells Alex: "My birthright is a country, not happiness" (*Royal Blue*, 272). Despite being born into royalty and privilege, Henry is still the 'other' within his family due to his sexual orientation. He follows the Queen's orders of maintaining a heterosexual public image, taking women on dates until his relationship with Alex is exposed. He dreams of being a writer but acknowledges that it is unrealistic: "Not exactly seen as a worthwhile pursuit for a man in line for the throne, scribbling verses about quarter-life angst" (*Royal Blue*, 106). Henry's character arc focuses on him becoming more confident, self-accepting and relaxed.

Table 1. Alex and Henry's characterisation following Culpeper's (2001, 75–76) social categories.

Character	Personal attributes	Social roles	Group membership
Alex	ambitious, loyal, outspoken, reckless, self-centred goal: becoming a politician	younger brother, First Son, college student, campaign worker Henry's 'rival' → friend → lover → boyfriend	man, American, 21–22 years, biracial (Latino/white), originally working-class, bisexual
Henry	contemplative, introverted, polite, reserved, witty dream: becoming a writer	youngest brother, Prince of Wales Alex's 'rival' → friend → lover → boyfriend	man, English, 22–23 years, white, royal, homosexual

The relationship between Alex and Henry begins, in Alex's eyes, as hostile, but Henry later confesses that he has loved Alex “the whole bloody time” (*Royal Blue*, 283), while Alex also realises that he has been unconsciously attracted to Henry since he first saw him. The novel's events span about a year, during which Alex and Henry become friends, then sexual partners, then secret boyfriends, until they are finally exposed to the world and decide to make their relationship official.

In the next section, I shift my attention to the idiolectal features, beginning with swearwords and vulgar slang. Following that, I discuss regional features and conclude the section by reviewing recurring words and phrases.

## 4.2 Idiolectal features

### 4.2.1 Swearwords and vulgar slang

Swearwords and other vulgarities occur frequently in the dialogue of the characters and reveal idiolectal patterns. Out of the 128 expletives and vulgarities in the material, 86 occur in Alex's lines and 42 appear in Henry's speech. This difference in the characters' language use is explicitly acknowledged in the narration: “Henry hardly ever swears, but at least he doesn't seem to mind Alex's filthy fucking mouth” (*Royal Blue*, 70). This uneven distribution of swearwords is also the main reason why Alex's lines outweigh Henry's. Table 2 lists the different swearwords and vulgarities in the ST material and displays their distribution between the characters.

Table 2. Swearwords and other vulgar lexis in the ST material.

Swearword	Appearances in Alex's lines	Appearances in Henry's lines
<i>fuck, fucking, fuckin'</i>	43	7
<i>(what the), (bloody) hell</i>	5	2
<i>(bull)shit, shithole</i>	7	1
<i>goddamn(it/ed), goddammit</i>	5	2
<i>((oh) (my)) God</i>	8	7
<i>Jesus Christ, Jesus, Christ</i>	5	5
<i>bloody</i>	0	8
<i>sodding</i>	0	1
vulgar nouns ( <i>arse, arsehole, ass, asshole, bastard, dick, prick, wanker</i> )	13	9
<b>In total</b>	86	42

The greatest difference in the characters' swearword use, as seen in Table 2, is found in the use of the word *fuck* and its derivatives. Alex uses *fuck* over six times more than Henry. I further examine the word *fuck* below. Another significant difference, also discussed in more detail below, is found in the appearances of *bloody*, all of which occur in Henry's speech. With the other vulgar words and expressions, the difference is far less drastic. The most evenly distributed expression is the religious interjection *Jesus Christ*, also appearing as just *Jesus* or *Christ*, which both characters use five times.

In the translation, swearwords and other vulgarities are, in many instances, neutralised into 'weaker' words or completely omitted. However, many are also translated as equally strong words. The total number of swearwords and vulgarities in the TT material is 81, with 57 in Alex's lines and 24 in Henry's. Alex's speech is still clearly 'filthier' compared to Henry's, but less so when viewed against the source material. Henry's swearword use is reduced by almost a half in the translation. The swearwords and their distribution in the TT material are listed in Table 3. All of the words are listed in the nominative case, but they include the inflected appearances of the same word (e.g. *vittu* covers the appearances of *vitun* and *vittua*).

Table 3. Swearwords and other vulgar lexis in the TT material.

Swearword	Appearances in Alex's lines	Appearances in Henry's lines
<i>vittu, vittumainen</i>	15	3
<i>helvetti</i>	15	4
<i>paska</i>	4	1

Swearword	Appearances in Alex's lines	Appearances in Henry's lines
<i>jumalauta</i>	7	2
<i>saatana</i>	3	1
<i>voi Jeesus</i> (also as <i>jeesus</i> )	2	1
<i>hitto</i>	1	4
vulgar nouns ( <i>kusipää, kyrpä, mulkku, paskiainen, perse, persläpi</i> )	10	8
<b>In total</b>	57	24

The most used TT swearword overall is *helvetti* ('hell') which occurs 15 times in Alex's speech and four times in Henry's. There is also one further appearance of *helvetti* in Alex's speech, but since it refers to the metaphorical place rather than the swearword, I did not take it into account. *Helvetti* is closely followed in appearances by *vittu* ('cunt'), also used 15 times by Alex and thrice by Henry. These words also have the greatest difference in their distribution between the characters. The only TT swearword used more by Henry than Alex is *hitto* (comparable to *damn*), as it appears in Henry's lines four times and only once in Alex's.

Next, I examine some of the most frequent vulgarities and their translations, providing examples on how they are used by each character and presenting the strategies applied in their translation. The expletives I have chosen are *fuck/fucking*, the intensifier *bloody* and vulgar nouns (e.g. *asshole, bastard*).

### *Fuck*

*Fuck* and its adjective and adverb forms *fucking* and *fuckin'* appear 50 times in the material. Characteristic to Alex, exactly half of the vulgarities in his speech are variants of *fuck*. Alex typically uses *fucking* as an intensifier, as in "[s]ays Prince fucking Charming" (*Royal Blue*, 105), but also in phrases such as "oh my fucking God" (*Royal Blue*, 140), "for fuck's sake" (*Royal Blue*, 145) and "what the fuck" (e.g. *Royal Blue*, 170).

Most often, *fuck* and *fucking* are translated as various Finnish swearwords, such as *vittu* in example (1). Despite its literal meaning of 'cunt', *vittu* is the functional equivalent and commonly used translation of *fuck*, as discussed by Hjort (2015).

(1a) I don't know. Doing what we do is **fuckin**g hard. But it's harder for me. I'm the son of the first female president. [...] And you're, you know, *you*, and you were born into all of this, and everyone thinks you're Prince **fuckin**g Charming.

You're basically a living reminder I'll always be compared to someone else, no matter what I do, even if I work twice as hard. (*Royal Blue*, 50–51, italics as in the original)

(1b) En tiedä. Ollaan molemmat **vitun** vaikeassa asemassa, mutta minun asemani on vaikeampi, koska äitini on Yhdysvaltojen ensimmäinen naispresidentti. [...] Ja sinä taas olet syntynyt keskellä tätä kaikkea, olet mitä olet, ja kaikki pitää sinua **vittu** prinssi Uljaana. Eli käytännössä muistutat minua siitä, että ihan sama mitä teen tai kuinka paljon paitsin töitä, minua tullaan aina vertaamaan muihin. (*Punaista*, 54)

[I don't know. Both of us are in a cunt's hard position, but my position is harder, because my mother is the first female president of the United States. And you, for your part, were born in the middle of all of this, you are what you are, and everyone thinks you're cunt prince Charming. So basically you remind me that no matter what I do or how hard I work, I'll always be compared to others.]

As seen from this example, Alex often repeats the same swearwords, especially *fuck/fucking*, in one line. In both cases, Auranheimo has preserved the recurring swearword with a functional equivalent. In example (1), the second *fucking* has been shifted to the beginning of the noun phrase, rendering “Prince fucking Charming” to “vittu prinssi Uljaana”. However, this does not alter the meaning of the phrase.

As later seen in Table 2, there is much variance in the translation of *fuck*, which leads to no particular swearword dominating Alex's speech in the TT. For example, in (2), Alex confesses his love to Henry, emphasising his speech three times with *fuck/fucking*. However, there is a different translation for each instance.

(2a) *I fucking love you, okay?* [...] **Fuck**. I swear. You don't make it **fucking** easy. But I'm in love with you. (*Royal Blue*, 271, italics as in the original)

(2b) Minä **vittu** rakastan sinua! [...] **Voi helvetti**. Teet tästä aika **hiton** vaikeaa. Mutta olen rakastunut sinuun. (*Punaista*, 260–261)

[I cunt love you! Oh hell. You make this pretty damn hard. But I'm in love with you.]

In this scene, occurring much later in the novel than example (1), Alex has come to Kensington Palace, desperate and furious, since Henry has not been in contact with him for a week, and starts to argue with Henry. In the midst of their fight, Alex blurts out his love confession, which is characteristically both coarse and sincere. The translation retains these qualities, although *hitto* (here in the genitive *hiton*), unlike *vittu* and *helvetti*, is a mild swearword (*Kielitoimiston sanakirja*) and might be considered a neutralised translation. As a whole, rendering the recurring *fuck* to different words creates the impression that Alex is

considering his words, rather than using his ‘standard’ swearword repeatedly because he cannot think of anything else in his emotional state.

There are also instances where *fucking* has been neutralised into a word with no vulgar connotations, as in example (3), where the swearword is replaced by *mikään* (‘not any’), a modifier that does not carry any vulgar meaning. This example is from the same dialogue as example (2).

(3a) Look, I might not be a **fucking** royal, [...] but I know what it’s like for your whole life to be determined by the family you were born into, okay? (*Royal Blue*, 274)

(3b) Okei, en ehkä ole **mikään** kuninkaallinen, mutta tiedän, millaista on, kun perhe määrittelee koko elämän suunnan.” (*Punaista*, 263)  
[Okay, maybe I’m not any royal, but I know what it’s like when family determines the whole course of your life.]

Henry has tried to end things between the pair, claiming that their statuses are not compatible, while Alex argues that their lives are not too different from one another. Neutralising the intensifier *fucking* downplays Alex’s anger, partly directed towards the royal family’s restrictions that Henry is appealing to. This is a highly emotional scene and swearwords punctuate its intensity.

There are seven instances where *fucking* is omitted completely from Alex’s lines. In example (4), once it has become clear that they are mutually attracted to each other, Alex invites Henry to his room for the first time, using a rather threatening tone. Directly preceding this line is a scene where the two have been kissing in a White House room during an official event. By “if you fucking ghost me again” Alex refers to Henry’s avoidance of him after their first kiss.

(4a) And then you are going to come to the East Bedroom on the second floor at eleven o'clock tonight, and I am going to do very bad things to you, and if you **fucking** ghost me again, I'm going to get you put on a **fucking** no-fly list. Got it? (*Royal Blue*, 134)

(4b) Ja sitten tänä yönä sinä tulet kello yhdeltätoista tokan kerroksen itäiseen makuuhuoneeseen, ja minä teen sinulle erittäin kiellettyjä asioita, ja jos sinä vielä kerran jätät minut roikkumaan, panen sinut lentokieltolistalle. Onko selvä? (*Punaista*, 132–133)

[And then tonight you’ll come at eleven o’clock to the east bedroom of the second floor, and I will do very forbidden things to you, and if you leave me hanging for one more time, I will put you on a no-fly list. Is that clear?]

Just as in example (3), the intensifier  *fucking*  is meant to emphasise Alex's words, although in this case, Alex is lustful and frustrated rather than angry. By repeating  *fucking* , he signals to Henry how serious he is. Both uses of  *fucking*  are omitted in the translation, which significantly reduces the strength of Alex's 'threat'.

Henry uses  *fuck (you)*  once and  *fucking*  six times in the material. In contrast to Alex's frequent casual use of the expletive and intensifier, Henry uses  *fucking*  only at highly emotional moments, making its appearance more noticeable than in Alex's speech. Example (5), where Henry and Alex are about to be intimate for the first time, is an example of such an intense scene.

(5a) "You were  *jealous* ," Alex says. "You  *want*  me."

Henry moves abruptly, heaving Alex off balance with both hands and down into his lap, eyes blazing, and he says in a low and deadly voice Alex has never heard from him before, "Yes, you preening arse, I've wanted you long enough that I won't have you tease me for another  *fucking*  second." ( *Royal Blue* , 137, italics as in the original)

(5b) "Vai olit sinä mustasukkainen", Alex sanoo. "Sinä haluat minua."

Henry kiskaisee Alexin syliinsä silmät palaen ja sanoo matalalla, vaarallisella äänellä, jota Alex ei ole ikinä ennen kuullut: "Aivan, senkin idiootti. Olen halunnut sinua niin pitkään, etten salli sinun kiusata minua enää yhtä ainutta  **vitun**  sekuntia." ( *Punaista* , 136)

[ "So you were jealous," Alex says. "You want me." Henry yanks Alex into his lap, eyes blazing, and says in a low, dangerous voice that Alex has never heard before: "That's right, you idiot. I have wanted you for so long that I won't allow you to tease me for another cunt's second." ]

In the ST,  *fucking*  is emphasised with italics to accentuate Henry's impatience and passion, and while the translation preserves the swearing with the equivalent  *vitun* , the italics are removed. McQuiston uses italics in the dialogue throughout the novel to show which words are stressed in the 'speech' of the characters, but this stylistic device is mostly omitted in the translation. While not changing the meaning of the sentences per se, this removal leads to words such as the above  *vitun*  to lose their formal significance.

The dialogue where Henry uses variants of  *fuck*  the most takes place during the fight discussed above in examples (2) and (3). Much like Alex, Henry is angry, as well as offended that Alex thinks he does not care about their relationship. Example (6) is the only line in the material where Henry uses  *fucking*  twice in a sentence. Only the second instance is preserved

in the translation. Like the neutralisation in example (3), the omission here reduces the intensity of Henry's anger.

(6a) When have I *ever*, since the first instant I touched you, pretended to be anything less than in love with you? Are you so **fucking** self-absorbed as to think this is about you and whether or not I love you, rather than the fact I'm an heir to the **fucking** throne? (*Royal Blue*, 272, italics as in the original)

(6b) Siitä asti, kun ekan kerran koskin sinua, olen tehnyt aika selväksi, että olen rakastunut sinuun. Oletko todella niin itsekeskeinen, että luulet tässä olevan kyse siitä, rakastanko sinua vai en, eikä siitä, että olen **helvetti** prinsssi? (*Punaista*, 261–262)

[Since I touched you for the first time, I've made it quite clear that I'm in love with you. Are you really so self-centred that you think this is about whether I love you or not, and not that I'm hell a prince?]

As a whole, *fucking* and *fuck* are translated five times in Henry's lines with an equivalent Finnish swearword and omitted twice. As with the translations of *fuck* and its variants in Alex's lines, the equivalent translations are not consistent, as *fucking* is translated as *vitun* (twice), *helvetti* and *saatanan* and *fuck you* as [h]aista paska ('smell shit'). As a result, there is no one swearword standing out as 'uncharacteristic' to Henry.

Table 4 shows which strategies have been applied to the translation of *fuck*, with equivalent translation standing out as the most prevalent strategy. I have listed all the translations in parentheses, to illustrate how many different swearwords were used by Auranheimo to translate *fuck*.

Table 4. Strategies used in the translation of *fuck* and its derivatives (*fucking*, *fuckin'*, *fuck you*).

Translation strategy	Appearances in Alex's lines	Appearances in Henry's lines
equivalent translation ( <i>vitun</i> , <i>vittu</i> , <i>jumalauta</i> , <i>helvetin</i> , <i>perseestä</i> , ( <i>voi</i> ) <i>helvetti</i> , <i>saatana</i> , <i>helvettiin</i> , <i>vittua</i> , <i>helvettiä</i> , <i>hiton</i> , <i>saatanan</i> , [h]aista paska)	31	5
colloquialisation	0	0
neutralisation	4	0
omission	7	2
recategorization	0	0

### *Bloody*

The next word under discussion is the intensifier *bloody*, used only by Henry. According to the *OED*, the colloquial adjective *bloody* means “absolute, downright, utter” and was considered a taboo word before but is nowadays normalised. The *OED* also notes that while *bloody* in this sense is used in most Anglophone countries, it has not become widely used in the United States. *Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary* defines both the adjective and adverb forms of *bloody* as “British, informal” and “sometimes offensive”. As it is not a particularly strong word in modern use and a regional colloquialism used to denote Henry’s ‘Britishness’, *bloody* could also be discussed in the category of regional features. However, the contexts where Henry uses the word are similar to those where the intensifier *fucking* is used, namely emotional scenes and in expressions of frustration. In total, Henry uses *bloody* eight times in the material. In the first instance, Henry uses the interjection “[b]loody hell” (*Royal Blue*, 47) which is translated as “[j]umalauta” (*Punaista*, 50). *Jumalauta* is a strong swearword originating from the expression *Jumala auta* (God help (me)) (*Kielitoimiston sanakirja*). This is a case of equivalent translation, although the translation is arguably stronger than the original phrase.

In example (7), the connotation of *bloody* is preserved in translation by using the modifier *hiton*, which, as mentioned above, is not a particularly strong swearword.

(7a) [Henry:] ”I never thought I’d be stood here faced with a choice I can’t make, because I never... I never imagined you would love me back.”  
 “Well,” Alex says. “I do. And you *can* choose.”  
 “You know **bloody** well I can’t.” (*Royal Blue*, 273, italics as in the original)

(7b) ”En ikinä uskonut, että joutuisin tämän käytännössä mahdottoman valinnan eteen, koska en voinut kuvitella... En voinut kuvitella, että voisit rakastaa minua.”  
 ”No, rakastan kuitenkin”, Alex sanoo. ”Eikä tämä valinta ole mahdoton.”  
 ”Tiedät **hiton** hyvin, että on.” (*Punaista*, 262)  
 [“I never imagined I would face this practically impossible choice, because I couldn’t imagine... I couldn’t imagine you could love me.” “Well, I love you anyway,” Alex says. “And this choice is not impossible. “You know damn’s well it is.”]

This conversation takes place after Alex has confessed his love (see example (2)) and Henry has made it clear that the feeling is mutual (example (6)). However, in his deep insecurity and self-deprecation, Henry has not considered the possibility of Alex loving him as well. Alex tries to assure Henry that he can choose to be happy, resulting in Henry’s bitter response. In the TT, the subject of Alex’s line is changed from Henry to Henry’s choice (“tämä valinta”),

resulting in Henry's line being accordingly altered too. However, "hiton hyvin" is quite a faithful translation, with the mildly vulgar modifier and a direct translation of the adverb *well*.

In five out of eight cases, *bloody* has been omitted in translation, such as in example (8), where Henry is telling Alex about his sister Bea's cocaine addiction.

(8a) "Anyway, Bea went," Henry goes on, "against her will, and didn't think she had a problem at all, even though you could see her **bloody** ribs and she'd barely spoken to me in months, when we grew up inseparable." (*Royal Blue*, 169)

(8b) "No, Bea vietiin siis vieroitukseen vasten tahtoaan", Henry jatkaa. "Eikä se edes tajunnut olevansa riippuvainen. Huolimatta siitä, että sen kylkiluut paistoi ihon läpi ja siitä että me ei oltu puhuttu käytännössä kuukausiin, vaikka lapsena oltiin erottamattomia." (*Punaista*, 166)

["Well, so Bea was taken to rehab against her will," Henry goes on. "And she didn't even realise that she was addicted. Despite the fact that her ribs could be seen through her skin and that we hadn't talked to each other in basically months, even though we were inseparable as children."]

While not altering the content of Henry's description, the omission of *bloody* affects the emotional intensity of the line. Even though Henry is recounting something that happened years before the novel takes place, he is clearly still upset over the events.

As a whole, *bloody* is translated with an equivalent word twice, omitted five times and neutralised once. As with *fucking*, since there is no consistent strategy or translation, the unique intensifier in Henry's speech is lost.

### *Vulgar nouns*

The third subcategory in this section is vulgar nouns. These words are not always referred to as swearwords but still carry offensive meanings. There are eight vulgar nouns in the material, including spelling variants: *arse*, *arsehole*, *ass*, *asshole*, *bastard*, *dick*, *prick* and *wanker*.

They are used in the material either to denote body parts (*ass* and *dick*) or refer to a person (all of the words), usually by Alex and Henry to refer to each other.

*Ass*, according to the *OED*, is a regional word for the anus and the "North American equivalent of *arse*". In line with this regionality, only Alex uses the word. In addition to its literal meaning, *ass* can also replace a pronoun to refer to one's person, to "impart greater force or vehemence to a statement", as in *your ass cannot take the heat*. *Ass* is also used in compound adjectives (e.g. *cheap-ass*) for emphasis, as well as in various phrases. Alex uses *ass* four times in the material, each time with a different meaning. In the first occasion, he

uses it as part of the phrase *bite me in the ass*. Example (9) is from the beginning of the novel, when Alex is trying to convince the elusive Henry to share more about himself for the sake of their ‘staged’ friendship.

(9a) “I don’t know what you’re talking about, and if I did, I’m not sure that’s any of your concern,” Henry says, his voice strained at the edges.

“Really? Because I’m pretty sure I’m legally bound to be your best friend, and I don’t know if you’ve thought this through yet, but that’s not going to stop with this weekend,” Alex tells him. [...] “If we do this and we’re never seen together again, people are gonna know we’re full of shit. We’re stuck with each other, like it or not, so I have a right to be clued in about what your deal is before it sneaks up on me and **bites me in the ass.**” (*Royal Blue*, 49)

(9b) “En tiedä, mitä selität, ja oli miten oli, se ei kuulu sinulle”, Henry sanoo ääni kireänä.

”Ai ei vai? Jos oikein muistan, minut on velvoitettu esittämään parasta kaveriasi, ja vaikka et ilmeisesti sitä tajua, niin yksi viikonloppu tuskin riittää”, Alex tokaisee. [...] ”Jos me ei jatketa, ihmiset tajuaa aika nopeasti, että koko juttu oli pelkkää esitystä. Halusit tai et, tämä peli ei ole hetkessä pelattu, ja minulla on oikeus tietää vähän etukäteen, mikä olet miehiäsi, **ettei tule ikäviä yllätyksiä.** (*Punaista*, 52)

[”I don’t know what you’re saying, and anyway, it’s not your business,” Henry says with a strained voice. “Oh it isn’t? If I remember correctly, I’m bound to play your best friend, and even though you evidently don’t realise it, one weekend probably won’t be enough,” Alex says. “If we don’t keep this up, people will realise pretty fast that the whole thing was just an act. Whether you want it or not, this is not over in a minute, and I have a right to know beforehand what your deal is, so there won’t be nasty surprises.”]

The phrase *to bite someone in the ass* is defined by the *OED* as follows: “to become a major nuisance or problem for someone, esp. in an unexpected way or at an unexpected time”. It is also listed as (mainly) North American, making it a regional feature as well. The phrase exemplifies both Alex’s casual use of coarse language and his self-centredness, as he is concerned only with the potential consequences for himself. In the translation, all the idiolectal markedness of the phrase is removed and it is neutralised. Although “*ettei tule ikäviä yllätyksiä*” essentially retains the meaning of the original phrase, the passive form distances it from Alex’s self-centred attitude. All of this results in the TT phrase no longer being characterising to Alex.

The second time that Alex uses the noun *ass*, it is directed at Henry. In example (10), Alex has insisted that his mother place two turkeys about to be pardoned on Thanksgiving to his room, as their accommodations would otherwise cost the government. What follows is a comical scene where Alex realises he is scared of the turkeys and calls Henry for the first

time. Henry suggests that Alex go to sleep in another room, to which Alex replies with the following line:

(10a) Okay, but, uh, what if they escape? I've seen *Jurassic Park*. Did you know birds are directly descended from raptors? That's a scientific fact. [...] And you want me to go to sleep like they're not gonna bust out of their enclosures and take over the island the minute I close my eyes? Okay. Maybe **your white ass**. (*Royal Blue*, 79–80, italics as in the original)

(10b) Joo, mutta entä jos ne karkaa? Olen nähnyt *Jurassic Parkin*. On ihan tieteellinen fakta, että linnut polveutuu suoraan dinosauruksista. [...] Kuvitteletko tosiaan, että voin muka vaan painua pehkuihin ilman, että sillä silmäyksellä kun nukahdan ne murtautuu häkeistään ja valloittaa koko saaren? **Helppo valkoisen tyypin on puhua**. (*Punaista*, 81, italics as in the original).

[Yeah, but what if they escape? I've seen *Jurassic Park*. It's a scientific fact that birds are directly descended from dinosaurs. [...] Do you really think I can just go to sleep without them breaking out of their cages and take over the whole island the minute I fall asleep? Easy for a white guy to talk.]

At the end of his comical argument, Alex comments on Henry's race and, implicitly, the privilege that comes with it. However, at this point in the story, the two know each other better and the tone of their mutual teasing is lighter. The aforementioned meaning of *ass* preceded by a possessive or genitive is not necessarily offensive and given the context of the line, "your white ass" comes off more as a dry, humorous remark than an insult. While its equivalent in the TT is similarly colloquial and conveys the same meaning, it lacks in coarseness. For that reason, I classify this as another case of neutralisation.

The third mention of *ass* in the material is the only time that Alex uses it in the typical meaning of a person's backside. When talking with Henry about wanting to protect their older sisters, Alex says: "I know the feeling. Last summer I almost punched a guy at Lollapalooza because he tried to grab June's **ass**" (*Royal Blue*, 167). This is translated quite directly as "Tiedän tunteen. Viime kesänä melkein löin yhtä jätkää, joka yritti puristaa Junen **persettä** Lollapalooza-festareilla" [I know the feeling. Last summer I almost hit one guy who tried to grab June's ass at Lollapalooza festival] (*Punaista*, 165). As *perse* is the Finnish equivalent of *ass* in both the literal and many connotational senses (*Kielitoimiston sanakirja*), this is an example of equivalent translation. In the fourth and final occurrence of *ass* in Alex's speech, he is referring to his sister's earlier comment: "June says I have a fire under my **ass** for no good reason" (*Royal Blue*, 262). This metaphorical sentence is translated almost literally as "Junen mielestä minulla on jatkuvasti tuli **perseen** alla ilman syytä" [In June's opinion I

constantly have a fire under my ass without a reason] (*Punaista*, 253), which is another equivalent translation.

The British spelling variant *arse* is used by Henry in example (5), discussed under *fuck*. There, he calls Alex “you preening **arse**” (*Royal Blue*, 136), which is translated as “senkin **idiootti**” [you idiot] (*Punaista*, 136). This is not as vulgar and counts as neutralisation.

Next words to be discussed are *arsehole* and *asshole*, which are regional spelling variants of a noun that shares its denotational meaning with *arse* and *ass*. However, in the material, both variants are used in the meaning of a “stupid, irritating, or despicable person” (*OED*). First, in example (11), *arsehole* is used by Henry to describe his own behaviour after his father’s passing.

(11a) We all went round the bend a bit. Philip just *had* to be the man of the family, and I was an **arsehole**, and Mum didn’t leave her rooms. (*Royal Blue*, 168, italics as in the original)

(11b) Me kaikki mentiin siitä vähän sekaisin. Philipistä tuli kunnon kontrollifriikki, minä itse käyttäydyin kuin mikäkin **kusipää**, ja äiti linnoittautui asuntoonsa. (*Punaista*, 165–166)

[We all went a bit crazy about it. Philip became a proper control freak, I myself behaved like some pisshead, and Mum barricaded herself in her residence.]

*Kusipää* is a vulgar noun that literally translates as ‘pisshead’. Its connotational meaning, however, is the same as that of *arsehole*, making it an equivalent translation. *Asshole*, on the other hand, is used three times by Alex, with both of the latter uses referring back to the first. It is actually Henry who first refers to Alex’s phrase from example (14), thus also using *asshole* once. Example (12) is from Alex and Henry’s fight, while (13) is from the morning after it.

(12a) Jesus, could you stop being an **obtuse fucking asshole** for, like, twenty seconds? (*Royal Blue*, 271)

(12b) Voi helvetti nyt, koeta jooko ihan hetki olla olematta tuollainen **pönttö persläpi**. (*Punaista*, 260)

[Oh hell now, please try not to be such a dumb asshole for just a moment.]

(13a) “Hi,” Alex says carefully, squinting over his coffee. “You seem... less pissy.”

Henry huffs a laugh. “You’re the one to talk. I wasn’t the one who stormed the palace in a fit of pique to call me an ‘**obtuse fucking asshole**.’”

“In my defense,” Alex says, “you *were* an **obtuse fucking asshole**.” (*Royal Blue*, 277, italics as in the original)

(13b) “Moi”, Alex sanoo varovasti, siristää silmiään kahvinsa yli. ”Vaikutat vähemmän... ärtyneeltä.”

Henry naurahtaa. ”Paraskin puhuja. Itse rynnäköit raivon vallassa palatsiin haukkumaan minua **pöntöksi persläveksi**.”

”Puolustuksekseni sanottakoon, että oikeasti käyttäydyit kuin **pönttö persläpi**”, Alex sanoo. (*Punaista*, 266)

[”Hi,” Alex says carefully, squints his eyes over his coffee. “You seem less... annoyed.” Henry gives a laugh. “You’re the one to talk. You were the one who stormed the palace consumed by rage to call me a dumb asshole.” “In my defense, let it be said that you really acted like a dumb asshole.”]

Although the phrase “obtuse fucking asshole” and its translation “pönttö persläpi” stay the same in both examples, the context of the scenes differs. In example (12), Alex is genuinely angry at Henry, who has ignored his contact attempts for a week and continues to act cold towards him. In example (13), Henry has just returned to his bedroom where Alex has woken up alone, both of them having calmed down since the fight. Their dialogue has a light, humorous tone, although Alex still stands by his earlier words. Later in their conversation, after Henry has told Alex that he has begun to see his own self-worth, Alex makes one last call-back to his insult, telling Henry that there is nothing wrong with him, “aside from the fact that you're occasionally an **obtuse fucking asshole**” (*Royal Blue*, 279). This is translated as “[p]aitsi siis silloin, kun olet **pönttö persläpi**” [except when you’re a dumb asshole] (*Punaista*, 268). While the omission of the intensifier *fucking* results in a softer translation overall, the noun *persläpi* is the direct equivalent of *asshole*, and its repetition in the lines retains the humorous effect intended in the ST.

The next vulgar noun under discussion is *bastard*. A colloquial term of abuse (*OED*), *bastard* is not explicitly named as being vulgar in either the *OED* or *Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary*. However, Ljung (2011, 125) refers to the word several times in his study of swearwords, categorising it as an “expletive epithet” alongside *arsehole* and *wanker*. In *Royal Blue*, *bastard* is used once by Alex and twice by Henry. Alex calls Henry *bastard* quite literally in the heat of the moment, when the two are being intimate for the first time. As the word is just one of many expletives uttered by Alex in example (14), it is not particularly emphatic.

(14a) “Oh my fucking God,” Alex says [...] “Fuck.” [...] “I can't believe—God, you're the most insufferable goddamn **bastard** on the face of the planet, do you know that—fuck—you're infuriating, you're the worst—you're—“

“Do you *ever* stop talking?” Henry says. “Such a *mouth* on you.” (*Royal Blue*, 140, italics as in the original).

(14b) “Voi helvetti”, Alex huokaisee [...] ”Voi vittu.” [...] ”En kestä... Jumalauta olet maailman sietämättömin **kusipää**, kai tiedät – ei saatana – että olet sietämätön, ihan hirveä, olet – ”  
 ”Pidätkö ikinä päätäsi kiinni?” Henry kysyy. ”Siistisit suusi.” (*Punaista*, 139)  
 [”Oh hell,” Alex sighs. ”Oh cunt.” “I can’t take it... Godhelp you’re the most insufferable pisshead in the world, surely you know – no satan – that you’re insufferable, the worst – you’re – “ “Do you ever keep your head shut?” Henry asks. “You should clean your mouth.”]

Like in example (13), *kusipää* is used here as an equivalent translation for a derogatory noun. Even though Alex is characterised by his frequent use of swearwords, the cluster of expletives in example (14) is exceptional even for him, which Henry remarks on. In the context of the scene, Alex is realising that sexual acts with Henry feel better than anything he has experienced, but being the stubborn and proud character that he is, Alex’s verbal reaction is to insult rather than to praise Henry.

There is also a second, less derogatory sense of *bastard* listed by the *OED*, which is a “mildly dismissive term for a person or (less commonly) an animal, often expressing familiarity”. Henry’s first use of *bastard*, which occurs in the same dialogue where example (10) is from, is an example of this weaker sense. As he and Alex are talking on the phone, Henry is interrupted first by the arrival of his dog David and then his sister’s cat.

(15a) [Henry:] “I really don’t think– *Oh, hello there.* [...] *Who ’za good lad, then?* David says hello.”  
 [Alex:] “Hi, David.”  
 [Henry:] “He – Oi! *Not* for you, Mr. Wobbles! Those are mine! [...] *No*, Mr. Wobbles, you **bastard!**”  
 [Alex:] “What in the fuck is a Mr. Wobbles?”  
 “My sister’s idiot cat,” Henry tells him. “The thing weighs a ton and still trying to steal my Jaffa Cakes. He and David are mates.” (*Royal Blue*, 80, italics as in the original)

(15b) “En nyt ihan usko – Hei, karvakasa! [...] Hyvä poika, hyvä poika. David lähettää terveisiä.”  
 ”Moi, David.”  
 ”Se – Hei! Ei saa, Herra Lyly! Ne ei ole sinulle! [...] Herra Lyly, *ei*, senkin **paskiainen!**”  
 ”Mikä helvetti on Herra Lyly?”  
 ”Siskoni typerä kissa”, Henry kertoo. ”Otus painaa jonkun tonnin ja yrittää silti syödä Jaffa-keksini. Se ja David on kavereita.” (*Punaista*, 82, italics as in the original)  
 [”I don’t really think – Hey, furball! Good boy, good boy. David sends his regards.” “Hi, David.” “He – Hey! Don’t, Mr. Wobbles! They’re not for you! Mr.

Wobbles, *no*, you little shit!” “What the hell is a Mr. Wobbles?” “My sister’s stupid cat”, Henry tells. “The creature weighs like a ton and is still trying to eat my Jaffa cakes. He and David are buddies.”]

*Paskiainen* is an offensive noun that roughly translates to ‘little shit’. It is usually used as a derogatory descriptor for a person, much like *bastard*. However, as it is derived from the swearword *paska* (‘shit’), *paskiainen* has a more forceful tone than *bastard* in this context, especially when directed at an animal. Despite this connotational difference, I would categorise this as an equivalent translation.

Henry’s second use of *bastard* is more typically directed at a person, as he uses it to refer to his brother Philip. Considering that Henry is not close with his pompous brother, he likely means *bastard* as an actual insult here. This dialogue occurs much later in the novel than example (15), when Henry is visiting Alex’s father’s lake house in Texas.

(16a) “Christ,” Henry says, slapping at a bug that’s landed on him, “what are these infernal creatures?”

“Mosquitos,” Alex supplies.

“They’re awful,” Henry says loftily. “I’m going to catch an exotic plague.”

“I’m... sorry?”

“I just mean to say, you know, Philip is the heir and I’m the spare, and if that **nervy bastard** has a heart attack at thirty-five and I’ve got malaria, whither the spare?” (*Royal Blue*, 263)

(16b) “Ei helvetti. Mitä nämä järkyttävät otukset on?” Henry kysyy läimien iholleen laskeutuneita ötököitä.

”Hyttysiä”, Alex vastaa.

”Ihan hirveitä”, Henry sanoo kopeasti. ”Saan jonkun eksoottisen rutan.”

”Öö... sori siitä?”

”Meinaan vaan, että jos Philip on kruununprinssi ja **täysin hermoraunio**, niin että jos se saa sydämin 35-vuotiaana ja minulla on malaria, niin mitä sitten tapahtuu?” (*Punaista*, 254)

[“No hell. What are these appalling creatures?” Henry asks, slapping bugs that have landed on his skin. “Mosquitos,” Alex replies. “They’re utterly horrible,” Henry says haughtily. “I’m going to catch some exotic plague.” “Um... sorry about that?” “I just mean that if Philip is the crown prince and a complete nervous wreck, that if he has a heart attack at 35 and I’ve got malaria, what will happen then?”]

The noun phrase *nervy bastard* is translated as *täysin hermoraunio*, which carries no derogatory force. The line is otherwise restructured, too, with no mention of Henry being the “spare”. The strategy used here is neutralisation.

As *dick* and *prick* are both slang words for the penis and terms of abuse (*OED*), it is conventional to discuss them simultaneously. *Dick* is used four times in the material, thrice by Alex and once by Henry. *Prick* is used twice by both characters. According to Ljung (2011, 131), both *dick* and *prick* are more common in American English. The first use of *dick* in Alex's speech is targeted at Henry: "You're such a *dick*" (*Royal Blue*, 79, italics as in the original), translated simply as "[k]usipää" (*Punaista*, 81). This is an equivalent translation, as although the literal meaning is changed, *kusipää* has a similar function as an insult as *dick*. Later, in example (17), Alex uses *dick* in its denotational sense, when Henry is about to leave his room after their first night together.

(17a) Alex follows him to the door, watching him turn to hover there awkwardly. "Well, er..." Henry attempts, looking down at his feet. Alex rolls his eyes. "For fuck's sake, man, you just had my **dick** in your mouth, you can kiss me good-night." (*Royal Blue*, 145)

(17b) Hän saattaa Henryn ovelle. Henry kääntyy ja jää kiusallisesti seisoskelemaan paikoilleen.  
"Noh, öö..." hän yrittää katse lattiassa.  
Alex pyörittelee silmiään. "Voi jumalauta nyt. Otit minulta äsken suihin, eli voit antaa hyvänyönsuukon." (*Punaista*, 144)  
[He walks Henry to the door. Henry turns and remains awkwardly standing in his place. "Well, uh..." he attempts, his gaze on the floor. Alex rolls his eyes. "Oh godhelp now. You just took from me in the mouth, so you can give me good-night's kiss."]

The translation retains the meaning of having oral sex, but the sentence is restructured so that there is no direct mention of a penis anymore. *Ottaa suihin* (idiom for giving a blowjob) is included in Paunonen and Paunonen's dictionary of Helsinki slang, in the sense of "take (a penis) in one's mouth" (Paunonen and Paunonen [2000] 2002, 749, my translation). It is not typical of only Helsinki slang, however, but rather is a more general colloquial phrase. Still, as there is no vulgar noun included in the TT line, I consider this a case of neutralisation.

Alex's other denotational use of *dick* is translated more literally. In example (18), after Alex and Henry have agreed to begin dating in secret, Henry reflects on his sexuality and love for queer royal history.

(18a) "It's funny," Henry says. "I always thought of the whole thing as the most unforgivable thing about me, but you act like it's one of the best."  
"Oh, yeah," Alex says. "The top list of reasons to love you goes brain, then **dick**, then imminent status as a revolutionary gay icon." (*Royal Blue*, 289)

(18b) “Hassu juttu. Asia, jonka ajattelin olevan minussa kaikkein pahinta, onkin sinun mielestäsi minussa parasta”, Henry sanoo.

”Todellakin. Lista syistä, miksi rakastan sinua: aivot, **kyrpä** ja se, että sinusta tulee pian vallankumouksellinen homoesikuva.” (*Punaista*, 277)

[“A funny thing. You think that the thing I thought was the worst about me is the best about me”, Henry says. “For real. A list of the reasons why I love you: brain, dick, and the fact that you will soon become a revolutionary gay role model.”]

*Kyrpä* is the Finnish equivalent of *dick* both in its vulgarity and literal meaning (*Kielitoimiston sanakirja*). This is a direct, equivalent translation.

Henry’s only use of *dick* is directed at Alex, when they are about to share a bed for the first time. Given the context, there is little force behind the insult.

(19a) ”Well, come on, Your Highness,” Alex says, shifting his weight to give Henry a last tease before he stands.

“You’re a **dick**,” Henry says, but he follows, smiling. (*Royal Blue*, 139)

(19b) ”Tulkaas sitten, teidän kuninkaallinen korkeutenne.” Alex kiusaa Henryä hieraisemalla lantiotaan tätä vasten vielä kerran ennen kuin nousee.

”Olet **perseestä**”, Henry sanoo, mutta seuraa Alexia hymyillen. (*Punaista*, 137)

[“Come on then, Your Royal Highness.” Alex teases Henry by rubbing his pelvis against him one last time before he gets up. “You are from ass”, Henry says, but follows Alex, smiling.]

”Olet perseestä” literally means ‘you are from ass’ and therefore refers to a different body part, but it works functionally as a translation of the ST phrase. Considering that Henry says this “smiling”, a more direct translation, such as *kyrpä*, could have been too derogatory in tone. Once again, this is a case of equivalent translation.

All four uses of *prick* are from the same dialogue, which is chronologically the first dialogue I have included from the material. Henry asks Alex why he hates him, to which Alex replies:

“Do you really not remember being a **prick** to me at the Olympics?” (*Royal Blue*, 49). This is translated as “Etkö ihan oikeasti muista, miten **paskasti** käyttädyit minua kohtaan silloin Riossa?” [Do you really not remember how shitty you acted towards me back in Rio?]

(*Punaista*, 53). The noun *prick* becomes the adverb *paskasti* [‘in a shitty manner’] but both the ST and TT lines convey the meaning that Henry’s behaviour had greatly offended Alex, making this an equivalent translation. When Henry does not seem to remember, Alex repeats the word *prick* more forcefully: “It was the time you were a *condescending prick* at the diving finals. You really don’t remember?” (*Royal Blue*, 50, italics as in the original). However, the translation is different this time: ”[S]e kerta, kun käyttädyit kuin ylimielinen **mulkku**

uimahypyn finaaleissa. Etkö oikeasti muista?” [The time you acted like an arrogant prick at the diving finals. Do you really not remember?] (*Punaista*, 53). *Mulkku* is a vulgar word for penis that is also used to describe an obnoxious person (*Kielitoimiston sanakirja*), making it a Finnish equivalent of *prick*. The different translation is most likely the result of the adjective *ylimielinen*, which fits more naturally into a noun phrase.

A little later in the same scene, after Alex has opened up about the pressure that he feels in his position (see example (1)), Henry replies, echoing Alex’s use of the word *prick*.

(20a) I can’t very well do much about the rest. But I can tell you I was, in fact, a **prick** that day. Not that it’s any excuse, but my father had died fourteen months before, and I was still kind of a **prick** every day of my life at the time. And I am sorry. (*Royal Blue*, 51)

(20b) Tiedän, että olin täysi **mulkku** Riossa [...] Ja ei sillä, että haluaisin jotenkin puolustella itseäni, mutta isä oli kuollut vain vähän reilu vuosi sitä ennen ja olin niihin aikoihin täysi **mulkku** ihan kaikkia kohtaan. Mutta siis anteeksi.”

(*Punaista*, 54)

[I know I was I a complete prick in Rio. And not that I’d like to make excuses for myself, but father had died just over a year before that and I was a complete prick towards everyone at the time. But I mean, I’m sorry.]

The fact that this is the only time Henry uses the word *prick*, just after Alex has called him that, is a sign of Henry’s sincerity. He accepts the term and acknowledges that his behaviour was wrong. In the TT, the repetition of the word *mulkku* achieves the same effect.

The final vulgar noun under discussion is *wanker*, used once by Henry. According to the *OED*, *wanker* is a slang word originating in British English. Its denotational meaning is a “person who masturbates” and it is also used as a general “term of contempt”. Just as Ljung (2011, 131) notes that *dick* and *prick* are more typical in American English, he classifies *wanker* as a British term. Based on this, *wanker* could also be included in the category of regional slang.

In example (21), Henry has just told Alex on the phone about his sister’s addiction and other troubles in the royal family since his father’s death. Henry admits that he has never told anyone about it, after which the following conversation happens.

(21a) [Alex:] “I’m glad you told me. Does it feel better at all to have said it?”  
[...] Alex hears a swallow across the line, and Henry says, “I suppose so. Thank you. For listening.”

“Yeah, of course,” Alex tells him. “I mean, it’s good to have times when it’s not all about me, as tedious and exhausting as it may be.”

That earns him a groan, and he bites back a smile when Henry says, “You are a *wanker*.” (*Royal Blue*, 169, italics as in the original)

(21b) “Hyvä kun kerroit. Onko yhtään parempi olo?”

[...] Henry nielaisee, ja sitten sanoo: ”Kyllä vähän. Kiitos kun kuuntelit.”

”Koska vaan”, Alex vastaa. ”Joskus on ihan hyvä puhua muustakin kuin minusta, niin sairaan tylsää ja rasittavaa kuin se onkin.”

Alexia hymyilyttää, kun Henry voihkaisee:

”**Hiton runkkari**.” (*Punaista*, 167)

[”It’s good that you told me. Do you feel any better?” Henry swallows and says:

“A little bit. Thank you for listening.” “Anytime”, Alex replies. “Sometimes it’s quite good to talk about other things than just me, as tedious and exhausting as that is.” Alex wants to smile, when Henry groans: “Damn’s wanker.”]

This is another example of Henry calling Alex names in a context that decreases the force these vulgar words would otherwise have. Considering this, the Finnish translation comes off as stronger than the original line, as although *runkkari* is the literal equivalent of *wanker* in Finnish slang, in the TT line there is also an addition of the modifier *hiton* (‘damn’s’).

*Runkkari* is already quite a derogatory word, so in terms of meaning, there is no clear reason for this addition. My assumption is that the Finnish line simply sounded more idiomatic than *olet runkkari* would have. In any case, this is an example of equivalent translation.

In total, equivalent translation is clearly the dominant strategy in rendering vulgar nouns into Finnish, occurring ten times in Alex’s lines and seven times in Henry’s. Neutralisation is used twice for each character, while omission has only one occurrence in one of Alex’s lines.

#### 4.2.2 Regional features

In this subsection, the focus is on features representing American and British regionalities and slang. The words selected from Alex’s speech are *douchey*, *dope*, *nutso* and *y’all*. Henry’s regional lexis includes the words *mate*, *bloke*, *numpty*, *daft* and *knackered*.

##### *American features used by Alex*

The first of Alex’s regional features to be reviewed is *douchey*, which is an adjective in U.S. slang defined by *Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary* as “characteristic or having the qualities of a douchebag: obnoxiously annoying, offensive or dislikable”. It is used by Alex once in the material, when he tells Henry why he bears a grudge towards him.

(22a) [Alex:] “I walked up to you to introduce myself, and you stared at me like I was the most offensive thing you had ever seen. Right after you shook my hand, you turned to Shaan and said, ‘Can you get rid of him?’”

[...]

“Ah,” Henry says. [...] “I didn’t realize you’d heard that.”

“I feel like you’re missing the point,” Alex says, “which is that it’s a **douchey** thing to say either way.” (*Royal Blue*, 50)

(22b) “Yritin esittäytyä sinulle, mutta tuijotit minua kuin olisin vastenmielisintä mitä olet koskaan nähnyt. Ja heti käteltyämme sanoit Shaanille: ’Voitko käskeä hänet pois?’”

[...]

”Aivan”, Henry sanoo ja yskäisee. ”En tajunnut, että kuudit.”

”Epäolennaista”, Alex sanoo. ”Kuulin tai en, on tosi **vittumaista** ylipäätään sanoa niin.” (*Punaista*, 53)

[”I tried to introduce myself to you, but you stared at me like I was the most repulsive thing you have ever seen. And right after we shook hands you said to Shaan: ‘Can you order him away?’ ‘Right’, Henry says and coughs. ‘I didn’t realise you heard it.’ ‘Irrelevant’, Alex says. ‘Whether I heard it or not, it’s really cunty to say that in the first place.’”]

Although *douchey* is used here to mean ‘offensive’, neither *Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary* nor the *OED* classifies it as a vulgar word. However, Auranheimo has translated it as the adjective *vittumainen* (‘cunty’) which is derived from the swearword *vittu* and, according to *Kielitoimiston sanakirja*, is a vulgar word meaning nasty, annoying or repulsive. Even though it carries a similar connotation as *douchey*, the translation is significantly stronger. However, it is in line with Alex’s abundant use of vulgar language. I consider this to be the only instance of recategorization in the material, as an ST regional word is replaced with a TT swearword. This may also be a form of compensation, as Auranheimo has omitted many of the ST swearwords elsewhere.

*Dope*, in its adjective form, comes from African American English and is used “[c]hiefly among rap musicians” to mean “excellent, great, impressive” (*OED*). Alex uses *dope* once, when he asks Henry about his last name: “Do you use your dad’s? Henry Fox? That sounds fucking **dope**” (*Royal Blue*, 163). Since Alex is not Black, *dope* is likely used as just another example of his informal, slang-filled vocabulary. In the translation, the corresponding line is “Käytätkö isäsi nimeä? Oletko Henry Fox? Kuulostaa helvetin **siistiltä**” [Do you use your dad’s name? Are you Henry Fox? Sounds hell’s neat] (*Punaista*, 161). *Siisti* (‘neat’) is a generally used slang word that refers to something great or admirable (*Kielitoimiston sanakirja*). The translation conveys Alex’s characteristically coarse compliment and retains the colloquial tone. Thus, I consider this an example of the colloquialisation strategy.

*Nutso*, an adjective that, according to *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*, is predominantly American and can mean either “not mentally sound” or “absurd”, is also used by Alex once in the material, in the same dialogue where *dope* appears. Alex hears from Henry's voice that something is troubling him, prompting him to say the following line:

(23a) You know, this whole arrangement we have... you can tell me stuff. I tell you stuff all the time. Politics stuff and school stuff and **nutso family stuff**. I know I'm, like, not the paragon of normal human communication, but. You know. (*Royal Blue*, 165)

(23b) Tästä meidän jutusta sen verran, että... Voit kyllä kertoa minulle asioistasi. Minäkin kerron koko ajan kaikenlaista. Puhun politiikasta ja koulusta ja **perhesekoiluista**. Tiedän, etten ole itsekään mikään malliyksilö tässä suhteessa, mutta... Tajuat varmaan. (*Punaista*, 163)

[About this thing we have... You can tell me about your things. I tell you all kinds of things all the time, too. I talk about politics and school and crazy family stuff. I know I'm not the model specimen in this regard, either, but... You probably get it.]

The phrase “nutso family stuff” probably refers to an earlier conversation where Alex told Henry about his parents' divorce and their fight at the White House Christmas dinner. In the context of the line, both meanings of *nutso* are applicable. Auranheimo has decided on the translation *perhesekoilut*, which literally means ‘family craziness (plural)’. The translation is a compound noun rather than a noun phrase determined by an adjective. While there is no mention on *Kielitoimiston sanakirja* of *sekoilu* being a colloquial word, it is included in Paunonen and Paunonen's dictionary of Helsinki slang, in the meaning of talking excessively or speaking or behaving in an incoherent manner (Paunonen and Paunonen [2000] 2002, 972). I classify this as a colloquial translation, although *sekoilu* also appears in standard Finnish.

The last of Alex's regional slang words in the material is the pronoun *y'all*, which the *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary* defines as a mainly Southern U.S. word meaning *you*, “usually used in addressing two or more persons”. As mentioned in section 4.1, Alex has grown up in Texas, but in most of the material, his regional origin is not clearly marked in his dialogue. Even this typically Southern pronoun appears only once in the material, just before the pair's major fight. In example (24), the distraught Alex has just arrived in Kensington Palace to confront Henry.

(24a) Really nice [...] Fuckin' ghost me for a week, make me stand in the rain like a brown John Cusack, and now you won't even talk to me. [...] I can see why **y'all** had to marry your fucking cousins. (*Royal Blue*, 270)

(24b) Tosi jees! [...] Et vastaa vittu viikkoon, pakotat seisomaan sateessa kuin mikäkin ruskea John Cusack etkä suostu edes puhumaan. Ihan sikakivaa. Tajuan nyt, miksi **teidän sakkinne** on aina pakko naida serkkujanne.” (*Punaista*, 259–260).

[Very nice! You don't answer for a cunt week, you force me to stand in the rain like some brown John Cusack and you refuse to even talk. So pig nice. I realise now why your lot must always marry your cousins.]

By *y'all*, Alex refers to the royal family as a whole, creating an unusual contrast between the regional pronoun and the formality associated with royals. In addition, the rest of the sentence “y'all had to marry your fucking cousins” makes it clear that Alex is insulting the royal family and, by extension, Henry himself. As with all regionally marked words, there is no direct equivalent for *y'all* in Finnish nor any non-standard second person plural pronoun that would not be associated with a Finnish regional dialect. Auranheimo has found a suitable solution by using the translation “teidän sakkinne” (‘your lot, your gang’). *Sakki* is a colloquial noun referring to a group of people (*Kielitoimiston sanakirja*), but also a regional noun in the Lapua dialect carrying the same meaning (Vocabulary of Lapua dialect at HELEMI historical database of Lapua). Similarly to *y'all*, *sakki* would not typically be used about royalty, much less when addressing them. The translation strategy used here is colloquialisation.

#### *British features used by Henry*

In Henry's dialogue chosen for the material, regional British features are more recurring than the American features in Alex's speech. *Bloke*, for example, appears three times. *Bloke* is a slang word for a man or a fellow (*OED*), and according to *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*, it is “chiefly British”. In *Punaista*, it is consistently translated as *jätkä*, also an informal word for a man (*Kielitoimiston sanakirja*), as in example (25).

(25a) ”D’you ever wonder,” [Henry] says slowly, “what it’s like to be some anonymous person in the world?”  
Alex frowns. “What do you mean?”  
“Just, you know,” Henry says. “If your mum weren’t the president and you were just a normal **bloke** living a normal life, what things might be like? What you’d be doing instead?” (*Royal Blue*, 106)

(25b) Hän sanoo hitaasti: “Mietitkö ikinä, miltä tuntuisi olla joku ihan tavallinen tyyppi?”

Alex irvistää. ”Ai niin kuin miten?”

”Siis jos vaikka äitisi ei olisi presidentti, ja sinä olisit vaan joku tavallinen, normaalia elämää elävä **jätkä**”, Henry sanoo. ”Mitä sinä silloin tekisit?”

(*Punaista*, 106)

[He says slowly: ”Do you ever wonder how it would feel like to be some completely ordinary guy?” Alex grimaces. “Oh like how?” “So if like your

mother weren't the president, and you were just some ordinary guy living a normal life", Henry says. "What would you do then?"]

This is an example of colloquialisation. It must be noted that there is no attempt from the translator to mark *jätkä* as a word belonging to Henry's idiolect, since Alex uses it too, although only once in the material, as a translation of *guy*.

*Mate*, in the meaning of *friend*, is also a mainly British noun and a common form of address, especially talking to a man (*Merriam-Webster's Dictionary, OED*). Henry uses it in the previously discussed example (15), when talking about his sister's cat Mr. Wobbles and his dog David: "He and David are **mates**" (*Royal Blue*, 80). This is translated as "[s]e ja David on **kavereita**" [It and David are buddies] (*Punaista*, 82). *Kaveri* is not always a colloquial word: according to *Kielitoimiston sanakirja*, it can mean either a friend (not colloquial) or a guy (colloquial). As the context makes it clear that Henry is talking about the pets being friendly with each other, I would call this a neutralised translation.

According to the *OED*, both *daft* and *numpty* are British (mostly Scottish) regional words referring to stupidity, although *daft* is solely an adjective, while *numpty* can be a noun (in the meaning of 'idiot') or an adjective ('foolish'). *Numpty* is explicitly named as a slang word by the *OED*, while *daft* is only classified as regional. According to *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*, however, *daft* is also an informal word. *Daft* is used twice by Henry, both times referring to his own behaviour. Example (26) takes place just after Alex has called Henry an "obtuse fucking asshole" (example (13)). In his apology, Henry refers to his sudden departure from Alex's father's lake house and his fear of Alex confessing his love.

(26a) I am sorry about that [...] I – I wasn't ready to hear it. That night, at the lake... it was the first time I let myself think you might actually say it. I panicked, and it was **daft** and unfair, and I won't do it again. (*Royal Blue*, 279)

(26b) Olen tosi pahoillani. Silloin teidän huvilalla... Se oli ensimmäinen kerta, kun uskalsin kuvitella, että voisit oikeasti sanoa ne sanat, enkä ollut valmis kuulemaan niitä [...] Menin paniikkiin, ja olin tosi **hölmö** ja epäreilu. Ei tule toistumaan. (*Punaista*, 268)

[I'm really sorry. That time at your villa... It was the first time I dared to imagine that you could actually say those words, and I wasn't ready to hear them. I panicked, and I was really stupid and unfair. It won't happen again.]

*Hölmö* is both an adjective and a noun meaning silly or stupid (*Kielitoimiston sanakirja*), so the denotational meaning remains the same in the translation. Instead of referring to his action of leaving ("it was daft"), in the TT Henry says that *he* was really stupid ("olin tosi hölmö").

In both cases, Henry is admitting that what he did was wrong, but the translation appears more self-blaming, especially with the addition of the adverb *tosi* ('really'). Regarding the translation strategy, since *hölmö* is not a colloquial word, I would consider this a neutralised translation.

*Numpty* is used once by Henry, in the same dialogue where example (10) is from. When Alex is stressing about going to sleep with the turkeys in his room, Henry says: "Go sleep in June's room, you **numpty**" (*Royal Blue*, 84). This is translated as "Mene Junen huoneeseen nukkumaan, **pönttö**" [Go sleep in June's room, dummy] (*Punaista*, 84). *Pönttö* is a colloquial noun for a foolish person (*Kielitoimiston sanakirja*), making this an example of colloquialisation.

The last British regionalism to be discussed here is the adjective *knackered*. According to the *OED*, it is a participial adjective form of the verb *knacker*, which is a slang word meaning *to kill, to exhaust*. *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary* states that the adjective is more commonly used in Britain than the U.S. Henry uses *knackered* once in the material, on the night before he leaves the lake house. Henry's distant tone makes Alex aware that something is wrong.

(27a) Alex laughs weakly again, but he's got a distinct feeling of something being pulled out of his hands right before he could grasp it. Henry's tone has gone light, clipped, superficial. His press voice.

"At any rate, I'm **knackered**," Henry is saying now. [...] "If it's all the same to you, I think I'll go to bed."

Alex doesn't know what to say, so he watches Henry walk the long line of the dock, disappearing into the darkness. (*Royal Blue*, 263–264)

(27b) Alex nauraa taas heikosti. Tuntuu, että jokin on livennyt hänen otteestaan pahemman kerran. Henryn äänensävy on kevyt, terävä ja pinnallinen, lehdistöääni.

"Oli miten oli, olen **ihan kuitti**", Henry sanoo. [...] "Menen nukkumaan, jos sopii."

Alex on sanaton. Henry katoaa laituria pitkin pimeyteen. (*Punaista*, 254)

[Alex laughs weakly again. It feels like something has slipped from his grasp big time. Henry's tone is light, sharp and superficial, the press voice. "Anyway, I'm completely spent", Henry says. "I'll go to sleep if that's okay." Alex is speechless. Henry disappears along the dock into the darkness.]

*Kuitti*, besides its literal meaning of 'receipt', is also a colloquial word for 'exhausted' (*Kielitoimiston sanakirja*). Thus, it shares the connotational meaning of *knackered* and is another instance of the colloquialisation strategy.

Next, I shift my attention to the final category of idiolectal features, which consists of such recurring words and phrases that were not included in the categories discussed above.

### 4.2.3 Recurring words and phrases

In addition to the aforementioned lexical features, there are also a few idiolectal words and phrases that recur in Alex and Henry's speech but do not fit in either of the previous categories. I have selected three such features for each character: the terms of endearment *sweetheart*, *baby* and *babe* for Alex, and the adverb *quite* and the idiomatic phrase *I suppose* and its negative form *I don't suppose* for Henry.

#### *Alex's recurring features*

*Sweetheart*, *baby* and *babe* are all terms of endearment Alex uses to address Henry. *Sweetheart* occurs three times in the material, as does *babe*. *Baby* appears only twice, but it is arguably more meaningful than *babe* in the dialogues.

Alex first calls Henry *sweetheart* at a very early point in the novel, when he still views the prince antagonistically and uses the term sarcastically. According to the *OED*, in addition to its earnest meaning, *sweetheart* may also be used "ironically or contemptuously". In example (28), Alex and Henry have been shoved by security into a hospital's cleaning cupboard because of a sudden shooting-like sound. Alex tries to start a fight, which Henry stops by "pinning [Alex] down with one thigh" (*Royal Blue*, 47). The following dialogue occurs:

(28a) "So you *do* have some fight in you," Alex says. He bucks his hips, trying to shake Henry off, but he's taller and stronger and has a fistful of Alex's collar. "Are you *quite* finished?" Henry says, sounding strangled. "Can you perhaps stop putting your sodding life in danger now?" "Aw, you do care," Alex says. "I'm learning all your hidden depths today, **sweetheart**." (*Royal Blue*, 47–48, italics as in the original)

(28b) "Et siis olekaan *aivan* nössö", Alex sanoo. Hän yrittää pukata Henryn pois päältäään lantiollaan, mutta Henry on häntä pidempi ja vahvempi ja pitelee häntä paidankauluksesta.

"Joko lopetit?" Henry sihahtaa. "Vai vieläkö aiot vittu vaarantaa henkesi?"

"Voi **mur**, sinä siis välität minusta", Alex sanoo. "Kiva päästä näkemään todellinen minäsi." (*Punaista*, 51, italics as in the original)

[ "So you're not *completely* wimpy", Alex says. He tries to push Henry off from the top of him with his hips, but Henry is taller and stronger than him and holds him by the shirt collar. "Are you done now?" Henry hisses. "Or are you still going to cunt put your life in danger?" "Oh crumb, so you care about me", Alex says. "Nice to get to see your real self." ]

It is clear from the context that Alex calls Henry *sweetheart* mockingly rather than to genuinely show affection. The translation's equivalent of *sweetheart*, *mur*, has been transferred from the end of Alex's line to the beginning, most likely for idiomatic reasons, but its context and sarcastic tone stays the same. In addition to its literal meaning of 'crumb', *mur* is a term of endearment for a lover or a child (*Kielitoimiston sanakirja*). It is a suitable equivalent translation for *sweetheart*.

Alex uses *sweetheart* for the second time after his relationship with Henry has turned intimate, although he has not yet admitted to any deeper feelings. Example (29) is from the same conversation as example (23), namely the phone call during which Henry opens up about his family.

(29a) "I'm not... historically great at talking about things," Henry says.  
 "Well, I wasn't historically great at blowjobs, but we all gotta learn and grow, **sweetheart.**" (*Royal Blue*, 165)

(29b) "En ole koskaan ollut kovin hyvä puhumaan omista asioistani", Henry sanoo.  
 "Hei, en minäkään ennen ollut sairaan hyvä imemään munaa, mutta aina voi oppia uutta." (*Punaista*, 163)  
 ["I've never been very good at talking about my personal stuff", Henry says.  
 "Hey, I wasn't sick good at sucking dick before either, but you can always learn new things."]

Much like in the previous example, Alex uses *sweetheart* in a humorous retort, but the context gives it a more affectionate tone. The objective behind the line is also different: Alex attempts to persuade Henry to share his worries and, as becomes evident from the next example, sweet-talking is one of his methods to reach this goal. In the translation, *sweetheart* has been completely omitted. The direct meaning of Alex's line is mostly retained in the TT, but from the viewpoint of characterisation and the purpose behind Alex's reply, a shift has occurred.

The third appearance of *sweetheart* is the most straightforward. In the lake house, when Alex has realised that he is in love with Henry, he simply calls him "[s]weetheart" (*Royal Blue*, 263), and while there is no tone of voice given in the narration, it is obvious from the scene that this time, it is purely a verbal indication of Alex's love. It is translated accordingly as "[r]akas" ['love'] (*Punaista*, 253), which is an equivalent translation, although not the same as *mur* before.

*Baby* is first used by Alex soon after example (29), when Henry is still hesitating to talk and Alex decides to use his weakness, which is the word *baby*.

(30a) [Alex] rolls over to his stomach, considers, and very deliberately says, “**Baby.**”

It’s become a thing: *baby*. He knows it’s become a thing. He’s slipped up and accidentally said it a few times, and each time, Henry positively melts and Alex pretends not to notice, but he’s not above playing dirty here. (*Royal Blue*, 166, italics as in the original)

(30b) Alex kääntyy vatsalleen, miettii ja sanoo sitten erittäin laskelmoidusti: ”**Kulta.**”

*Kulta*. Sen sanomisesta on tullut heidän juttunsa. Alex on siitä ihan tietoinen. Hän on sanonut sen vahingossa muutamaan otteeseen, saanut joka kerta Henryn suorastaan sulamaan, ja esittänyt, ettei huomaa. Mutta vähän likaista peliähän tässä pelataan. (*Punaista*, 163–164, italics as in the original)

[Alex turns over to his stomach, thinks and then very calculatingly says: “Gold.” *Gold*. Saying it has become their thing. Alex is wholly aware of it. He has said it accidentally a few times, has each time caused Henry to downright melt and pretended that he doesn’t notice. But the game played here is a little dirty, after all.]

It is revealed in the narration that Alex has not intended to call Henry *baby* but has “slipped up”, implying that he has wanted to use the term but felt it to be too intimate. After all, the two are not properly a couple at this point. In this scene, however, Alex uses *baby* intentionally for the first time, which manages to make Henry talk. The Finnish translation *kulta* (‘gold’) is functionally equivalent to *baby*, but the TT narration creates a slightly different impression than the original. “Sen sanomisesta on tullut heidän juttunsa” implies that both Alex and Henry have used the word, while the ST narration rather clearly states that only Alex has called Henry *baby*, and not the other way around. The idiolectal pattern is thus altered.

*Babe*, according to the *OED*, is a U.S. slang term for lover and, like *baby* and *sweetheart*, is a common term of endearment. All three uses of *babe* are omitted in the translation, for example Alex’s line “[w]here’s this going, **babe?**” (*Royal Blue*, 278) becomes “[m]itä yrität sanoa?” [what are you trying to say?] (*Punaista*, 267). The TT line is in standard Finnish with no colloquial features. Alex says this line the morning after his fight with Henry and his confession of love, and although the omission of *babe* does not alter the meaning of the question, it does remove a sign of Alex’s affection and dissipated anger.

Finally, example (31) is from the last dialogue chosen for the material. In this scene, suspicion has risen in the media about the nature of Alex and Henry’s relationship, and to divert their attention, Henry pretends to date Alex’s sister June. After an arranged lunch meeting between

Henry and June, Henry is allowed to secretly meet with Alex in a car, where Alex tries to comfort his despondent boyfriend.

(31a) "It's not fucking *fair!*" [Henry] goes on, his voice nearly breaking. "My shit ancestors walked around doing a thousand times worse than any of this, and nobody *cared!*"

"***Baby,***" Alex says, moving his hand to Henry's chin to bring him back down. "I know. I'm so sorry, **babe.** But it won't be like this forever, okay? I promise." (*Royal Blue*, 312, italics as in the original)

(31b) "Kaikki on niin saatanan epäreilua!" Henry jatkaa ääni lähes särkyen.

"Kusipäiset esi-isäni sai tehdä ties mitä kauheuksia, eikä ketään kiinnostanut!"

"**Kulta.**" Alexin käsi liukuu rauhoittavasti Henryn leualle. "Tiedän. Olen niin pahoillani. Mutta tämä ei kestä ikuisesti. Lupaani sen." (*Punaista*, 298)

[*"Everything is so satan's unfair!"*] Henry goes on, voice nearly breaking. "My pissheaded ancestors could do who knows what terrible things, and no one was interested!" "Gold." Alex's hand slides calmly to Henry's chin. "I know. I'm so sorry. But this won't last forever. I promise that.]"

*Baby* is once again translated as *kulta*, but *babe* is omitted completely, reducing the tenderness of Alex's words. Also, the lack of italics affects the strength with which Alex is supposedly saying *baby*. He deliberately counters Henry's desperation with affection and words of comfort, even though he too hates the situation.

### *Henry's recurring features*

The adverb *quite* is used by Henry seven times in the material, preceding either an adjective, verb or adverb. According to the *OED*, *quite* has three distinct senses: it can act as an intensifier, emphazier or moderating adverb. *Quite* occurs in Henry's speech in all three senses, although they are not all easily distinguishable from one other. Below, I give one example of each sense.

When used as an intensifier, *quite* means *completely* or "to the utmost extent or degree" (*OED*). This use appears in example (28), when Henry angrily asks Alex if he is "***quite*** finished" with fighting (*Royal Blue*, 48, italics as in the original). The italics indicate the significance of the adverb *quite*, which Henry uses to punctuate his frustration. The translation "[j]oko lopetit?" [did you stop already?] (*Punaista*, 51) has no equivalent for *quite*, and the adjective *finished* is converted to the verb *lopetit*, the second person singular past tense of *lopettaa* ('to stop'). As a result, there is no emphasis on a specific word. I would classify this as an omission.

The emphasizer *quite* is synonymous to *truly*, *definitely* or *considerably* (*OED*). It is used by Henry when he brings Alex to the V&A Museum, right after example (18).

(32a) [Henry:] You are **quite** literally Queen Victoria's worst nightmare.

[Alex:] And that's why *you* love *me*.

[Henry:] My God, you're right. All this time, I was just after the bloke who'd most infuriate my homophobic forebears. (*Royal Blue*, 289, italics as in the original)

(32b) [Henry:] Taidat **todella** olla Viktorian pahin painajainen.

[Alex:] Ja siksi sinä taas rakastat minua.

[Henry:] Ei hitto, oikeassa olet. Olen koko ikäni etsinyt jätkää, joka saisi homofobiset esivanhempani täysin raivon valtaan. (*Punaista*, 277)

[You really seem to be Victoria's worst nightmare. And that is why you love me. No damn, you are right. I've searched all my life for a guy who would cause my homophobic ancestors to be completely consumed by rage.]

*Quite* is translated as *todella* ('really'), which in this context is an equivalent translation, although as a whole, Henry's line in the translation is less straightforward than the original, as it features the verb *taitaa* ('appear to be', 'seem to be') instead of *olla* ('to be').

In its third sense, *quite* means "to a certain or significant extent or degree" (*OED*). According to the *OED*, *quite* as a modifier of an adjective, verb or adverb is rare in North American English. As such, *quite* in this sense may be considered a regional feature for Henry. The clearest example of this use is Henry's line "I'm **quite** confused" (*Royal Blue*, 150), translated as "[o]len **vähän** pihalla" [I'm a little baffled] (*Punaista*, 149). *Vähän* ('a bit', 'a little') is an adverb with roughly the same meaning as *quite* in this context and is another example of an equivalent translation.

The final idiolectal feature discussed in this subsection is the phrase *I suppose*, which Henry uses three times, and its negative form *I don't suppose*, appearing twice in the material. These are mostly fixed, idiomatic phrases, referring to assumption. *Suppose* can signify "uncertainty in making an observation, esp. about oneself" (*OED*), which is fitting for a character like Henry, who has low self-esteem. He also uses *suppose* to 'soften' his utterances. When telling Alex about his sister's addiction and her return to rehabilitation, Henry says the following line:

(33a) The next day, she went back, and she's been clean ever since, and neither of us has ever told anyone about that night. Until now, **I suppose**. And I'm not sure why I've said all this, I just, I've never really said any of it. I mean, Pez was there for the most of it, so, and I—I don't know. (*Royal Blue*, 169)

(33b) Se meni takaisin vieroitukseen seuraavana päivänä ja on ollut kuivilla siitä asti. Kumpikaan meistä ei ole kertonut kenellekään mitä sinä yönä tapahtui. **Tai siis** ei ennen kuin nyt. Enkä tiedä, miksi edes selitän tätä juttua, tai siis että en ole ikinä sanonut näitä juttuja ääneen. Pez oli tietysti läsnä suurimman osan ajasta, mutta siis, niin. (*Punaista*, 167)

[She went back to rehab the next day and has been dry ever since that. Neither of us has told anyone what happened that night. Or like, not until now. And I don't know why I'm even explaining this story, or like I've never said these things aloud. Pez was of course there for most of the time, but like, so.]

Henry corrects himself, realising that he has just told Alex a very personal story. Instead of simply saying 'until now', he adds the phrase *I suppose*, followed by clumsy, hesitant sentences that further emphasise his uncertainty. The Finnish translation "tai siis" ['or like'] is moved to the beginning of the sentence and has a different denotational meaning, as it is said when making a correction or revoking a previous statement. As a result, the focus of the TT sentence is on Henry correcting his words, rather than in his hesitation. This is a difficult case to categorise, but perhaps neutralisation describes it best.

*I don't suppose*, according to the *OED*, is "used to express a question tentatively". This is quite a formal way to begin a question and is fitting for both Henry's family background and his character. Example (34) takes place after Alex has attended Henry's charity polo match in Connecticut and been intimate with him for the second time. The two are about to say their goodbyes, with Henry's formality contrasted with Alex's brashness.

(34a) "**I don't suppose** you'll be anywhere near Kensington anytime soon?"  
"That shithole?" [Alex] says with a wink. "Not if I can help it." (*Royal Blue*, 151)

(34b) "**Et varmaan** pyöri missään Kensingtonin suunnalla lähiaikoina?"  
"Ai sen vanhan murjun?" Alex iskee silmää. "En, jos ei ole ihan pakko."  
(*Punaista*, 150)

["You probably won't hang around anywhere in the direction of Kensington in the near future?" "Oh that old dump?" Alex winks. "I won't, if it's not really necessary."]

Content-wise, Henry's question is unnecessarily complex. In addition to the phrase *I don't suppose*, *anywhere* and *anytime* are filler words with no purpose, except for characterisation. In the translation, Henry's agency in the question is removed, and instead he directly addresses Alex with "[e]t varmaan" [you probably won't]. There still remains a negative declarative clause, which achieves a similar effect as the original line. Functionally, this counts as an equivalent translation. Alex's vulgar reply, on the other hand, is neutralised.

The second appearance of the phrase *I don't suppose* is translated in the same manner as in example (34). Henry asks Alex: “**I don't suppose** you keep up with any British tabloids, do you?” (*Royal Blue*, 166) which is translated as “**Et varmaan** lue täkäläisiä juorulehtiä?” [You probably don't read gossip magazines that come from here?] (*Punaista*, 164). Again, this is an equivalent translation.

Now that all of the idiolectal features have been reviewed, I proceed to the discussion section, where I examine the distribution of the translation strategies in further detail. Finally, I present the results of this case study.

### 4.3 Discussion

Following the results of the analysis, the differences between Alex and Henry's idiolects are evident. The idiolectal features appearing in their dialogue both corroborate the characterisation provided by the narration (for example, the characters' regional slang matches the nationalities given to them) and further add to their characterisation, revealing Alex's unapologetic bluntness and Henry's formal uncertainty, for example.

Table 5 depicts the total distribution of translation strategies used in the TT material. Equivalent translation is by far the most prevalent strategy, being used 89 times in total. The second most used strategy is omission, with 37 features omitted in total. This is noteworthy, since these two strategies are the furthest from each other (of course, the true opposite strategy to omission would be direct transfer of the ST feature, which was not a strategy used in the TT material).

Table 5. Total distribution of translation strategies by character.

Translation strategy	Alex's lines	Henry's lines
equivalent translation	59	30
neutralisation	13	15
omission	22	15
colloquialisation	3	6
recategorization	1	0

When examining which features have most often been translated with an equivalent Finnish word, the most noticeable category is swearwords and other vulgar lexis (which, admittedly, also contains the most features overall). Typically, swearwords do not need to be translated

literally, as an idiomatic translation often achieves the same effect as the original expression. However, as mentioned in subsection 4.2.1, the variety of translations also leads to Alex and Henry's vulgar expressions being less idiolectal to their characters, as there are no distinct "personal" swearwords that recur in one character's speech, such as *fucking* and *bloody* are in the ST material. Alex's most used TT swearwords, *helvetti* and *vittu*, are, in many cases, translations for *fuck* or *fucking*, but as a whole, the repetitive and consequently, idiolectal nature of the ST feature is omitted in favour of a variety of idiomatic equivalent translations. What has been preserved in translation is Alex's more prevalent use of swearwords compared to Henry, although the vulgar features are overall reduced in the TT.

The omission strategy is applied to several different features throughout the material, but some recurring patterns can be distinguished. For example, the word *bloody* is omitted in five out of its eight appearances. As discussed, *bloody* is (originally) a British regional intensifier that is used as part of Henry's dialect, as well as a relatively mild vulgarism. Because of its regionality, there is no established Finnish equivalent for *bloody*, compared to, for instance, how the words *fuck* and *vittu* function as a 'pair' (Hjort 2015). As Auranheimo's translations of swearwords prioritise idiomatic fluency over their characterising use, it may be assumed that she found it more sensible to omit the word *bloody* rather than translate it with a word that might not be suitable in the given context. However, as many of the scenes where Henry uses *bloody* are highly charged emotionally, the omissions reduce the intensity of his lines, even if their semantic meaning remains unchanged.

Other frequently omitted features are more casually used swearwords and, in Alex's case, terms of endearment. For example, when Alex has the two turkeys in his room and tries to get Henry to hear their gobbling sounds, Henry jokingly suggests that Alex should "get into the mind of the turkey" (*Royal Blue*, 78). Not realising that Henry is pulling a trick on him, Alex replies with "[h]ow the hell do I do that?" (ibid.). This has been translated as simply "[m]iten?" [how?] (*Punaista*, 80). The tone of the question is altered and along with it, an instance of Alex's casual use of foul language is lost. Lines such as this show that in Alex's speech, swearwords do not serve as just intensifiers to his anger and other strong emotions, but are an integral part of the character's 'voice'. The fact that there are 47 fewer swearwords in the TT material compared to the ST material suggests that Auranheimo has prioritised the meaning of the lines as a whole over maintaining individual idiolectal features. The same can be said for the omission of the terms *sweetheart* and *babe*, the former omitted once and the latter in each instance when it appears. Common for all these omissions is that the ST features

appear at the end of sentences, such as “[c]ome on, think about it, babe” (*Royal Blue*, 262), which is translated as “[k]elaa nyt” [lit. ‘wind (the tape) now, a colloquial expression for thinking something over] (*Punaista*, 252). Another reason for these specific omissions may be that terms of endearment are used more ‘seriously’ in Finnish compared to English, so translating these words with Finnish equivalents could alter the light-hearted tone of expressions such as the one above. This once again comes back to idiomatic consideration.

The third most used translation strategy is neutralisation with 28 total appearances. I used the term neutralisation to describe both the rendering of swearwords into ‘weaker’ expressions, as well as the translation of regional slang into standard Finnish lexis. My reasoning for this was that both have a similar effect on the speech of the characters, namely dissolving idiolectal differences in favour of less marked expressions. Neutralisation is a common strategy in the translation of religious swearwords and phrases, for example Alex’s line “[o]h... my God” (*Royal Blue*, 163), a reaction to hearing Henry’s lengthy full name, is translated as “[n]o johan nyt” [well I’ll be] (*Punaista*, 161), a phrase with no religious connotations whatsoever. Similarly, Henry reacts with “[o]h, God” (*Royal Blue*, 150) when Alex takes his trousers off when they are alone after Henry’s polo match, while in the translation Henry says “[v]oi apua” [oh help] (*Punaista*, 149). Both TT expressions are neutral and quite ‘literary’ in style, especially when examined against the fairly colloquial style of the translation as a whole.

The neutralisation strategy was used in the translation of regional slang three times, if the regional features included in other categories (e.g. *ass* and *quite*) are left out, all three being Henry’s regional features. The reason for this might be that Henry’s regionalisms *mate* and *daft* (which is neutralised twice) are less ‘slangy’ words than Alex’s *dope* and *y’all* (*OED*, *Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary*). Also worth noting is the fact that Henry’s lines contain more regional features overall (including repeated words).

The colloquialisation strategy appeared in the material nine times in total. It seems that Auranheimo has not attempted to distinguish between the characters’ dialects in the translation but has rather resolved to using general colloquial Finnish lexis for both of them. As stated before, colloquial language is prevalent in the translation, often even when the ST feature is standard. For example, when Alex calls Henry for the first time because the prince is teasing him about his fear of turkeys, Henry asks: “Have you really rung me at three o’clock in the morning to make me listen to a turkey?” (*Royal Blue*, 77). Alex replies with “[y]es, obviously” (*ibid.*), translated as “[t]ietty soitin” [of course I called] (*Punaista*, 77),

with *tietty* being a colloquial variant of the word *tietysti* (of course). It is only natural, then, that the majority of regional expressions are translated as colloquial Finnish. The main alteration considering idiolectal variety is that the general colloquial words do not stand out as unique to either character. An example mentioned in subsection 4.2.2 was the use of the word *jätkä* as a translation for both Henry's *bloke* and Alex's *guy*, and another would be the word *pönttö*, first used as a translation for Henry's British noun *numpty* and later as part of the phrase "pönttö persläpi" (e.g. *Punaista*, 260), the translation of Alex's insult "obtuse fucking asshole" (e.g. *Royal Blue*, 271).

Finally, the strategy of recategorization only occurs once in the material, in the translation of the American regional adjective "douchey" (*Royal Blue*, 50) as "vittumaista" (*Punaista*, 53). I named this strategy after recognising that this translation did not fit under any of the other four strategies. As mentioned in subsection 4.2.2, it could also be seen as a kind of compensation for the omission of swearwords elsewhere.

Following the analysis of the idiolectal features and the translation strategies, I can state that the idiolectal variety present in the original dialogue of *Royal Blue* has, for the most part, been erased in the translation and replaced with general colloquial dialogue that has few noticeable differences between Alex and Henry's use of lexical features. The uneven distribution of swearwords is the best preserved element, as Alex is still clearly more vulgar in his word choices compared to Henry.

The results of this case study support many of the views given by Finnish editors of translated fiction in the 2010 interviews by Tiittula (presented in Tiittula and Nuolijärvi (2013, 251–261)), especially the notion that idiolectal variation between characters is "levelled" (Tiittula and Nuolijärvi 2013, 256) in translation, even if the translator uses non-standard language. The popular strategy of translating dialectal variation as general colloquial language or *yleispuhekieli* (e.g. Tiittula and Nuolijärvi 2013, 255) is also realised in *Punaista*.

Hatim and Mason (1990, 44) present the question of whether idiolect translation is necessary or even possible, coming to the conclusion that "[idiolect] is not unrelated to one's choice of which standard, geographical, social or temporal dialects to use. It is also linked to the purpose of the utterance and will ultimately be found to carry socio-cultural significance". *Purpose* is a significant word here. As seen in many of the examples presented in the analysis, strategies such as omission and neutralisation rarely alter the overall denotational meaning of

a line, but often affect its underlying function, i.e. what it conveys to the reader about Alex or Henry, their motivations or their relationship with each other.

## 5 Conclusions

The objective of this thesis was to examine idiolect translation and its impact on fictional characterisation through a case study of one novel, Casey McQuiston's *Red, White & Royal Blue*, and the dialogue of its two main characters, Alex and Henry. The research question was twofold: first, it asked *how* idiolectal features are conveyed in the translation, and second, *what* is the translation's effect on characterisation. The analysis revealed that while equivalent translation was clearly the most prevalent strategy used by the Finnish translator Johanna Auranheimo, resulting in individual words having similar connotations as in the source text, there is a lack of recurring elements in the translated speech of either character. Hatim and Mason (1997, 103) posit that true idiolectal variation is such that contains systematically repeated features. While both Alex and Henry's speech displays several recurring lexical features in the ST dialogue, this is not the case in the translation. Moreover, in the target text, the lexis used by the characters is not 'unique' to them, as there are no recurring words or expressions that are, in Page's ([1973] 1988, 100) words, "unshared by others" or, in this case, unshared by each other. In short, the variety of translations for the same ST features results in the dissolution of idiolectal continuity.

As for the second research question, as the notion of fictional idiolect is inevitably linked with characterisation, the neutralisation of the former naturally affects the latter. While the direct characterisation conveyed by the narration is retained, the more indirect, subtler characterisation embedded in the dialogue is altered and even reduced in the translation, leading to the differences in Alex and Henry's personalities being less pronounced.

It is relevant to note that this study examined only a part of all the idiolectal variation and its translation in *Royal Blue*, and the results might have been somewhat different if all dialogue of the novel had been included in the material. Moreover, I focused on lexical elements, which were certainly not the only idiolectal features in the dialogue. Further research could include the translation of syntactical variety, pronunciation spellings and ungrammatical structures, for example.

As this was a case study, I cannot make generalisations concerning the Finnish translation of literary idiolects, and more research on the topic is undoubtedly required. Some possible directions for future research could be corpus studies including several novels and their

translations. With a digital corpus, the frequencies of certain words and grammatical features could be analysed more efficiently.

As academic research on the translation of fictional idiolects is still relatively scarce, this thesis, despite its limitations, is a relevant contribution to the field of literary translation studies. My objective is to inspire further studies on the topic of idiolectal translation, as well as on the novels of Casey McQuiston. There are numerous paths to pursue in the future, as many and diverse as idiolects themselves are.

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## Appendices

### Appendix: Finnish summary

Tutkielma käsittelee fiktiivisten idiolektien kääntämistä Casey McQuistonin vuonna 2019 julkaistussa romaanissa *Red, White & Royal Blue*. Teoksen suomensi Johanna Auranheimo vuonna 2022, ja suomennos julkaistiin nimellä *Punaista, valkoista ja kuninkaansinistä*.

Tarkemmin tutkimuksen kohteena ovat romaanin kahden päähenkilön puheen suorassa esityksessä esiintyvät sanastolliset idiolektiset eli henkilöitä yksilöivät piirteet.

Tutkimuskysymykseni ovat seuraavat: miten suomentaja on kääntänyt lähtötekstin idiolektisia piirteitä? Mikä on käännöksen vaikutus henkilöhahmojen karakterisointiin?

### Tutkimuksen teoreettinen tausta

Tutkimuksen teoriassa yhdistyvät kirjallisuudentutkimuksen aiheet karakterisointi (*characterisation*) ja kirjallisen dialogin tutkimus, sekä käännöstutkimuksen fiktiivisen puheen kääntämistä käsittelevä haara. Ensin on syytä määritellä tutkimuksen keskeiset termit, eli *puheen suora esitys* ja *idiolekti*.

Puheen suora esitys (*direct speech*) on kirjallisuudessa keino esittää puhetta sellaisena kuin henkilö sen ”todellisuudessa” sanoisi (Page [1973] 1988, 25). Suora esitys on tyypillisesti merkitty lainausmerkein tai muilla keinoin, joka erottaa sen kerronnasta, ja sitä usein joko edeltää tai seuraa puheen verbi, kuten *sanoi* (McHale 2014, 813). Kuten kaikki puheen esittämisen keinot, myös suora esitys on alisteista kerronnalle huolimatta siitä, että se antaa näennäisen välittömän pääsyn henkilöiden keskusteluun (Koivisto ja Nykänen 2016, 6).

Idiolekti tarkoittaa todellisen tai fiktiivisen henkilön omaa, yksilöllistä puhetapaa, jossa yhdistyvät puhujan käyttämät toistuvat sanastolliset, kieliopilliset ja äänteelliset piirteet (Page [1973] 1988, 97). Hatimin ja Masonin (1997, 102) mukaan idiolektit sisältävät piirteitä kaikista muista puhutun kielen varianteista, kuten murteista ja sosiolekteista. Kenenkään puhetyyli ei luonnollisesti kehity tyhjiössä, vaan yksilön puhe ottaa aina vaikutteita ympäristöstä. Kirjallisuudessa idiolekteja käytetään esimerkiksi henkilöiden yksilöimiseen ja erottamiseen toisistaan (Page [1973] 1988, 99).

Karakterisoinnilla viitataan piirteisiin, joiden avulla fiktiivisiä hahmoja kuvataan ja kehitetään. Tämän tutkimuksen puitteisiin sopii määritelmä, jonka mukaan karakterisointiin sisältyvät sekä henkilöhahmon ”pysyvät ominaisuudet” (*stable properties*), eli tämän

ulkonäön ja luonteenpiirteiden kuvaukset, että hahmon taustaan liittyvät tekijät ja tämän toiminnasta ja ihmissuhteista epäsuorasti luettavissa olevat luonnekuvaukset. (Eder et al., 2010, 30–31.) Karakterisointi voi olla suoraa tai epäsuoraa: suora karakterisointi tarkoittaa hahmon kuvaamista tekstissä esimerkiksi adjektiivein, jotka kertovat, millainen henkilö on (Eder et al. 2010, 32), esimerkiksi seuraavasti: ”Alex tietää puhuvansa liikaa ja on toivottoman huono hallitsemaan tunteensa, minkä hän yleensä kätkee olemalla äärimmäisen hurmaava.” (McQuiston 2022, 71). Epäsuorassa karakterisoinnissa hahmon luonne on puolestaan pääteltävissä tämän toiminnasta tai sanomisista (Eder et al. 2010, 32). Henkilöhahmolle annetut piirteet eivät välttämättä pysy samoina läpi teoksen, vaan ne voivat muuttua ja niitä voi tulla lisää (Chatman ([1978] 1986, 125–127).

Culpeper (2001, 75–76) esittää mallin ihmisten ja fiktiivisten hahmojen luokitteluun ja kuvaamiseen, jota hyödynnetään tässä tutkimuksessa. Malli koostuu kolmesta ryhmästä, jotka ovat henkilökohtaiset kategoriat (*personal categories*), sosiaalisten roolien kategoriat (*social role categories*) sekä ryhmään kuulumisen kategoriat (*group membership categories*). Henkilökohtaisia kategorioita ovat muun muassa henkilön yksilölliset luonteenpiirteet, tavoitteet, kiinnostuksen kohteet ja tavat. Sosiaaliset roolit luokitellaan sukulaisuusrooleihin, suhderooleihin ja työrooleihin. Nämä kategoriat siis liittyvät henkilön rooleihin suhteessa muihin ja ovat hyvin muuttuvia, sillä ihmissuhteet lisääntyvät ja vaihtuvat väistämättä esimerkiksi työpaikan vaihdoksessa tai parisuhteen päättyessä. Ryhmään kuulumisen kategorioita ovat puolestaan esimerkiksi henkilön ikä, sukupuoli, kansallisuus, etnisyys, yhteiskuntaluokka ja uskonto. (Culpeper 2001, 75–76.) Tätä tutkimusta varten myös seksuaalinen suuntautuminen on lisätty ryhmään kuulumisen kategorioihin, sillä se on olennainen piirre aineistossa.

Seuraavaksi käsittelen fiktiivisen norminvastaisen puheen (*non-standard speech*) kääntämistä. Yleinen strategia standardista poikkeavan dialogin kääntämisessä on normalisointi (*normalisation*) (Rosa 2012, 87), eli esimerkiksi murteen kääntäminen yleiskieliseksi. Rosan (2012, 88) mukaan normalisointi muuttaa karakterisoivan dialogin ei-karakterisoivaksi, jolloin se ei enää yksilöisi henkilöitä heidän puhetyylinsä perusteella. Kuten Tiittula ja Nuolijärvi (2013, 247) huomauttavat, alkutekstin puhekielen muuttaminen yleiskieliseksi ”ei ole koskaan neutraali käänösstrategia” ja sillä voi olla merkittävä vaikutus käänöksen luonteeseen riippuen siitä, miten merkittävässä osassa norminvastainen dialogi on alkuteoksessa.

Nevalainen (2003) vertaili korpustutkimuksessa puhekielisyysyksien esiintymistä suomeksi kirjoitetussa ja suomennetussa kaunokirjallisuudessa. Supisuomen korpukseen (SSK) kuului 60 suomalaista teosta, kun taas käänno-suomen korpuksessa (KSK) teoksia oli 64 (Nevalainen 2003, 6). Yleisesti esiintyvien sanojen perusteella Nevalainen laati 14 sanaryhmää käsittävän listan, jossa oli yhdeksän fonologista, yksi morfologinen ja neljä sanastollista kategoriata (Nevalainen 2003, 9–10). Tutkimuksessa ilmeni, että SSK:ssa puhekielisyysyksii esiintyi enemmän ja monipuolisemmin kuin KSK:ssa, jossa sanastolliset puhekielisyysyksii olivat selvästi yleisimpiä (Nevalainen 2003, 19). Esimerkki leksikaalisten piirteiden ryhmästä on voimasanat ja alatyyliset ilmaukset. Tulosten perusteella kääntäjät vaikuttivat yleisesti suosivan lievempiä kirosanoja (esim. *hitto* ja *hemmetti*), kun taas suomalaiset kirjailijat käyttivät karkeampia ilmaisuja (esim. *saatana* ja *vittu*). Tämä voi viitata siihen, että kääntäjät neutralisoivat kääntämiensä teosten voimakkaampia kirosanoja, joskin Nevalainen huomauttaa, että lähde-teosten puuttuminen tutkimuksesta rajoittaa johtopäätösten tekemistä käännösstrategioiden suhteen. (Nevalainen 2003, 18.)

Tiittula ja Nuolijärvi (2013, 251) esittävät teoksessaan tutkimuksen, joka perustuu Tiittulan vuonna 2010 suorittamiin haastatteluihin. Haastateltavana olivat viisi suomalaista käännöskirjallisuuden kustannustoimittajaa ja yksi kustannusjohtaja, ja heiltä kysyttiin näkemyksistään puhekielen käytöstä kaunokirjallisuuden suomennoksissa (ibid.). Useampi mainitsi toimivaksi strategiaksi yleispuhekielen käytön ja erityisesti puhekielisten sanastollisten keinojen hyödyntämisen (Tiittula ja Nuolijärvi 2013, 255). Yksi toimittajista mainitsi, että vaikka hänestä alkuteoksen variaation säilyttäminen on tärkeää, henkilö-hahmojen väliset idiolektiset erot usein “tasoittuvat” käännöksessä ja muistuttavat toisiaan enemmän kuin alkuteoksessa (Tiittula ja Nuolijärvi 2013, 256).

### **Aineisto ja menetelmät**

Tutkimuksen aineiston lähteenä ovat amerikkalaisen kirjailija Casey McQuistonin vuonna 2019 julkaistu esikoisromaani *Red, White & Royal Blue* (tästä lähin *Royal Blue*) ja Johanna Auranheimon suomennos *Punaista, valkoista ja kuninkaansinistä* (tästä lähin *Punaista*). Tutkielmassa viitataan *Royal Blue* -teoksen vuoden 2022 brittiläiseen painokseen, jonka on julkaissut Macmillan. Suomennoksen on kustantanut Tammi ja se on vuodelta 2022. *Punaista* on vaihtoehtoiseen todellisuuteen sijoittuva rakkausromaani, joka kertoo Yhdysvaltain presidentin pojan, Alex Claremont-Diazin ja Englannin prinssi Henryn yllättävästä suhteesta, joka alkaa eripuraisena, mutta kehittyy vähitellen seksuaaliseksi ja romanttiseksi.

Teoksen tapahtumat saavat alkunsa, kun Alex osallistuu Henryn veljen prinssi Philipin häihin ja päättyy Henryn kanssa tappeluun, joka johtaa mediakohuun. Tilanteen paikkaamiseksi Alexin äiti, presidentti Ellen Claremont, kehittää suunnitelman: Alexin on esitettävä olevansa Henryn ystävä. Kun Alex ja Henry tutustuvat toisiinsa paremmin, heidän välilleen syntyy aito ystävyys, joka syvenee pian seksisuhteeksi. Syvempien tunteiden kehittyttyä kaksikko päättää kertoa suhteestaan maailmalle, kunhan presidentinvaalit, joissa Alexin äiti on ehdolla jatkokaudelle, ovat ohi. Tilanne kuitenkin riistyy käsistä, kun lehdistö saa haltuunsa kuvia ja sähköpostiviestejä, jotka paljastavat suhteen ennen aikojaan. Alexin ja Henryn on päätettävä, millaisen jäljen he haluavat jättää historiaan.

Aineistoon valikoitui yhteensä 123 repliikkiä *Royal Blue* -romaanista. Rajasin aineiston sisältämään vain keskusteluja, joita Alex ja Henry käyvät keskenään. Alex on teoksen päähenkilö, jonka näkökulmasta koko tarina esitetään, joskin kolmannessa persoonassa kerrottuna. Alex on siis osallisena lähes jokaisessa romaanin dialogissa. Aineiston tasapuolisen jakautumisen puolesta rajaus oli tarpeen, tosin Alexin repliikkejä kertyi silti selvästi enemmän, 69 verrattuna Henryn 54:een. Erillisiä dialogeja aineistoon päätyi kaksitoista.

Jaoin repliikeissä esiintyvät leksikaaliset piirteet kolmeen kategoriaan: kirosanoihin ja muihin alatyylisiin ilmauksiin (*swearwords and vulgar slang*), kielialueellisiin piirteisiin (*regional features*) ja muihin toistuvasti esiintyviin sanoihin ja fraaseihin (*recurring words and phrases*). Käännösten analysointia varten nimesin viisi käännösstrategiaa, joista kaksi pohjautuu Berezowskin (1997, 81) murteiden kääntämisessä käytettyjen strategioiden luokitteluun: neutralisointi (*neutralisation*) ja puhekielistäminen (*colloquialisation*). Neutralisointi viittaa tässä niin kirosanojen kääntämiseen vähemmän voimakkaiksi sanoiksi kuin puhekielisen ilmaisun kääntämiseen yleiskieliseen muotoon. Puhekielistäminen puolestaan tarkoittaa murteellisten piirteiden kääntämistä yleispuhekieliseksi. Loput kolme strategiaa ovat ekvivalentti käännös (*equivalent translation*), jossa alkuperäisen piirteen konnotaatio säilytetään käännöksessä, poisto (*omission*), jossa tarkasteltava lähtötekstin piirre on poistettu käännöksessä, sekä uudelleenkategoriointi (*recategorisation*), jossa tiettyyn idiolektiseen kategoriaan luokiteltu piirre on käännetty tavalla, joka muuttaa sen kategoriaan (esim. murteellisesta sanasta tulee kirosana).

## **Analyysi ja tulokset**

Ennen varsinaisen analyysin esittämistä on relevanttia esitellä lyhyesti henkilöhahmot, joiden dialogin käännoästä tutkielmassa käsitellään. Tähän tarkoitukseen olen soveltanut Culpeperin (2001, 75–76) aiemmin esiteltyä mallia (taulukko 1), jolla voidaan kuvailla fiktiivisiä hahmoja. Henkilökohtaisiin ominaisuuksiin lukeutuvat Alexin ja Henryn keskeiset luonteenpiirteet sekä heidän tavoitteensa ja unelmansa, kun taas sosiaalisiin rooleihin lasketaan heidän tärkeimmät roolinsa julkisuudessa ja perheissään sekä heidän suhteensa toisiinsa. Ryhmittely-otsikon alle sisältyvät henkilöiden sukupuoli, kansallisuus, ikä, etnisyys, yhteiskuntaluokka ja seksuaalinen suuntautuminen.

Taulukko 1. Alexin ja Henryn keskeiset piirteet Culpeperin (2001, 75–76) mallin mukaisesti.

Henkilöhahmo	Henkilökohtaiset ominaisuudet	Sosiaaliset roolit	Ryhmittely
Alexander "Alex" Claremont-Diaz	kunnianhimoinen, lojaali, suorapuheinen, impulsiivinen, itsekeskeinen tavoite: poliitikon ura	presidentin poika, pikkuveli, opiskelija, kampanjatyöntekijä Henryn "vihollinen" → ystävä → seksikumppani → poikaystävä	mies, yhdysvaltalainen, 21–22-vuotias, puoliksi latino ja puoliksi valkoinen, alun perin työväenluokkainen, biseksuaalinen
Walesin prinssi Henry	mietiskelevä, introvertti, kohtelias, pidättyväinen, nokkela unelma: kirjailijan ura	Walesin prinssi, nuorin lapsi Alexin "vihollinen" → ystävä → seksikumppani → poikaystävä	mies, englantilainen, 22–23-vuotias, valkoinen, kuninkaallinen, homoseksuaalinen

### *Kirosanat ja alatyylinen slangi*

*Royal Blue* -teoksen aineistossa esiintyy 128 kirosanaa ja alatyylisiä ilmausta, joiden jakautuminen paljastaa merkittävän eron henkilöhahmojen kielenkäytössä: kirosanoista 86 on Alexin repliikeistä ja 42 Henryn. Suomennoksen aineistossa kirosanoja ja alatyylisiä sanoja on 81, joista 57 on Alexin ja 24 Henryn repliikeistä. Käännoäksessä kirosanoja on siis selvästi karsittu.

Ero Alexin ja Henryn kiroilussa tulee esille paitsi näiden välisessä dialogissa, myös kerronnassa: "Henry ei kiroile melkein koskaan, muttei selvästikään pane pahakseen Alexin helvetin saastaista kielenkäyttöä" (*Punaista*, 72). Suomennoksessa ero on osittain säilytetty, joskin voimasanojen vähentäminen johtaa siihen, ettei Alexin puhe ole niin "saastaista" kuin alkuteoksessa.

Alexin repliikeissä selvästi eniten esiintyvä kirosana on *fuck* eri muotoineen ( *fucking, fuckin'* ). Sana esiintyy aineistossa 43 kertaa Alexin sanomana ja vain seitsemän kertaa Henryn puheessa. Esimerkki (1) on romaanin alusta, kun Alex avautuu Henrylle siitä, miksi ei tule toimeen tämän kanssa. Esimerkeissä analyysin kohteena olevat sanat on lihavoitu.

(1a) I don't know. Doing what we do is  **fucking**  hard. But it's harder for me. I'm the son of the first female president. [...] And you're, you know, *you*, and you were born into all of this, and everyone thinks you're Prince  **fucking**  Charming. You're basically a living reminder I'll always be compared to someone else, no matter what I do, even if I work twice as hard. (*Royal Blue*, 50–51, kurssiivi kuten alkuperäisessä)

(1b) En tiedä. Ollaan molemmat  **vitun**  vaikeassa asemassa, mutta minun asemani on vaikeampi, koska äitini on Yhdysvaltojen ensimmäinen naispresidentti. [...] Ja sinä taas olet syntynyt keskellä tätä kaikkea, olet mitä olet, ja kaikki pitää sinua  **vittu**  prinssi Uljaana. Eli käytännössä muistutat minua siitä, että ihan sama mitä teen tai kuinka paljon paiskin töitä, minua tullaan aina vertaamaan muihin. (*Punaista*, 54)

Esimerkissä näkyy Alexille tyypillinen tapa käyttää samaa kirosanaa, erityisesti  *fucking-*  vahvistussanaa, useamman kerran samassa repliikissä. Molemmat esiintymät on käännetty sanalla  *vittu* , joka on Hjortin (2015) mukaan sanan  *fuck*  vakiintunut käänнос.  *Vitun*  lisäksi  *fuck*  on käännetty aineistossa usean kerran myös  *helvetti* -sanalla taivutusmuotoineen. Molemmissa tapauksissa käänносstrategiana on ekvivalentti käänнос, sillä  *helvetti*  on myös vahva kirosana. Yhteensä ekvivalentteja käänноksiä  *fuck* -sanalle on Alexin repliikeissä 31, mutta käänноksissä on niin paljon vaihtelua eri kirosanojen välillä, ettei mikään yksittäinen sana vastaa alkuperäisen sanan runsasta esiintyvyyttä ja luonteenomaisuutta Alexin hahmolle.  *Fuck*  on käänноksessä neutralisoitu neljä kertaa ja poistettu seitsemästi. Henryn repliikeissä se on käännetty ekvivalentilla vastineella viisi kertaa ja poistettu kahdesti.

Vain Henryn repliikeissä esiintyvä, nykyisin vain lievästi loukkaava  *bloody*  on brittienglannista lähtöisin oleva vahvistussana, jota Henry käyttää samalla tavoin kuin Alex sanaa  *fucking* .  *Bloody*  esiintyy Henryn repliikeissä kahdeksan kertaa. Esimerkissä (2) se on käännetty sanalla  *hiton* .

(2a) [Henry:] "I never thought I'd be stood here faced with a choice I can't make, because I never... I never imagined you would love me back."  
 "Well," Alex says. "I do. And you  *can*  choose."  
 "You know  **bloody**  well I can't." (*Royal Blue*, 273, kurssiivi kuten alkuperäisessä)

(2b) ”En ikinä uskonut, että joutuisin tämän käytännössä mahdottoman valinnan eteen, koska en voinut kuvitella... En voinut kuvitella, että voisit rakastaa minua.”  
 ”No, rakastan kuitenkin”, Alex sanoo. ”Eikä tämä valinta ole mahdoton.”  
 ”Tiedät **hiton** hyvin, että on.” (*Punaista*, 262)

Koska *hitto* on *bloody*-sanan tavoin vahvuudeltaan lievä voimasana, sen voi luokitella ekvivalentiksi käännökseksi. Hitto on ainoa kirosana, joka esiintyy useamman kerran (4) Henryn kuin Alexin (1) käännösureplikeissa, mutta se toimii vain kerran käännökseenä sanalle *bloody*. Viisi kertaa *bloody* on ollut poistostrategian kohteena, eikä sillä näin ollen ole toistuvaa käännösvastinetta.

Aineistossa esiintyy myös useita alatyylisiä substantiiveja, joita useimmiten käytetään haukkumasanoina. Tähän ryhmään kuuluvat sanat *arse*, *arsehole*, *ass*, *asshole*, *bastard*, *dick*, *prick* ja *wanker*. *Arse(hole)* on brittienglannin ja *ass(hole)* amerikanenglannin kirjoitusasu kirjaimellisesti takapuolta merkitsevälle ilmaukselle, jolle suurin vastine suomessa on *perse(reikä)*. Kyseessä on monimerkityksinen sana, joka kirjaimellisen merkityksensä lisäksi voi viitata myös henkilöön (*Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*), kuten esimerkissä (3).

(3a) We all went round the bend a bit. Philip just *had* to be the man of the family, and I was an **arsehole**, and Mum didn't leave her rooms. (*Royal Blue*, 168, kursiivi kuten alkuperäisessä).

(3b) ”Me kaikki mentiin siitä vähän sekaisin. Philipistä tuli kunnon kontrollifriikki, minä itse käyttäydyin kuin mikäkin **kusipää**, ja äiti linnoittautui asuntoonsa.” (*Punaista*, 165–166)

Henry kertoo Alexille isänsä kuolemasta ja viittaa omaan käytökseensä sanalla *arsehole*. Vaikka *kusipää* ei ole suora käänнос, vastaa se konnotaatioiltaan *arsehole*-sanaa. Tämäkin on siis ekvivalentti käänнос.

Esimerkkinä toisenlaisesta strategiasta toimii dialogi, jossa Henry käyttää *bastard*-sanaa viitatessaan isoveljeensä Philipiin, jota ei pidä suuressa arvossa. *OED*:n mukaan *bastard*-sanaa käytetään erityisesti haukkumasanan tunteettomasta ja itsekkästä ihmisestä. Käännöksestä ilmaisu ”nervy bastard” on neutralisoitu muotoon ”täysin hermoraunio”, joka ei ole läheskään yhtä voimakas tai loukkaava ilmaisu.

(4a) “Christ,” Henry says, slapping at a bug that’s landed on him, “what are these infernal creatures?”  
 “Mosquitos,” Alex supplies.  
 “They’re awful,” Henry says loftily. “I’m going to catch an exotic plague.”

“I’m... sorry?”

“I just mean to say, you know, Philip is the heir and I’m the spare, and if that **nervy bastard** has a heart attack at thirty-five and I’ve got malaria, whither the spare?” (*Royal Blue*, 263)

(4b) “Ei helvetti. Mitä nämä järkyttävät otukset on?” Henry kysyy läimien iholleen laskeutuneita ötököitä.

”Hyttysiä”, Alex vastaa.

”Ihan hirveitä”, Henry sanoo kopeasti. ”Saan jonkun eksoottisen ruton.”

”Öö... sori siitä?”

”Meinaan vaan, että jos Philip on kruununprinssi ja **täysin hermoraunio**, niin että jos se saa sydärin 35-vuotiaana ja minulla on malaria, niin mitä sitten tapahtuu?” (*Punaista*, 254).

Yhteensä alatyylisiä substantiiveja esiintyy Alexin repliikeissä 13 ja Henryn repliikeissä 9. Ne on käännetty ekvivalentiksi sanaksi kymmenessä Alexin ja seitsemässä Henryn repliikissä, neutralisoitu kahdesti kummankin hahmon kohdalla ja poistettu yhdestä Alexin repliikistä.

### *Kielialueelliset piirteet*

Molempien henkilöahmojen puheessa esiintyy heidän alueellista ja erityisesti kansallista identiteettiään edustavia murre- tai slangisanoja. Alexin repliikeissä amerikanenglantia merkitseviä sanoja ovat *dope*, *douchey*, *nutso* ja *y’all*, kun taas Henryn käyttämiä brittienglannin murre sanoja ovat *mate*, *bloke*, *numpty*, *daft* ja *knackered*. Seuraavaksi esitän kummaltakin hahmolta yhden esimerkin alueellisten sanojen käännöksistä.

Alexin kerran aineistossa käyttämä *douchey*-adjektiivi on amerikanenglannin slangisana, jota käytetään *Merriam-Webster’s Dictionaryn* mukaan kuvaamaan ihmistä, joka on törkeä tai epämiellyttävä (*douchebag*). Esimerkki (5) on romaanin alusta ja siinä Alex kuvailee ensivaikutelmaansa Henrystä.

(5a) [Alex]: “I walked up to you to introduce myself, and you stared at me like I was the most offensive thing you had ever seen. Right after you shook my hand, you turned to Shaan and said, ‘Can you get rid of him?’”

[...]

“Ah,” Henry says. [...] “I didn’t realize you’d heard that.”

“I feel like you’re missing the point,” Alex says, “which is that it’s a **douchey** thing to say either way.” (*Royal Blue*, 50)

(5b) “Yritin esittäytyä sinulle, mutta tuijotit minua kuin olisin vastenmielisintä mitä olet koskaan nähnyt. Ja heti käteltyämme sanoit Shaanille: ’Voitko käskeä hänet pois?’”

[...]

”Aivan”, Henry sanoo ja yskäisee. ”En tajunnut, että kuulit.”

”Epäolennaista”, Alex sanoo. ”Kuulin tai en, on tosi **vittumaista** ylipäättään sanoa niin.” (*Punaista*, 53)

”Douche” on käännetty adjektiivilla ”vittumainen”, joka on *Kielitoimiston sanakirjan* mukaan alatyylinen sana. Vaikka konnotaatio Henryn loukkaavasta käytöksestä säilyy, on käännös sävyltään voimakkaampi. Tämä on aineiston ainoa uudelleen­käännösstrategian esiintymä, jossa alueellinen piirre muuttuu alatyyliseksi sanaksi. Käännös kuitenkin sopii Alexin kielenkäyttöön ja onkin mahdollista, että Auranheimo kompensoi tällä käännöksellä kirosanojen vähenemistä muualla teoksessa.

Esimerkki Henryn repliikeissä esiintyvistä brittiläisestä sanasta on *bloke*, joka esiintyy aineistossa kolme kertaa. *Bloke* on miestä tarkoittava slangisana (OED), jonka *Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary* luokittelee pääasiallisesti brittienglannin sanaksi. Sana on joka kerta suomennettu puhekielisel­lä *jätkä*-sanalla, josta esimerkkinä on seuraava katkelma.

(6a) ”D’you ever wonder,” [Henry] says slowly, “what it’s like to be some anonymous person in the world?”  
Alex frowns. “What do you mean?”  
“Just, you know,” Henry says. “If your mum weren’t the president and you were just a normal **bloke** living a normal life, what things might be like? What you’d be doing instead?” (*Royal Blue*, 106)

(6b) Hän sanoo hitaasti: ”Mietitkö ikinä, miltä tuntuisi olla joku ihan tavallinen tyyppi?”  
Alex irvistää. ”Ai niin kuin miten?”  
”Siis jos vaikka äitisi ei olisi presidentti, ja sinä olisit vaan joku tavallinen, normaalia elämää elävä **jätkä**”, Henry sanoo. ”Mitä sinä silloin tekisit?”  
(*Punaista*, 106)

Vaikka Auranheimo käyttää tätä käännöstä johdonmukaisesti, ”jätkä” ei esiinny vain Henryn puheessa, sillä se on myös käännös Alexin aineistossa kerran käyttämälle ”guy”-sanalle. *Jätkä* ei siis ole osa Henryn idiolektia samalla tavalla kuin *bloke* alkutekstissä.

Yhteensä Alexin käyttämistä amerikanenglannin slangisanoista kolme on käännetty yleispuhekielisiksi ja yksi on uudelleenkategorisoitu. Henryn brittienglantia edustavista sanoista (sanojen *bloke* ja *daft* toistot mukaan lukien) viisi on käännetty puhekielisiksi ja kolme neutralisoitu.

*Toistuvat sanat ja ilmaukset*

Viimeiseen idiolektisten piirteiden ryhmään kuuluvat sellaiset henkilöiden puheessa toistuvat sanat ja ilmaukset, jotka eivät sovi edeltäviin kategorioihin. Alexin puheessa tällaisia sanoja ovat hellittelynimet *babe*, *baby* ja *sweetheart*, joilla hän kutsuu Henryä. Käännöksessä sanat on joko käännetty ekvivalentilla vastineella tai poistettu kokonaan. Molemmat strategiat esiintyvät seuraavassa esimerkissä romaanin loppupuolelta, jossa median spekulointi Alexin ja Henryn suhteesta on johtanut tilanteeseen, jossa Henryn on teeskenneltävä seurustelewansa Alexin sisaren Junen kanssa. Lavastettujen treffien jälkeen Alex tapaa epätoivoisen Henryn ja yrittää lohduttaa tätä.

(7a) "It's not fucking *fair*!" [Henry] goes on, his voice nearly breaking. "My shit ancestors walked around doing a thousand times worse than any of this, and nobody *cared*!"

"**Baby**," Alex says, moving his hand to Henry's chin to bring him back down. "I know. I'm so sorry, **babe**. But it won't be like this forever, okay? I promise."

(*Royal Blue*, 312, kursiivi kuten alkuperäisessä)

(7b) "Kaikki on niin saatanan epäreilua!" Henry jatkaa ääni lähes särkyen.

"Kusipäiset esi-isäni sai tehdä ties mitä kauheuksia, eikä ketään kiinnostanut!"

"**Kulta**." Alexin käsi liukuu rauhoittavasti Henryn leualle. "Tiedän. Olen niin pahoillani. Mutta tämä ei kestä ikuisesti. Lupaen sen." (*Punaista*, 298)

"Baby" on käännetty sanalla "kulta", mutta "babe" on poistettu kokonaan. *Sweetheart* on kerran suomennettu ekvivalentilla käännöksellä "muru" (*Punaista*, 51), kerran käännöksellä "rakas" ja yhden kerran poistettu. Jokainen *babe*-sana on poistettu, kun taas *baby* on käännetty *kullaksi* sen molemmilla esiintymiskerroilla. *Baby*-sanaa lukuun ottamatta käännöksissä ei siis ole johdonmukaisuutta. Poistostrategian yleisyys saattaa johtua siitä, että hellittelynimen käyttö lauseen lopussa, kuten esimerkissä (7), ei ole niin yleistä tai luontevaa suomessa kuin englannissa.

Henryn puheesta toistuvista idiolektisistä piirteistä valitsin tähän kategoriaan adverbien *quite* sekä ilmauksen *I suppose* ja sen kielteisen muodon *I don't suppose*. *Quite*-sana esiintyy aineistossa seitsemän kertaa monissa eri merkityksissä. Se voi olla esimerkiksi korostussana, jota käytetään merkityksessä *todella* (*OED*). Näin se on myös käännetty esimerkissä (8).

(8a) [Henry:] You are **quite** literally Queen Victoria's worst nightmare.

[Alex:] And that's why *you* love *me*.

[Henry:] My God, you're right. All this time, I was just after the bloke who'd most infuriate my homophobic forebears. (*Royal Blue*, 289, kursiivi kuten alkuperäisessä)

(8b) [Henry:] Taidat **todella** olla Viktorian pahin painajainen.

[Alex:] Ja siksi sinä taas rakastat minua.

[Henry:] Ei hitto, oikeassa olet. Olen koko ikäni etsinyt jätkeä, joka saisi homofobiset esivanhempani täysin raivon valtaan. (*Punaista*, 277)

Luokittelen tämän ekvivalentiksi käännökseksi, vaikka suomennos onkin siten ”lievempi”, että ”literally”-sana on poistettu, jolloin syntyy vaikutelma, että Henry on sanoissaan varovaisempi. Yhteensä *quite* on käännetty ekvivalentilla adverbilla (*aika, oikein, vähän, todella*) neljä kertaa ja poistettu kolmesti.

Viimeisenä käsittelen fraasien *I suppose* ja *I don't suppose* esiintymistä Henryn puheessa. *I suppose* esiintyy aineistossa kolme kertaa ja sen kielteinen muoto kahdesti. Vaikka tutkimuksessa käsitellään suureksi osaksi yksittäisten sanojen kääntämistä, nämä fraasit ovat niin vakiintuneita ja Henryn hahmolle tyypillisiä, että sisällytin ne mukaan. *Suppose*-verbi ilmaisee muun muassa puhujan epävarmuutta (*OED*), joka sopii Henryn huonoon itsetuntoon. Esimerkissä (9) Henry on juuri kertonut Alexille sisarensa Bean kokaiiniriippuvuudesta ja yöstä, jona Henry oli kertonut Bealle homoudestaan ja saanut siskonsa palaamaan vieroitushoitoon. Repliiikissä mainittu Pez on Henryn paras ystävä.

(9a) The next day, she went back, and she's been clean ever since, and neither of us has ever told anyone about that night. Until now, **I suppose**. And I'm not sure why I've said all this, I just, I've never really said any of it. I mean, Pez was there for the most of it, so, and I—I don't know. (*Royal Blue*, 169)

(9b) Se meni takaisin vieroitukseen seuraavana päivänä ja on ollut kuivilla siitä asti. Kumpikaan meistä ei ole kertonut kenellekään mitä sinä yönä tapahtui. **Tai siis** ei ennen kuin nyt. Enkä tiedä, miksi edes selitän tätä juttua, tai siis että en ole ikinä sanonut näitä juttuja ääneen. Pez oli tietysti läsnä suurimman osan ajasta, mutta siis, niin. (*Punaista*, 167)

”I suppose” on käännetty ”[t]ai siis”, joka on enemmän korjaava kuin epävarmuutta ilmaiseva fraasi. Vaikka Henryn epävarmuus tulee esille myöhemmin repliikissä, luokittelen käännöksen neutralisoivaksi siksi, että sillä on eri funktio kuin alkuperäisellä ilmauksella. Yhteensä *I suppose* on neutralisoitu kahdesti ja kerran käännetty ekvivalentilla vastineella.

*OED*:n mukaan kysymyksen alkuun lisättävä fraasi *I don't suppose* muuttaa kysymyksen sävyiltään varovaisemmaksi. Se on myös melko muodollinen ilmaisu, joka sopii Henryn kuninkaalliseen syntyperään ja epävarmaan luonteeseen. Esimerkissä (10) Henry ja Alex hyvästelevät toisensa luonteenomaisesti harrastettuaan seksiä toisen kerran.

(10a) “**I don't suppose** you'll be anywhere near Kensington anytime soon?”  
 “That shithole?” [Alex] says with a wink. “Not if I can help it.” (*Royal Blue*, 151)

(10b) “**Et varmaan** pyöri missään Kensingtonin suunnalla lähiaikoina?”  
 “Ai sen vanhan murjun?” Alex iskee silmää. ”En, jos ei ole ihan pakko.”  
 (*Punaista*, 150)

Käännös ”[e]t varmaan” on alkuperäisen ilmaisun tapaan kielteisessä muodossa, tosin Henry puhuttelee sillä suoraan Alexia sen sijaan, että viittaisi itseensä lauseen alussa. Sanoisin kuitenkin, että koska käännös on myös kielteinen väitelause, joka tekee kysymyksestä muodollisemman, että kyseessä on ekvivalentti suomennos. *I don't suppose* on käännetty samalla tavalla myös toisella esiintymiskerrallaan.

### *Tulokset*

Taulukossa 2 esitetään käännösstrategioiden jakautuminen henkilöhahmojen kesken. Kuten taulukosta käy ilmi, ekvivalentti käännös on selvästi yleisimmin esiintyvä strategia, mutta koska eri käännöksiä samoille sanoille (kuten sanalle *fuck(ing)*) on niin paljon, henkilöiden käännetyissä dialogissa ei esiinny toistuvia piirteitä samalla tavalla kuin alkutekstissä. Lisäksi on huomioitava, että toiseksi yleisin käännösstrategia on poisto, joka vähentää vielä selkeämmin Alexin ja Henryn puheen yksilöllisiä piirteitä.

Taulukko 2. Käännösstrategioiden jakautuminen henkilöhahmojen kesken.

<b>Käännösstrategia</b>	<b>Esiintymät Alexin repliikeissä</b>	<b>Esiintymät Henryn repliikeissä</b>
ekvivalentti käännös	59	30
neutralisointi	13	15
poisto	22	15
puhekielistäminen	3	6
uudelleenkategorisointi	1	0

Käännöksessä parhaiten säilynyt idiolektinen ero on Alexin suurempi kiroilun määrä verrattuna Henryyn, vaikka sitäkin on vähennetty. Dialogi on myös yleisellä tasolla puhekielistä, eli normalisoidusta käännöksestä ei ole kyse. Yleispuhekielisten sanojen valikoitumisessa ei ole kuitenkaan huomattavaa eroa hahmojen välillä, vaan sekä Alex että Henry käyttävät esimerkiksi sanoja *jätkä* ja *pönttö*. Tulokset tukevat Tiittulan ja Nuolijärven (2013, 256) haastattelututkimuksessa esiin tuotua näkemystä siitä, että idiolektiset erot ”tasoittuvat” käännöksessä.

Hatim ja Mason (1990, 44, minun käännökseni) toteavat, että henkilön tai fiktiivisen hahmon idiolekti on ”kytköksissä ilmaisun tarkoitukseen”. Yhdyn tähän näkemykseen, sillä vaikka Auranheimon käännös useimmiten välittää alkuteokselle uskollisesti Alexin ja Henryn repliikkien suoran, tarinan ymmärtämiselle välttämättömän merkityksen, idiolektisten piirteiden häivyttäminen muuttaa dialogin funktiota ja siihen sisältyvää karakterisointia.

### **Johtopäätökset**

Tavoitteeni oli vastata tutkimuksessa kahteen kysymykseen, joista ensimmäinen koski sitä, miten Casey McQuistonin *Royal Blue* -romaanin kahden päähenkilön dialogissa esiintyviä idiolektisiä piirteitä on käännetty, kun taas toinen kysymys oli, millainen vaikutus käännöksellä on hahmojen karakterisointiin. Suomentaja Auranheimo vaikuttaa asettaneen käännöksen idiomaattisen luontevuuden tärkeämmäksi kuin yksittäisten, toistuvien sanojen säilyttämisen. Hatimin ja Masonin (1997, 103) mukaan idiolektiseen variaatioon tulisi sisältyä järjestelmällisesti toistuvia piirteitä, joita ei ole Auranheimon käännöksessä. Alexin ja Henryn kohdetekstissä käyttämät ilmaisut eivät ole myöskään kummallekaan hahmolle yksilöllisiä eli sellaisia, joita ei esiintyisi toisen puheessa. Mitä tulee toiseen tutkimuskysymykseen, idiolektisen variaation häivyttäminen käännöksessä muuttaa ja vähentää idiolektisten piirteiden sisältämää epäsuoraa karakterisointia. Tuloksena Alexin ja Henryn hahmojen väliset hienovaraisemmat erot eivät tule esille yhtä vahvasti kuin alkuteoksessa.

On huomioitava, että tämän tutkimuksen aineisto koostui vain valikoidusta osasta McQuistonin romaanin dialogia ja sen tulokset olisivat voineet olla erilaiset, jos Alexin ja Henryn kaikki dialogit olisi otettu huomioon. Lisäksi keskityin vain sanastollisiin piirteisiin, mutta alkuteoksessa on myös muun muassa syntaktista ja äänneasuiesta vaihtelua, jotka voisi laskea mukaan laajempaan tutkimukseen. Lisää tutkimusta tarvitaan sen selvittämiseksi, miten hyvin tämä tapaustutkimus vastaa yleisiä suomentajien tendenssejä idiolektien kääntämisessä. Esimerkiksi korpustutkimus voisi sopia hyvin tähän tarkoitukseen, sillä sen avulla voitaisiin analysoida rinnakkain idiolektisten piirteiden esiintymiä ja niiden käännöksiä useassa teoksessa.

Fiktiivisten idiolektien kääntämisen tutkimus on vielä suhteellisen vähäistä ja pidän tätä tutkielmaa rajoitteistaan huolimatta hyödyllisenä tutkimusalalle. Yhtenä tavoitteenani on herättää lisää kiinnostusta sekä idiolektien kääntämisestä että Casey McQuistonin teosten tutkimusta kohtaan. Idiolektit ovat jo itsessään niin monipuolisia, että niiden tutkimus voi epäilemättä johtaa mihin suuntaan tahansa.

