

Harry Potter in Translation: Comparison of Nine Romance Languages in the Translation of Proper Names in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*

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Abstract

This paper employs both quantitative and qualitative approaches to analyse the translations of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* into nine Romance languages, utilising Davies's (2003) translation taxonomy. The study reveals nuanced strategies in translating proper names, particularly characters and locations. Character names predominantly employ localisation, adapting spelling or morphology, except for the Italian language, which opts for creating new names. Places generally follow a localisation strategy. Neologisms emerge in objects and things, but the majority aligns with the English version, either adapting the word or retaining the original. Hogwarts houses exhibit a split between maintaining the original form and adapting to readers with new terminology.

Key Words

Harry Potter, Proper names, Romance languages, Transcreation, Wordsmith.



Introduction

The translation of proper names is considered one of the greatest challenges for any translator, particularly in children's literature. In this genre, the category of names, which generally includes names of people, animals, geographical places, and festivals, carries specific meanings and allusions. According to Tymoczko (1999: 223), proper names designate "dense signifiers" which are "the most

problematic to translate, in part because their [...] significance is often culturally specific and dependent on cultural paradigms”. The author mentioned argues that when dealing with proper names, two main approaches are taken: (1) foreignisation, which aims at preserving all references to a different culture for the readers by using the same term as the original version, and (2) domestication, which adapts the term to the readers, sometimes by omitting certain cultural elements. To sum up, not only does a translator need to be linguistically competent in the foreign language but also be aware of the cultural references that proper names may carry. Additionally, translating a children’s book poses an extra challenge as the translator must consider the intended audience and their age (Jaleniauskiene and Čičelytė, 2009).

When J. K. Rowling published the first book of the Harry Potter series in 1997, she did not know that she had created one of the most translated books in history, alongside the *Bible* and *The Little Prince*. Twenty years later, the translation into Scots by Matthew Fitt became the 80th language into which this famous children’s book was translated. The Harry Potter saga has become so popular worldwide that it has created a cultural phenomenon comparable to *Star Wars* or *The Lord of the Rings*. A number of studies have been carried out of the different translations of the little wizard’s adventures (Benati, 2002; Valero Garcés, 2003; Jaleniauskiene and Čičelytė, 2009; Croitoru et al., 2011; Mut Miralles, 2016), comparing them with the original version in two or more languages. However, little attention has been paid to similarities and differences in translation techniques among all the languages related to a single family.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the translation strategies used by translators in nine languages belonging to the Romance language family (i.e., Italian, French, Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, Romanian, Catalan, Galician, Asturian and Occitan) using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The research’s second goal is to investigate whether there are some common patterns in the translation processes in this Indo-European family of languages.

This study is divided as follows: Section 1 is an overview of the main strategies used in narrative translation as well as previous studies of the analysis of proper names in the first Harry Potter book series. Section 2 describes the data gathering instruments and the procedures used to analyse data. Section 3 evaluates the results of this research, and finally Section 4 draws the conclusions, and opens up possible future studies in the same field.

1. Overview

1.1 Corpus linguistics in translation studies

At the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, translation was one of the areas excluded in the introductions to corpus linguistics (e.g., Biber et al., 1998; Kennedy, 1998; McEnery and Wilson, 2001). A possible reason for this phenomenon is that the use of translation studies in corpus linguistics is relatively new. Furthermore, the traditional unidirectional trend between linguistics and translation studies could be another reason (Olohan, 2002). Translation has not received the same attention as an original text with its rights in the target language system; it is often considered merely a copy. The definition given by Oakes and McEnery (2000, p. 8) on translation in corpus linguistics shows a conventional view about this area: “a bilingual parallel corpus is a corpus that contains the same text samples in each of two languages, in the sense that the sample are translations of one another”. However, translation scholars have provided a different definition when using corpus linguistics for their studies. One example is the definition given by Johansson (1998, p. 6):

It is well known that linguistic choices often differ depending upon the individual translator, or there may be outright mistakes in translation. To what extent can we then make generalisations based on translated texts? And can we really be sure that the same meanings are expressed in the source and the target text? Or should we rather think in terms of degrees or types of equivalence? [...] Most seriously, to what extent can we take translated texts to be representative of ordinary language use? Translated texts may differ from original texts because of source language influence [...] Moreover, there may be general features which characterise translated text.

Today, translations in corpus-based methodology have gained recognition, and they are no longer considered solely in relation to their source text; instead, they are viewed as new products with communicative rights (Olohan, 2002). Software such as WordSmith¹ and AntConc,² which are used to find linguistic patterns in corpus linguistics, are really useful in the field of translation studies as well. Some of their functions, such as concordance, are highly effective in finding the context for a specific term and helping the researchers and other translators to

¹ <https://www.lexically.net/wordsmith/> (Last accessed: 26/11/2024)

² <https://www.laurenceanthony.net/software/antconc/> (Last accessed: 26/11/2024)

understand the reasons behind the translation strategies used in the translated text. Following a translator's approach, this research built up a corpus purely based on the translations of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Such translations are regarded as new texts with the same importance given to the original version.

1.2 Translation strategies for proper names

Before analysing the previous study of the proper names used in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, it is worth mentioning Davies's (2003, pp. 65-100) classification of translation techniques applied when translating proper names from one language into another. The author identifies seven different categories: preservation, addition, omission, globalisation, localisation, transformation and creation, which are described below.

- Preservation: involves a direct or literal translation, consisting of transferring the foreign term directly into the new text.
- Addition: similar to the previous strategy with the exception that the translator adds additional information about the term in a footnote or similar.
- Omission: this strategy involves deleting some information without leaving any trace in the new version (e.g., a character speaking with an accent or in a different dialect).
- Globalisation: this process involves replacing a specific cultural element with a more neutral or generic one (e.g., *cat* instead of *Siamese cat*).
- Localisation: the translator adapts the term by using a cultural element familiar to the target readers or by grammatical, morphological, phonological and gender ending variations.
- Transformation: this strategy consists of altering the original (i.e., *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* becomes *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* in the United States).
- Creation: this process is used when a translator creates a completely different term from the original version.

1.3 Previous studies of names used in *Harry Potter heptalogy*

The Harry Potter saga represents a real challenge for translators. The names created by J. K. Rowling have diverse origins and allusions, including French, Latin, Scottish, British, mythological, astronomical, imaginary, toponymical and humoristic elements (Jaleniauskiene and Čičelytė, 2009).

Valero Garcés (2003) analyses the translation of proper names between five Romance languages and German. The results show that, while Italian, French, Catalan and Portuguese languages adopt localisation and creation approaches, Spanish and German languages tend to remain faithful to the original with a preservation strategy. The approach taken by the majority is due to the belief that the target receiver should enjoy the story by understanding every word with its allusions and should not perceive it as a translation.

Jaleniauskiene and Čičelytė (2009) compare the translation of the book among English, Lithuanian and German, revealing distinct approaches taken by the two translators. Since the original targeted audiences were children living in the United Kingdom, many names alluded to the British culture or were perceived as new and strange on purpose. However, some references may still be mysterious for a British child due to being well hidden. Such allusions are very challenging when put into another language; for instance, the surname of the potions teacher Severus Snape refers to a snake, and the *sn* cluster has a general negative connotation, as in *sneer*, *snide*, and *sneak* (Davies, 2003). Another example, more difficult to find, is the first name of one of the main characters, Hermione Granger, which a well-educated Briton will probably associate with the wife of the king of Sicily in *The Winter's Tale* by Shakespeare (Brøndsted and Dollerup, 2004).

In 2010, Mäkinen examined the Finnish and German translations of Harry Potter to explore translation challenges. The study found that hidden meanings, creative aspects of names and the original casual style were often lost in translation. On the other hand, Mut Miralles (2016) compares the translation between Spanish and Catalan. Surprisingly, the strategies applied by the translators are quite different, even though they are geographically close. For her part, Brazill (2016) highlights frequent issues in Chinese to English translations in formal and professional contexts. The study involves interviews with 20

teachers and surveys with over 300 students from seven Chinese universities. It identifies four main problematic areas: Chinglish, cultural awareness, machine translation and the translation profession. The findings reveal differences between Chinese and English expressions, with causes of Chinglish rooted in vocabulary, grammar and cultural differences. Emphasising cultural awareness was crucial for improving translation quality, especially for idiomatic expressions. The study recommends creating more intelligible translations to enhance Chinese-English translation quality.

Zabir and Haroon (2018) examine the translation procedures for proper names in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* into Malay, using Fernandes's (2006) theory. They also assess the impact of translation programmes using the concept of "translation loss". The study identifies several translation procedures that result in the loss of hidden meanings, creative elements and the original casual style in the translated names. Finally, Xinyu et al. (2022), whose research aims to identify challenges and propose solutions in translating Harry Potter books from English into Chinese, highlight the fact that, due to linguistic differences, the transcription strategy is often necessary to maintain phonemic and semantic fidelity between the source text and the target text.

This approach involves choosing Chinese characters that approximate to the pronunciation and meaning of English proper names, which typically consist of multiple characters in Chinese. Additionally, the recreation strategy is discussed as a method to create new target text proper names based on the meanings found in the original source text, particularly suitable for the inventive names characteristic of fantasy literature like Harry Potter. The authors also emphasise the use of the rendition strategy to directly translate proper names with formal unity across both languages, preserving the unique atmosphere of the magical world in the translations. Their findings underscore the importance of cultural understanding and structural considerations in improving the quality and appropriacy of translations, especially in children's literature and fantasy genres.

2. Methodology

2.1 The corpus HAROMUS

To compare the translation across nine different Romance languages, a corpus named HAROMUS was compiled. The name is derived from the Latin first name of the main character, Harrius, and the language family chosen for this

study, Romance. HAROMUS contains the following texts in digital format:

1. *Harry Potter e la Pietra Filosofale* (Italian)
2. *Harry Potter à l'École des Sorciers* (French)
3. *Harry Potter y la Piedra Filosofal* (Spanish)
4. *Harry Potter și Piatra Filozofală* (Romanian)
5. *Harry Potter e a Pedra Filosofal* (Brazilian Portuguese)
6. *Harry Potter y la Piedra Filosofal* (Asturian)
7. *Harry Potter e a Pedra Filosofal* (Galician)
8. *Harry Potter i la Pedra Filosofal* (Catalan)
9. *Harry Potter e la Pèira Filosofau* (Occitan)

It should be noted that the American version of the book used as a reference point (i.e., *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*) shows slight differences compared to the British version. Examples of these differences are lexical (*Sorcerer's Stone* instead of *Philosopher's Stone*) and morphological (British English spelling vs. American English spelling, such as *favour/favor*, *realise/realize*, etc.). The same phenomenon applies to the Portuguese version from Europe and the translation into Brazilian Portuguese, with a major impact on the translation process. For this reason, the Brazilian version was specifically included in the study. It should be noted that due to the absence of a digital format of the book in Asturian, Catalan, Galician and Occitan, a digital copy was created using Acrobat Scan, followed by the digitisation of the texts with an OCR programme. Finally, the Valencian edition of the book was considered; however, due to its similarity to the Catalan version, only the latter was included in this research.

2.2 Data gathering instruments

The data used in this work were collected in an Excel file and divided into four main categories (proper names of the characters, places, objects and the four houses of the Hogwarts school). For the first category (characters' names), 36 items were selected. The place category included seven entries, while the object section comprised 14 items. Finally, the names of the four Hogwarts houses constituted the last category analysed.

For the quantitative approach, the main instrument used to analyse the data was the 6.0 version of WordSmith Tools. All the three functions (i.e., Keywords, Wordlist and Concordance) were used to investigate the translation strategies used by the different translators. The Keywords option was used to identify the keywords in the original book by comparing it to the British National Corpus (BNC). The Wordlist tool examined the 10 most frequent words in each translation, while the Concordance option calculated the number of entries for each selected word. This analysis helped in understanding the translator's choices in translating or omitting specific terms. For the qualitative approach, after the data were gathered, a translation analysis was conducted for each language described by using Davies's (2003) strategies in translation. To provide plausible explanations for the terms used by the authors involved, dictionaries of the nine Romance languages selected and the results of the previously mentioned studies were referenced.

2.3 Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone: Plot

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone by the British writer J. K. Rowling is the first book of a saga composed by seven books. The story is about a young boy called Harry Potter, who lives with his uncles in London after his parents were killed by a dark wizard called Lord Voldemort when he was little. On his 11th birthday, he receives a letter from the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Subsequently, he starts to attend the school to become a wizard. In Hogwarts he meets new friends, such as Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger, and makes some enemies too, for instance, Draco Malfoy and the Potion teacher Severus Snape. In the meantime, the dark Lord is trying to come back thanks to a powerful stone which can produce the elixir of life, the philosopher's stone. The seven books tell about the adventures of Harry and his two best friends in the magical world.

3. Data Analysis and discussion

3.1 Wordsmith analysis: Keywords function

Before the analysis of HAROMUS, an analysis of keywords was conducted in the original book in English compared to the BNC. The first 22 keywords related to proper nouns were selected to conduct this study. The keywords in the text

are the main characters of the story (Harry, Hagrid, Ron, Hermione, Dumbledore, Snape and Malfoy). These are followed by the house to which the main character belongs (Gryffindor), the name of the school (Hogwarts) and finally the wizard sport (Quidditch). By looking at the keywords only, it is possible to estimate that the story mainly talks about the adventures of the main characters in the school.

3.2 Wordsmith analysis: Wordlist function

The total number of words contained in the corpus is 801,157. Firstly, a comparison between the total number of words per language was conducted. As Table 1 shows, the Brazilian Portuguese version of the book displays the smallest number of words (77,911), only five words below the original version (77,916). However, it is not surprising that the Catalan, Italian and French versions enjoy the greatest number of words. These three languages are known to use longer sentences than English. It should be noted that the English language prefers the use of verbs, whereas Catalan, Italian and French tend to use nominalisation instead.

EN	IT	FR	SP	PT (BR)	RO	AS	CAT	GAL	OCC
77,916	83,215	85,734	78,525	77,911	80,555	71,415	88,938	74,817	82,131

Table 1. Total number of words in each version of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*

Secondly, the total number of different words (types) was calculated for each version. Table 2 shows that the Italian version uses almost the double of different words (10,306) than the original version in English (5,986), followed by Galician with 9,276 different terms. However, the other versions display an average of 8,530 different words. A possible reason may be the use of synonyms by the Italian translator, not to mention the lexical variety of the Italian language due to its close relation to Latin compared to the other Romance languages. The possible reason for the Galician variation in terminology may be attributed to the translator's choice of using terms from various areas within the region.

EN	IT	FR	SP	PT (BR)	RO	AS	CAT	GAL	OCC
5,986	10,306	8,723	8,629	8,376	8,737	8,922	7,334	9,276	8,992

Table 2. Total number of different words (types) in each version of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*

The Wordlist option was used to extract the 10 most frequent proper names in each version of the book (see Table 3). Interestingly, the first four names are consistent across seven languages, including the three central characters: “Harry Potter” and his two closest friends, “Ron Weasley” and “Hermione Granger”. It is intriguing that Hogwarts’s gamekeeper, “Rubeus Hagrid”, appears more frequently than “Hermione Granger”. One possible explanation is Hagrid’s early introduction in the story. However, in the Catalan and Occitan versions, the word for “head” ranks second and third, respectively.

From the fifth word onward, divergences among translations become apparent. While four out of the nine versions mention the Potions teacher Severus Snape, the English and French editions feature “professor” in the fifth position, whereas Galician and Occitan opt for “face” (*cara*) and “people” (*monde*). This discrepancy may stem from the use of different titles in these languages to refer to individuals in the book, such as *señor* (“sir”) and *señora* (“madam”) in the Spanish version.

Although the positions of other main characters’ names vary across versions (Dumbledore, Malfoy, Vernon), certain nouns are shared among multiple translations: “time” in English; “head” (*testa, tête, cabeça, cap*) in Italian, French, Brazilian Portuguese, Catalan and Occitan; “door” (*puerta, porta*) in Spanish, Catalan and Brazilian Portuguese; and “eyes” (*olhos*) in the Brazilian Portuguese version. Additionally, the Occitan version places “room” (*sala*) seventh. These recurring terms may reflect various factors: different languages using synonyms or different structures for discussing time; the recurrent use of “head” due to the Sorting Hat ceremony; the prevalence of “door” in Spanish possibly due to castle descriptions; the focus on “eyes” in Brazilian Portuguese descriptions of main characters; and the prominence of “room” in Occitan, reflecting the school’s setting with multiple classrooms.

EN	IT	FR	SP	PT (BR)	RO	AS	CAT	GAL	OCC
Harry	Harry	Harry	Harry	Harry	Harry	Harry	Harry	Harry	Harry
Ron	Ron	Ron	Ron	Rony	Ron	Ron	Cap	Ron	Ron
Hagrid	Hagrid	Hagrid	Hagrid	Hagrid	Hagrid	Hagrid	Ron	Hagrid	Cap
Hermione	Hermione	Hermione	Hermione	Hermione	Hermione	Malfoy	Hagrid	Hermione	Hagrid
Professor	Piton	Professeur	Snape	Snape	Plesneala	Snape	Hermione	Cara	Monde
Snape	Silente	Tête	Dumbledore	Dumbledore	Dumbledore	Hermione	Cosa	Snape	Dudley

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EN	IT	FR	SP	PT (BR)	RO	AS	CAT	GAL	OCC
Dumbledore	Dudley	Rogue	Dudley	Duda	Dudley	Profesora	Snape	Dumbledore	Sala
Uncle	Malfoy	Dumbledore	Malfoy	Cabeça	Vernon	Dudley	Dumbledore	Dudley	Malafé
Time	Testa	Dudley	Puerta	Olhos	Draco	Cara	Porta	Malfoy	Dumbledore
Dudley	Vernon	Malefoy	Vernon	Porta	Neville	Gryffindor	Dudley	Neville	Gryffindor

Table 3. Top 10 most frequent words in each version of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*

3.3 Wordsmith analysis: Concordance function

3.3.1 Main characters

The final WordSmith Tool function used to analyse HAROMUS was the Concordance option. The first analysis consisted of investigating any differences in the number of entries of the 35 selected characters of the story. Although 30 out of the 35 main characters' entries were consistent across all translated versions, five entries differed unexpectedly. As illustrated in Table 4, the Brazilian Portuguese translation presents a scarce number of entries compared to the original version and the other translations.

To interpret the results, a comparison with the Brazilian Portuguese version was manually conducted. The Transfiguration teacher, Minerva McGonagall, appears under her surname only three times in the Brazilian Portuguese version. Apparently, the translator opted to address her using her first name, possibly reflecting a cultural preference typical of Brazil, where people often refer to others by their names with a title. Similarly, the gamekeeper Hagrid (52 tokens) is referred to by his first name *Rúbeo* (309); the bad boy of the Slytherin house *Draco* (82) is more frequently used than Malfoy (46); the Gryffindor student *Simas* (19) of Irish origin occurs more than double Finnigan (7); and the Gryffindor Quidditch keeper *Olívio* (44) is used instead of Wood (11).

Notably, the Romanian translation adopts a similar strategy to the Brazilian Portuguese version referring to Draco more frequently by his first name (118 tokens) rather than his surname, Malfoy (8). In the Occitan version, a comparable pattern is observed with Finnigan, where his first name, Seamus (6 tokens), occurs more often than his surname, Finnigan (2 tokens).

Character	EN	IT	FR	SP	PT (BR)	RO	AS	CAT	GAL	OCC
McGonagall	95	99	97	94	3	88	65	99	100	73
Hagrid	336	355	320	362	52	351	243	351	370	272
Malfoy	109	123	123	123	46	8	93	123	126	73
Finnigan	18	19	14	18	7	17	5	7	7	2
Wood	49	52	41	56	11	49	20	58	55	29

Table 4. Number of entries of the main characters in each version of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*

3.3.2 Places

The second category analysed with the Concordance function was the main places in the story. The Romanian version exhibits the most significant difference compared to other versions of the book. This difference could be attributed to the typical structure of Romanian sentences, which are generally longer than their English counterparts. As a result, references are created using synonyms and relative pronouns. Table 5 provides statistics extracted from different translations compared to the original. The Occitan and the Asturian translations also show a lower use of “Forbidden Forest”, with 11 and 14 entries, respectively. This is due to the use of synonyms for “forest” in the text (e.g., *bosc*).

Place	EN	IT	FR	SP	PT (BR)	RO	AS	CAT	GAL	OCC
Privet Drive, 4	16	18	14	16	15	9	14	15	14	15
Hogwarts	79	79	85	77	85	59	54	79	78	67
Gringotts	28	27	24	27	27	19	20	26	28	21
Forbidden Forest	33	36	37	37	38	19	14	44	36	11

Table 5. Number of entries of selected places in each version of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*

3.3.3 Objects

Among the 13 selected objects for the analysis of this study, only one shows a difference between the versions: the “Remembrall”. This magical object, which aids in remembering things by changing color, was mentioned only once in the

Romanian version, while it typically displays between six and eight entries in the other versions. The discrepancy arises because the Romanian translator opted to use a synonym (*globul*, meaning “sphere”) to refer to this particular object.

3.3.4 Hogwarts Houses

The final items explored with the Concordance function of Wordsmith were the four houses of Hogwarts School. The entries indicate that the most frequently mentioned houses in the book are “Gryffindor”, the house of the main character Harry Potter, and “Slytherin”, the house of his rival, Draco Malfoy. No variations in entries were identified across the translated versions.

3.4 Translation comparison

3.4.1 Comparison of proper names and lexical constructions to name people

3.4.1.1 Creation strategy for proper names

This section is dedicated to the translation strategies used by the different translators, according to the taxonomy proposed by Davies (2003). The results show that 14 terms were transformed for the children’s audience. This strategy is used the most in the Italian version (12 entries as shown in Table 6) followed by French (8) and Romanian (6). As can be observed, these three languages adopted this strategy to adapt the hidden allusions for each character to their readers.

English	Italian
Muggle	Babbano
Albus Dumbledore	Albus Silente
Minerva McGonagall	Minerva McGrannit
Madame Pomfrey	Madama Chips
Professor Quirrell	Professor Raptor
Neville Longbottom	Neville Paciock

Crabbe	Tiger
Severus Snape	Severus Piton
Argus Filch	Argus Gazza
Madame Hooch	Madama Bumb
Oliver Wood	Oliver Baston
Firenze	Fiorenzo

Table 6. Creation strategy in the Italian version

- 1) “Muggle”: this term in English is used to refer to people without magical power. Judith Ingg (2003: 167) claims that the lexical term has “connotations of stupidity” or plainness, as in the English expressions “a real mug” or “what an ugly mug”. The Italian term *Babbano* derives from the adjective *babbeo*, meaning stupid. Similarly, Brazilian Portuguese calls these people *Trouxa*, which has the same form of the adjective *trouxa*, meaning “silly person”. The French version uses *Moldu*, meaning “soft-brained” (*mol de cerveau*), someone who does not really understand things (Ménard, 2010). For its part, Occitan uses the term *Mángol*, meaning “simpleton, fool”. Finally, the Romanian translator chose *Încuiat*, meaning “narrow-minded”.
- 2) “Dumbledore”: according to Ménard (2010), the author of the book chose this name from chapter 20 of the book *The Mayor of Casterbridge* by Thomas Hardy. In the book, a woman living in the countryside speaks in a peculiar dialect. The term seems to derive from the regional version of the word “bumblebee” since the character is very active and goes from one place to the other. Valero Garcés (2003) provides another explanation, claiming that the word comes from the term “dumb” or “bumbling”. Only the Italian version changed the surname into *Silente*, giving another connotation to the term. The words can derive from *silenzio*, meaning “silent”, since the Headmaster of Hogwarts is a reflexive person who keeps silent on Harry’s past. This term also alludes to the term *senile*, adjective used for old people suffering from weak health, since the character is very old.
- 3) “Minerva McGonagall”: as mentioned above, the first name of the Transfiguration teacher appears in the book written by Hardy. It is a clear reference to the Roman goodness of wisdom and strategic warfare. Although her name is unchanged in every version, her surname becomes *McGrannit* in Italian, alluding to the granite rock, showing the severe and strict character of this professor.

- 4) “Madame Pomfrey”: this character works as a nurse in the school’s hospital. As Valero Garcés (2003) mentions, the term refers to potato chips from the French *pomme de terre* (“potato”) and the verb “to fry”. She becomes *Madame Pomfresh* in French and *Madame Pomafresca* in Occitan, both adapting the lexical term “potato” with *frais* and *fresca*, meaning “fresh, good”. Since the allusion to potatoes was not clear to the Italian readers, the translator named her *Madam Chips*, referring to chips using a synonym that could be better understood by Italians.
- 5) “Professor Quirrell”: the Defence against the Dark Arts teacher becomes *Professor Raptor* in the Italian version. The term indicates a connection with the term *raptus*, meaning “fit, burst”, since the teacher seems to be quite mad and hosts a part of Lord Voldemort on the back of his head.
- 6) “Neville Longbottom”: this shy and clumsy Gryffindor student was translated into *Neville Paciock* in Italian. It seems to derive from the adjective *pacioccone*, meaning “fatty and calm person” (Benati, 2002). The translator chose the ending in *-ck* to keep the term similar to an English word. The French version called him *Longdubat* (“long” and “bottom”), whereas the Romanian translator used the word *Poponeață*, a slang word for “bottom”.
- 7) “Crabbe”: the surname of this character, who is one of the bodyguards of Draco Malfoy, refers to the crustacean “crab”. The Italian version prefers the term *Tiger*.
- 8) “Severus Snape”: the Potion master’s surname alludes to the term *snake*. In the Italian version, he is called *Professor Piton*, alluding to a type of snake, whereas in French it is referred as *Professeur Rogue*, meaning “arrogant”. The Romanian translator chose *Plesneală*, from the verb “to snap”.
- 9) “Argus Filch”: the custodian of Hogwarts is in charge of catching students who break the rules. His surnames come from the slang verb “to filch”, meaning “to steal”. In Italian, he is called *Gazzza* (“magpie”), whereas in French it is *Rusard*, from the verb *ruser*, meaning “use cunning” or “go around”, since the character is always inspecting the castle.
- 10) “Madame Hooch”: the Flying Instructor is called *Madama Bumb* in Italian and *Madame Bibine* in the French version. The English term refers to a cheap and poor-quality alcoholic drink, which is respected in the French term. However, the Italian version seems to refer to the onomatopoeia for an

explosion.

- 11) “Professor Sprout”: the Herbology teacher’s surname indicates a clear reference to the term “sprout”. The French *Professeur Chourave* alludes to *chou* (“cabbage”) and *rave* (“turnip”), remaining in the same semantic field of plants and vegetables as the Catalan *Professora Coliflor* and the Occitan *Professora Caulet-Flòri*, synonymous terms for “cauliflower”. The Romanian *Profesoara Lăstar* makes reference to a “sapling”.
- 12) “Voldemort”: the English term seems to derive from French *vol* (“theft”) and *mort* (“death”). The dark wizard in fact splits his soul in order to become immortal. The Romanian term *Cap-de-Mort* seems to derive from *cap* (“head, leader”) of death.
- 13) “Oliver Wood”: the Capitan of the Gryffindor Quidditch team’s surname clearly derives from wood. The surname was translated as *Dubois*, which means “of wood” in French, and *Maderu* in Asturian, from *madera* (“wood”). The Occitan version also alluded to an olive tree and wood (*Oliu Husta*). The Catalan *Roure* seems to derive from the term used for an oak tree, whereas both Italian and Romanian translators used the term *Baston* from *bastone* meaning “woodstick”.
- 14) “Firenze”: the centaur that lives in the Forbidden Forest and later becomes a Divination teacher has its name derived from the Italian city of Florence. For this reason, the Italian translator changed its name into *Fiorenzo* from the verb *fiorire* (“to bloom, to prosper”).

3.4.1.2 Localisation strategy for proper names

This strategy consists of adapting the name to the readers by following the morphology, phonetics or syntax of the target language. Among the 18 items selected for this study, it seems that this strategy is mostly used in the Brazilian Portuguese version (17) as represented in Table 7. The names are adapted to the phonetic of the target languages using accentuation (aunt Petunia is *Pétunia*, *Petúnia*) or by using the corresponding name in the language (uncle Vernon is *Válter*, James becomes *Tiago* and George is *Jorge* in Brazilian Portuguese). The referring expression for Lord Voldemort, You-Know-Who, was literally translated in every version except for the Catalan version which calls him *Innominable* (“unnamable”). It is relevant to note that the surname of Draco Malfoy, from the French *mal foi* (“bad faith”) was literally translated into

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Romanian with *Reacredință* and adapted to French and Occitan morphology with *Malefoy* and *Malafé*. It is interesting that the Portuguese version from Portugal keeps the proper names in English instead. The Occitan version of the book also adapted proper names to the language spelling and names (*Jórdi Weasley* and *Ròn Weasley*).

English	Brazilian Portuguese
Vernon Dursley	Válter Dursley
Petunia Dursley	Petúnia Dursley
Dudley Dursley	Duda Dursley
Lily Potter	Lílian Potter
James Potter	Tiago Potter
You-Know-Who	Você-Sabe-Quem
Albus Dumbledore	Alvo Dumbledore
Rubeus Hagrid	Rúbeo Hagrid
Ginny Weasley	Gina Weasley
George Weasley	Jorge Weasley
Ron Weasley	Rony Weasley
Nicolas Flamel	Nicolau Flamel
Seamus Finnigan	Simas Finnigan
Dean Thomas	Dino Thomas
Severus Snape	Severo Snape
Argus Filch	Argos Filch
Oliver Wood	Olívio Wood

Table 7. Localisation strategy in the Brazilian Portuguese version

3.4.1.3 Preservation strategy for proper names

Among the 36 proper names chosen for this research, only five are kept as the originals in the nine different versions: the main character of the story, Harry Potter, and one of his best friends, Hermione Granger; two of the brothers of the Weasley family, Fred and Percy, and the other “bodyguard” of Draco Malfoy, Goyle. While it is clear that all the translators decided not to change the name of the main character, the choice of not translating these other names seems unclear. A possible reason may be that three of them are very short names and

easily understood by the audience (Fred, Percy and Goyle). A possible localisation for Hermione could have been *Hermión* for the languages spoken in the Iberian Peninsula though.

3.4.2 Comparison of places

3.4.2.1 Creation strategy for places

Six places were taken into account for this study. The creation strategy seems to occur only three times.

- 1) “Hogwarts school of Witchcraft and Wizardry”: the famous name of the magic school derives from a word game by switching the position of the two syllables from the term warthog (*Phacochoerus*), which is also the symbol of the school. While eight out of nine languages maintain the original term, the French translator Jean-François Ménard explains that he chose the term *Poudlard* by interpreting the English word as a pig (*lard*, “the pig fat”) with lice (*poux*). In an interview (Ménard, 2010), the translator commented that the French readers asked him if the word had to be pronounced as an English word. This phenomenon seems to represent an excellent translation of the term, since it contains a French meaning while having the shape of an English word.
- 2) “Diagon Alley”: this street in the middle of London is the place where wizards and witches live and go shopping. As mentioned in Mut Miralles (2016), if the word is read very fast, it sounds like *diagonally*. For this reason, the Catalan translator decided to use the same strategy by employing the term *Ronda d’Alla* which sounds as *rondalla* (“a fairytale”). For its part, the French version changed it into *chemin de traverse* (“the cross path”). Finally, the Occitan version chose the term *via de l’Embarca* from the term *embarca*, a shortcut, “detour”, or from the verb *embarcar*, “to board”.
- 3) “Platform Nine and Three-Quarters”: this is the platform hidden behind a magic wall where students take the train to go to Hogwarts. Surprisingly, the Portuguese version from Brazil used the term *Plataforma nove e meia* (“Platform nine and a half”), while the version from Portugal keeps the original term.

3.4.2.2 Localisation strategy for places

This strategy seems to be the most widely used in for toponyms. Five out of six terms are adapted to the language according to different strategies.

- 1) “Privet Drive, 4”: Harry Potter’s uncle’s house where the protagonist grows up. The term seems to derive from the plant “privet” from the *Ligustrum* family. In the Romanian version, the street is called *Aleea Boschetelor, 4*, which seems to derive from the term *boschet* (“bush”). The Brazilian Portuguese version translated the name of the plant into Portuguese calling it *Rua dos Alfeneiros, 4*, referring to a general shrub belonging to the Fabaceae family. The same process is used in Asturian with *Camín de los Sanxuaninos, 4*, from the *Hypericum Perforatum*, also known under the name of St. John’s Wort. In Catalan, they changed only the term drive into *carrer* instead.
- 2) “Diagon Alley”: the term becomes *Callejón Diagon* literally translated into Spanish, *Diagon-al* (“diagonal”) in the Portuguese version from Portugal and *Beco Diagonal* in Brazil. *Aleea Diagon* (Romanian), *travesa Diagon* (Galician) and *Caleyon Diagon* (Asturian) are translating literally only the term “alley”.
- 3) “Gringotts”: the famous wizard bank operated by goblins is morphologically modified in Italian by taking the English ending out (*Gringott*), whereas the Brazilian Portuguese added the ending *-es* transforming it into *Gringotes*.
- 4) “Forbidden Forest”: finally, the forest near the castle full of fantastic creatures is literally translated in every language as shown in Table 8.
- 5) “Platform Nine and Three Quarters”: the term “platform” is literally translated in the nine translations (*binario, voie, andén, plataforma, peronul, via, andana*).

EN	IT	FR	SP	PT (BR)	RO	CAT	GAL	OCC	AS
Forbidden Forest	Foresta Proibita	Forêt Interdite	Bosque Prohibido	Floresta Proibida	Pădurea Interzisă	Bosc Prohibit	Fraga prohibida	Seuva defenduda	Viesca Vetada

Table 8. Translation of ‘Forbidden Forest’ in every version

3.4.2.3 Preservation strategy for places

The two terms that are unchanged in the majority of the translated version are “Privet Drive, 4” (Italian, French, Spanish, Galician and Occitan) and “Gringotts” (French, Spanish, Romanian, Catalan, Galician, Occitan and Asturian). The term “Hogwarts” is changed only in French, whereas the term “Diagon Alley” is only kept in Italian.

3.4.3 Comparison of objects and things

3.4.3.1 Creation strategy for objects and things

Thirteen items were chosen to be analysed in this section. Ten out of 13 objects were creatively created by the translators. Differently from the two previous types of proper names, the translators seem to use this strategy more often with these kinds of words.

- 1) “Put-Outer”: also known with the term “Deluminator” in the American version, is a device to remove light sources from the surroundings. It is similar to a cigarette lighter. Whereas the American term refers to “taking the light” from the Latin prefix *de-* and *lucos*, all the translators chose a word related to the phrasal verb “to put out”. This is evident in the British English version, which clearly alludes to the term (Put-outer). It is called *Spegnino* (from *spegnere*) in Italian, *Éteignoir* (from *éteindre*) in French, *Apagador* in the languages from the Iberian Peninsula (from *apagar*) and *Apagueiro* in Brazilian Portuguese. In Occitan it is called *tirabuèc*, literally a lighter. The Romanian *Brichetă* also literally means a lighter.
- 2) “Sickle”: is a form of currency in the wizarding world. The term seems to derive from the object, a sickle. The French translator chose a word from *argot*, the secret language used in France during the 19th century. He called this coin a *Mornille* from *mornifle* (“money”). The Portuguese version from Portugal used the term *Leões* (“lions”).
- 3) “Knuts”: the origin of this word is unknown. It could derive from the Dutch *knut*, referring to a small insect. The Italian version called this object *zellino* from which vaguely reminds one of a schilling. For their part, the French version adapted the word to *noise* and the Brazilian Portuguese version adapted it to *nuque*.

- 4) “Bettie Bott’s Every Flavour Beans”: this sweet similar to jellybeans is translated into Italian by the strategy of omission and creation. The Italian translator relieved of the creator’s name calling them *caramelle Tuttigusti +1* (“every flavour plus one sweet”). In French they are known as *Dragées surprises de Bertie Crochue* (“surprising sweets by Bertie Hooked”).
- 5) “Sorting Hat”: the magical hat that sorts the new students to the different Hogwarts’ houses. In Italian becomes the “speaking hat” *Cappello Parlante*, which is a familiar object in the Italian fairytales. The French *Choixpeau Magique* is a word game between *choix* (“choice”) and *chapeau* (“hat”).
- 6) “Remembrall”: this sphere-like object helps the owner to remember things by changing colour. The Italian *Ricordella* comes from the verb *ricordare* (“to remember”) and the diminutive suffix *-ella*. The French version used the term *Rapeltout* from *rappeler* (“remind”) and *tout* (“everything”). The same technique is used for the other languages, by deriving the name of this object from verbs such as *recordar*, *lembrar*, *a-și aminti* and *brembar* (“remember, remind”), which gives birth to *Recordadora*, *Lembrador*, *Amintește-ți tot* and *Brembatóri*.
- 7) “Quaffle”: one of the balls used in the wizard sport of Quidditch. This is an invented word which becomes *Pluffa* in Italian, *Souafle* in French, *Goles* in Brazilian Portuguese (with probably a reference to a goal in English), *Balon* in Romanian, *Bomba* in Catalan, *Larpadela* in Galician and *Cuatriada* in Asturian.
- 8) “Bludger”: another item used in Quidditch. This ball is extremely fast and it is enchanted to hit players who are flying on their brooms. It is translated into *Bolide* in Italian, alluding to something that goes really fast, and into *Cognard* in French, from the verb *coigner* (“to hit”) and the negative suffix *-ard* (Valero Garcés, 2003). The Occitan translator opted for the same technique with the term *Tustard*, from the verb *tustar* (“to hit”). In Romanian it is called *Baloane-ghiulea*, from *ghiulea* (“cannon ball”). The Galician version called it *Fungueira*, and *Porriador* in Asturian.
- 9) “Golden Snitch”: the smallest winged ball of Quidditch is called *Boccino d’oro* in Italian from *boccino* (“jack”) (the small ball in the game of balls as mentioned in Valero Garcés, 2003), *Vif d’or* in French from the adjective *vif* (“alive”), *Papallona* from (“butterfly”) in Catalan and *Raitana dorada* in Asturian from the bird *raitán* (“robin”). In Occitan, however, it is called *Petòfi*

durat, likely derived from the term *petòfia*, meaning rumor or gossip, and the adjective *durat*, golden. The term alludes to the sound the object makes when it flies and perhaps evokes the speed at which gossip spreads.

- 10) “Mirror of Erised”: the second term of this phrase is written that way so that if read from right to left it would give the word “desire”. In Italian, however, this game of words is omitted in the first translation of the book. The translator preferred to allude to a magical object present in the fairytale of Snow White, calling it *Specchio delle brame* from the famous sentence “Mirror, mirror on the wall” (*Specchio, specchio delle mie brame*) and later translated into *specchio delle emarb*.

3.4.3.2 Localisation strategy for objects and things

The seven objects which were adapted to the children audience are the ones described in this subsection.

- 1) “Bettie Bott’s Every Flavour Beans”: the terms were literally translated into the different languages, such as *feijões de todos os sabores de Bertie Bott* in Portuguese from Portugal or *gominoles Bertie Bott de toos tastos* in Asturian.
- 2) “Chocolate Frog”: this sweet is literally translated in the 10 languages. For example, it became *Cioccorana* in Italian from *cioccolata* (“chocolate”) and *rana* (“frog”), *Chocogrenouille* in French, *Ra de chocolate* in Galician and *Braște de ciocolată* in Romanian.
- 3) “Sickle”: this term was literally translated into Italian as *Falce* and *Focetus* in the Asturian version. The Romanian version preferred *Stecli* and in Occitan it became *Sèclos*.
- 4) “Knuts”: it is adapted to the Romanian orthography into *Cnuți*, whereas Asturian used *Kuenxos*.
- 5) “Sorting Hat”: the function of the hat is literally translated into Spanish (*Sombrero Seleccionador*), Portuguese (*Chapéu seleccionador*), Romanian (*Jobenul Magic care face Sortarea*), Catalan (*Barret que tria*), Galician (*Escolla do sombreiro*), Asturian (*Gorru Escoyedor*) and Occitan (*Capèth causidor*).
- 6) “Mirror of Erised”: the word game is kept in every language, except for Italian, and with the translation of the term “mirror” (i.e., *Miroir du Riséd*, *Oglinda lui Erised*, *Miralh d’Erisdat* and *Espeyu d’Uésed*).
- 7) “Philosopher’s Stone”: the magical stone which can produce the elixir of life

and turns base metals into gold is literally translated in every version. For instance, it is called *Pierre Philosophale* in French, *Piedra Filosofal* in Spanish and *Piatra Filozofală* in Romanian.

3.4.3.2 Preservation strategy for objects and things

Only four entries were kept as the original version in the translations. Interestingly, three of them are the balls used in Quidditch.

- 1) “Knuts”: the term is the same in Spanish, Portuguese from Portugal, Catalan and Galician.
- 2) “Quaffle”: the item remains unchanged in Spanish, Occitan and Portuguese from Portugal.
- 3) “Golden Snitch”: it is known as “Snitch” with the omission of the adjective only in the Spanish version.

3.4.4 Comparison of the four houses of Hogwarts School

3.4.4.1 Creation and localisation strategies for the Hogwarts' houses

The four main houses of the Hogwarts School are the following: Gryffindor, whose symbol is a lion; Slytherin, represented by a snake; Ravenclaw, whose emblem is an eagle/crow; and Hufflepuff, indicated by a badger.

3.4.4.1.1 Italian

The houses are then the following: *Grifondoro* (“golden griffon”), *Serpeverde* (“green snake”), *Tassorosso* (“red badger”, even if the colours of this house are yellow and black) and *Corvonero* (“black raven”). In the translation of the first three books, this last house was called *Pecoranera* (“black sheep”). However, the name was changed in the reprinted version and the last books to match with the house emblem.

3.4.4.1.2 French

Slytherin became *Serpentard* from *serpent* (“snake”) and the suffix *-ard*. *Serdaigle* is used for Ravenclaw, from *serrer* (“to grip”) and *aigle* (“agle”). Finally, the story behind the translation of Hufflepuff is quite interesting. Jean-François Ménard used the term *Poufsouffle* for this house. As he mentioned in an interview in 2010, the English author chose *Hufflepuff* from the fable *The Three Little Pigs*. It is actually the sound that the wolf makes to blow away the houses built by the piglets. Not only did he adapt it to the French audience, but he also gave an extra connotation: the students of this house are known to have problems passing the difficult exams of the school. As he said in the interview above mentioned “*les étudiants de cette maison courent après leurs études*” (“the students are running behind their studies”) (Ménard, 2010).

3.4.4.1.3 Brazilian Portuguese

The translator from Brazil chose *Grifinória* for Gryffindor (localisation), *Sonserina* for Slytherin (adaptation), *Corvinal* for Ravenclaw from *corvo* (“crow, raven”) and *Lufa-lufa* for Hufflepuff from the onomatopoeia of somebody in a rush (similar to French strategy for this house).

3.4.4.1.4 Romanian

The translation into Romanian changed Gryffindor into *Cercetași*, which seems to derive from the word for “scout” alluding to the bravery and strength of the students from this house. Slytherin became *Viperini* from *vipera* (“poisonous snake”). Ravenclaw is *Ochi-de-Çoim* (literally “the eyes of the hawk”) and finally *Astropuși* for Hufflepuff, which seems to derive from *astro* (“star”) and the preposition *puf* (“under, down”).

3.4.4.1.5 Occitan

The Occitan translation of the book introduced two terms and adapted the other two. The first change is Slytherin, which becomes *Eslissin*, from the verb *eslissar*, meaning to slip. *Taishpof* is used for Hufflepuff, derived from *taish*, meaning “badger” and *pof*, similar to the English word *puff*. *Gryffindor* is translated as

Gridondaur, combining the noun “griffin” with the adjective *golden*, *daur*. Lastly, Ravenclaw becomes *Arpagraula*, combining *arpa*, meaning “talon”, with *graula*, meaning “crow”.

3.4.4.2 Preservation strategy for the Hogwarts' houses

The translations taken into account (Spanish, Catalan, Galician and Asturian) preferred to maintain the original form of the houses' names. Interestingly, the Portuguese version from Portugal also kept the original names. The possible reason is that the translator wanted to keep the Anglo-Saxon background, since the school is supposed to be in a hidden place somewhere in Scotland.

Conclusions

The aim of this study was to analyse the translations of Harry Potter into nine Romance languages using both quantitative and qualitative approaches, classified according to Davies's (2003) translation taxonomy. The results revealed that, for character names, the most commonly employed strategy is localisation, adapting the spelling or morphology to suit the readers. An exception is found in the Italian translation, which often creates entirely new names. In examining the places in the story, the predominant strategy also appears to be localisation. While some neologisms were introduced, the majority aligns with the English version by either adapting the words to the language's spelling or retaining the original term. Four of the translations maintained the four houses of Hogwarts in their original forms, while the other five preferred to adapt them to readers by introducing new terminology.

Future research should focus on differences in transcreation among languages from different families to deepen understanding of how linguistic and cultural influences shape translation strategies. Additionally, exploring other books in the Harry Potter saga, particularly the translation of names of magical creatures, potion ingredients and spells, could provide valuable insights into the challenges and creative solutions involved in translating fantasy literature across diverse languages.

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