The Issues of Translating Proper Nouns in Harry Potter Novels from English to Urdu Language

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Abstract

Translation of proper nouns from one language into another language is a serious issue for translators while making advancements in the field of translation studies. The translators are left with no option, either to translate the proper nouns or leave them as given in the source text. In this regard, the present research intakes similar issues to highlight the problems of translating proper nouns from English to Urdu in the novel *"Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets"* and to analyze the strategies adopted by the translator in handling these issues. The investigation is carried out by identifying various proper nouns in the novel and analyzing their translation by applying strategies proposed by Hermans (1988). The findings showed that the translator has mostly used the

transcription strategy for the conventional nouns; frequently used translation strategy for the descriptive names, both these strategies did not affect the overall plot of the story.

Keywords: Translation, Proper Nouns, Harry Potter Novel, Translation Strategies.

1. Introduction

Translation is a process of transfer of information or messages from one language to another language. The process of translation is also involved between two different cultures. Languages and cultures differ in various ways. Culler (1976) is of the view that models of one language differ greatly from those of other languages. He believes that the translation between languages becomes a difficult task when the disparity among languages is great. The greater the gap between source and target text, the more difficult will be the conversion of message from a source language to a target language. The same is the case between the English and Urdu language. Both these languages differ greatly, the difference arises due to the fact that both belong to different cultures which are apart from one another at an extreme level.

The process of translation becomes a challenging task because of the difference between languages and the variation in their cultures. Literature also plays an important role when it is translated from one language to another language. The cultural disparities are fronted and one culture understands and comprehends the other culture. Keeping the issue of translating proper nouns is applicable entirely to literature whereas the children literature is more important because children are largely amused by the literature produced for them. Therefore, the translation of children literature from one language into another is greatly affected due to the aforementioned differences. Many difficulties are faced by the translator in translating the children literature. These are due to the use of various cultural terms and proper names in the children literature, specified to a particular culture. The frequent use of cultural references and proper names in the children literature poses a serious problem for the translators. One of the famous series in children literature is the Harry Potter series of seven fantasy novels written by British author J.K Rowling, which gained worldwide popularity and has been translated into many languages. When the author first published the novel she did not know that her books will receive such fame. She did not construct the story, considering future translations into so many different languages. The author used figurative and metaphorical names in her novels which are scattered throughout the text. Such metaphorical names, culture-specific names, and neologisms used in the text have posed a great challenge for the translators. One of the main challenges is dealing with the proper names including names of characters, institutional terms, sports items, brand names and books.

1.1 The usage of Proper Nouns

Proper nouns include several categories, names of persons, animals, locations, companies, institutions, shops, food items, and books. Different scholars give their own view about proper nouns. Richards (1985) define a proper noun as "name of particular thing, place or person spelled with first letter capital". According to Aixela (1996) proper nouns constitute the maximum percentage of culture-bound items in a text. Tymoczko (1999) indicates proper nouns as "racial, ethnic, national and religious identity". She argues that these names are difficult to translate as they are dependent on a particular culture and its paradigms. Proper nouns are regarded as culture-specific items by many translation theorists such as Aixela (1996), Davies (2003), Brondsted and Dollerup (2004). In children literature proper nouns are of immense consideration in developing characterization and the plot of the story. Fernandes (2006) defines them as "dense signifiers", as they contain in themselves the indications about the character and the plot of the story. Hejwowskin (cited by Fornalczyk, 2007) states that in literature, proper nouns have a special linkage with the background culture e.g. Seamus Finnigin in Harry Potter series signals Irish descent.

1.2 Proper Nouns in Harry Potter Novel

Proper names are used frequently in Harry Potter novels. They affect the overall appearance of the text. They help in developing the plot of the story. According to Aguilera (2008), more than one hundred proper nouns of people and locations are presented in this novel. Chaffey (1999) has generalized three functions of proper nouns. The first purpose of names is identification. In the *Harry Potter* novel, the names of characters such as Harry Potter, Hermione Granger and places names such as Hogwarts and Gringotts help the readers to identify and serve as a benchmark for a better understanding of the text. The second function of names is the description. This is the case with many shop names, created by the author in the novel. By reading shop names such as Quality Quidditch Suppliers, Gambel and Japes and Wizarding Joke Shop give the readers a viewpoint and glimpse of the type of work or function performed through the said names. Thirdly, names depict some kind of linkage and association, helping the readers to develop connections and feelings with other objects or individuals. Lin (2013) points out that proper nouns used in the *Harry Potter* stories, develop deep feelings and responsiveness to portray a true picture and real taste in the story. For example, the name Severus Snape give feelings of negative value to the readers, indicating the attention of readers towards the severe or strict nature of the character and also giving an image of a snake in mind. In contrast, names such as Albus Dumbledore gives feelings of goodness and give an impact of positive nature.

Wyler (2003) points out that besides certain associations and linkages with the used names, they also express humor in children novels, a dire need and central point of children literature to amuse and entertain the children. Aschenberg (1991) says about the technique of alliteration, used to give rise to humor which is explicit and can be found in *Harry Potter* series up to a larger level. Some of the examples are; Severus Snape, Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes, Moaning Myrtle, Bertie Bott's Every Flavor Beans, Quality Quidditch Suppliers, etc. As these names have a special formation, so they pose a serious problem in the translation process.

Hermans (1988) generally classified nouns and names into two types' conventional names and loaded names. Loaded and telling names are used repeatedly in the novel. Mussache and Williems (2010) giving an example of such names remarks that the name Whomping Willow used in the series is a telling name, indicating the ability of a tree to attack using its tough branches. Other names like the name of places Diagon Alley and Knockturn Alley. The name "Knockturn Alley" is a play on "nocturnally". "Nocturnally" indicates darkness, giving a hint on its dark nature. Such names are difficult to translate. Some names used in the novel are invented by the author; these are basically fiction names that give a glimpse of a fantasy world. To create a magical appearance in the novel the author has successfully incorporated neologisms throughout the text. The names of animals, institutional terms, books, ghosts, plants, and sports items, all created by the author's mind pose a serious challenge for the translators.

Overall the entire series is full of different proper nouns and names, indicating special effects to readers, standing in a unique position but still the researcher finds translating of proper nouns from the English language to the Urdu language, a difficult task.

1.3 Translation of Proper nouns

Proper nouns are of significant value in children stories and its translation is a concerning issue for the translators. As previously discussed that the translators face a dilemma whether to translate them or leave them untranslated. Many scholars are of view that proper nouns have an important designation in children fantasy novels so they should not be translated. Aixela (1996) argues that some names have a tendency that they can be repeated, transcribed, or transliterated in the target text and on the other hand descriptive names seem to show a tendency towards linguistic translation of their components. Some scholars believe that it is better to leave the proper names untranslated in the children literature because children who are more interested in the plot of the story are not bothered by the use of foreignized elements obtained in the target text. Jentsch (2002) says that names having special associations lost their essence if not translated properly.

In children fantasy novels, authors mostly use descriptive and meaningful names; such countless examples are present in Rowling's books. Some translation theorists believe that leaving the proper nouns untranslated weakens the effect that meaningful names can have on the characterization and description and to avoid this upshot the translator can decide to translate proper names.

1.4 Translation Strategies for dealing Proper nouns in Children Novels

There are various models proposed by different translation theorists to deal with the proper names in the children literature. One of these models is proposed by Hervey and Higgins (1986) who give forward two strategies to deal with the proper names. They say that proper nouns can be transferred from SL to TL without changing, or they can be adopted to meet the phonological and graphic requirements of the target language known as transliteration. They also propose another strategy which is cultural transplantation, in which SL names are replaced by non-literal equivalents in the target language. Newmark (1988) stated that proper nouns should be moved unchanged in the target text if they are not having any connotations. He also remarks that if the names have any important connotation then the translation should be done. He gives forward various strategies to deal with proper names and allusions such as transliteration and naturalization. Hermans (1988) puts forward various strategies like transliteration, substitution, copy, addition or deletion to deal with the proper names in the children literature. Farahzad (1995) states that mostly used strategies for proper nouns are transliteration and transcription. Leppihalme (1997) proposes various strategies including retention of name, replacement of name and omission of name. . Fernandes (2006) puts forward ten strategies for the translation of proper names embodying rendition, copy, transcription, re-creation, substitution, deletion, addition, transposition, phonological replacement, and conventionality. Van Coillie (2006) also gives forward various strategies a translator can use to deal with the proper names especially in the translation of fiction.

1. 5 Research Objectives

The purpose of this research is:

- To highlight the issue of proper nouns in the translation of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* from English to Urdu language.

- To analyze the strategies adopted by the translator in translating the proper nouns from English to the Urdu language.

1.6 Research Questions

- What kinds of proper nouns have posed a serious challenge for the translator in translating *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* from English to Urdu language?

- How the translator has transferred the proper nouns from English to Urdu language?

- How far the translator has been successful in translating the proper nouns using various strategies?

2. Literature Review

Many research workers made a significant contribution in analysing the translated versions of the Harry Potter novels in terms of proper names. They exhibited a descriptive analysis regarding the tactics of the translators in dealing with proper nouns and up to what extent they are successful in conveying the real essence of the story to the target readers. As mentioned earlier the Harry Potter series has been translated into many languages including French, Spanish, Dutch, Indonesian, Persian, Arabic, Urdu, Chinese and others. Different researchers have investigated and made descriptive analysis of the translated version of Harry Potter novels.

Garces (2003) points out the translation issues of neologisms in Rowling's work. He made a deep analysis of the transfer of imaginary elements in different translated texts. For example, Polyjuice potion, Pepper up syrup, Skele Gro etc. are treated differently in different translations. According to him "Catalan and French are the ones that offer a more TL reader-oriented translation, following different strategies". Catalan changed the Polyjuice Potion into "Poció de la mutació" and in French, it became "Polynectar". In the case of Pepper up, it became "Poción Pepperu" in Spanish translation, and in German it is literally translated as "Aufpäpel-Trankwirkte", which means a hot drink. In analysing the names of various books invented by the author he states that it is also a challenging task for the translators. For example *Holidays with Hags, Voyages with Vampires,* and *Wanderings with Werewolves* when transferred into another language, sometimes translators prefer to go for literal translation to preserve the meaning, as in Spanish *Voyages with Vampires* becomes *Viaje con los vampiros*. By comparing different translations of Harry Potter novels Garces (2003) comes to the conclusion that humorous and fanciful effects are not always reproduced and are almost completely lost in some languages.

Astrén (2004) presented a study of the translation of names in Harry Potter books. She analysed the Swedish and Norwegian translations of this novel. She indicates that the name of the main character Harry Potter is preserved whereas the names of some of Harry's friends are not always preserved. Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger are altered and they become "Ronny Wiltersen" and "Hermine Grang" in the Norwegian translation. She points out that some names of places are not translated in Swedish translation like Azkaban, Hogwarts and Privet Drive whereas some of the names of locations are changed in the translation. For example, The Burrow is translated as "Kråkboet" and Diagon Alley is changed into "Diagon grand". She remarks that different strategies have been used by the translators, some of these give ignorant expression. Brondsted and Dollerup (2004) analysed the issue of translating names in Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, German, and Italian translations of the novel and they are of view that the translators have adopted different tactics to deal with the translation of names, which do not affect the whole scenario of the novel.

Standowicz (2009) made an analysis on the Polish translation of Harry Potter novel. She says that Polish translator has skilfully translated the names and invented words by the author in the Polish translation. The translator has used various strategies; some of the names are left untranslated in the text, and some are translated using the strategy of transcription. For example "*mugol*" is used for Muggle and "*Hogwart*" is used instead of Hogwarts. She points out that the most interesting work of Polish translator is the use of recreation strategy for translating proper names. The word "*Parszywek*" is used for the name of Ron's rat Scabbers and Peeves, the Poltergeist becomes "*Irytek*". Standowicz (2009) remarks that the creativity used by the translator gives a positive effect to the translated version of the novel. Jaleniauskiene and Cicelyte (2009) while discussing the strategies for translating proper nouns in children literature, they analysed two books of Harry Potter novel in Lithuanian Language. They point out that very few names are transferred in the target text without change but most of the names underwent literal translation. For example the name of ghost Nearly Headless Nick is literally translated and becomes "Beveik Begalvis Nikas". They also argue that the translator has mostly emphasized and predominantly used localization strategy for the proper names of most of the characters, for the ease in the understanding of target readers.

Makinen (2010) analysed the translation of proper nouns in Finnish and German translations of Harry Potter books. He points out that the real English names were left untranslated whereas the names having meaningful associations and magical nature are mostly rendered in the translations. Musschee and Williams (2010) investigated the Arabic translation of Harry Potter novel and made a descriptive analysis of proper names. They say that the transliteration strategy is often used for the conventional names whereas the loaded and telling names are translated and replaced by other name. They point out that this conclusion matches with the observation made by Aixela (1996). They

further remark that transliteration produces the effect of foreignization in the target text. According to them unlike the original English version, the Arabic text does not take into consideration the important connotations, wordplays, puns and humour effects, which make the target text unable to achieve the same style as produced by the author in the original version. (485).

Zee (2011) analysed the Dutch translation of Harry Potter novel. She analysed that the names of British places are preserved whereas the names of fictional places are translated to give good reading experience to the Dutch readers. The transformation strategy is also used for names of places like Gringotts and Diagon Alley. The Diagon Alley is only accessible to magical people, for the convenience of Dutch readers the Dutch name, "*Wegisweg* "is given to refer to such a place which is not visible to non-magical people. The Gringotts is the name of the bank which has been transformed in the Dutch translation as "*Goudgrijp"*. Goud represents gold, which is applicable for a bank. The Dutch translator has been successful in providing a good translation. He has been able to keep the British background in the story, and by translating funny names and using a transformation strategy, he retained the humorous effect for the Dutch readers, which is really an important criterion to keep in mind when translating the children novels.

 Lin (2013) investigated the Spanish translation of Harry Potter novels. She remarks that the British cultural background and excessive use of English names in the novel are really a matter of consideration for the translators. She points out that in Spanish translation the proper nouns of characters and locations are mostly preserved, whereas in the case of the names of magical objects the translator has sacrificed the effect of alliterations but has been successful in retaining the humorous effects. Sabzalipour and Pishkar (2015) points out that translation of proper names is a difficult task as there is no authentic verdict about their translatability and untranslatability among the theorists of translation studies. They analysed the translation of proper names in Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince from English to Persian language. They indicate that the transliteration strategy is most frequently used throughout the translated text.

3. Methodology

In view of above mentioned work represented by different researchers who made analysis of various translated versions of Harry Potter novels, the present research work was designed to highlight the issue of translating proper names in Harry Potter novel from English to Urdu language. For this purpose, "*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*" is selected for the identification of various proper names that pose a serious challenge for the translator to transfer them into Urdu language which is totally different from English language in terms of linguistic and culture variations. The qualitative

analysis approach was adopted for this purpose. The proper nouns of the main characters, locations, places, animals, names of ghosts, newspapers, institutional terms and sport items were identified in "*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*" and analysed by reading the Urdu translation of this book *" Harry Potter aur TehKhanay Kay Asrar*" by the translator, Moazzem Javed Bukhari. The analysis of their translation was made by applying the strategies proposed by Hermans (1988) because these strategies are especially to deal with the proper nouns and names in children literature and are explained in the table below.

Table 1: Translation strategies for proper nouns/names, proposed by Hermans

Translation Strategies	Characteristics Of Strategies
Copy	It is the exact transfer of proper nouns/names in the target text as they are in source text.
Transcription	It is the transliteration of names from source text to target text, adapted at the level of target language spellings and phonology.
Substitution	It is the substitution of name in a target text which is unrelated to the name in source text.
Translation	It is the translation of the name in the target text that acquires meaning.
Non translation or Deletion	It is the deletion of the proper name in target text.
Replacement by a common noun/name	It is the replacement of proper noun/name by a common noun/name.
Insertion	It is the addition of the proper name in the target text which is not present in the source text.

4. Results and Data Analysis

The proper nouns/names of characters, places, shops, animals, ghosts, newspapers, institutional terms, and sports items, found in the novel are categorized and their Urdu translation is analysed using the aforementioned strategies, proposed by Hermans (1988).

Table 2: Names of Characters

English Text	Urdu Text	Strategies
Harry potter	ہیری پوٹر	Transcription
Hermione Granger	ہر ما ئنی گرینجر	Transcription
Ron Weasley	رون ویزلی	Transcription
Albus Dumbledore	ایلبس ڈمبل ڈور	Transcription
Severus Snape	سیورس سنیپ	Transcription
Lord Voldemort	لارڈ والڈی موٹ	Transcription
Hagrid	ہیگرڈ	Transcription

Table 3: Names of Places and Locations

English Text	Urdu Text	Strategies
Majorka	ما جو رکا	Transcription
Kent	کینٹ	Transcription
King Cross Railway Station	کنگ کراس ریلوے اسٹیشن	Transcription
Romania	رومانیہ	Transcription
Norfolk	نار فوک	Transcription
Peebles	پی بلس	Transcription
Privet Drive	پرائیویٹ سٹریٹ	Transcription + Substitution
Hogwarts	ہو گورٹ	Transcription
Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry	ہوگورٹ سکول برائے جادوگری و پراسرارعلوم	Transcription + Translation
The Chamber Of Secrets	پراسرار تہ خانہ	Translation
Ottery St. Catchpole	_	Deleted in Urdu text

Table 4: Names of Shops

English Text	Urdu Text	Strategies
Leaky Cauldron	لیکی کا لڈرن	Transcription
Borgin and Burkes	بو ر گنا ینڈ بر و کس	Transcription
Flourish and Blotts	فلو ر ش اینڈ بلا ٹس	Transcription

Quality Quidditch Suppliers	کوالٹی کیوڈچ سپلا ئرز	Transcription
Gambel and Japes Wizarding Joke shop	گیمبل اینڈ جاپس جادو گری فنون لطیفہ کی دوکان	Transcription + Translation

Table 5: Names of Animals

English Text	Urdu Text	Strategies
Aragog	ایر ا گاگ	Transcription
Scabbers	سکے برز	Transcription
Hedwig	ہیڈ و یگ	Transcription
Mrs.Norris	مسز نو ر س	Transcription
Fawkes	فا کس	Transcription
Fang	فینگ	Transcription

Table 6: Names of Ghosts

English Text	Urdu Text	Strategies
Nearly Headless Nick	لگ بھگ سر کٹا نک	Translation + Transcription
Moaning Myrtle	واویلا مچا نے والی مٹر ٹل	Translation + Transcription

Table 7: Names of Newspapers

English Text	Urdu Text	Strategies
Daily Prophet	روز نا مہ جادوگر	Translation
Witch Weekly	ہفت روزہ جادوگرنی	Translation

Names of School Related Terms

Table 8: Names of Houses

English Text	Urdu Text	Strategies
Gryffindor	گری فنڈر	Transcription
Slytherin	سلے درین	Transcription
Ravenclaw	ریون کلا	Transcription
Hufflepuff	ہفل پف	Transcription

Table 9: Names of Subjects

English Text	Urdu Text	Strategies
Potions	جادوئی سیال و ادویہ	Translation + insertion
Transfiguration	تبدیلی ہیئت	Translation
Herbology	جڑی بوٹیوں سے آگاہی	Translation
Dark Arts	تاریک جادو	Translation
Arithmacy	علم سیاق کی جادوئی تک بندی کی تاریخ	Translation + Insertion
Divination	علم پیش گوئی	Translation
History of Magic	جادو کی تاریخ	Translation

Table 10: Names of Books

English Text	Urdu Text	Strategies
Magical Me	میرا جادوئی کمال	Translation
Break with a Banshee	چڑیلوں کو بھگا نے کا فن	Translation
Year with a Yeti	برفیلے انسان کے سا تھ ایک سال	Translation
Gilderoy Lockhart's Guide to Household Pests	گلڈ رائے لک ہارٹ کی رہنما ئے گھر یلو اتلاف	Transcription + Translation
The Standard book of Spells	جادوئی کلمات سٹینڈرڈ بک	Transcription + Translation
A Beginners guide to Transfiguration	تبدیلی ہیئت کی ابتدائی کتاب	Translation
Encyclopaedia of toadstools	زہر یلے نباتات کا انسائیکلو پیڈ یا	Transcription + Translation

Table 11: Names of Sport and Sport Items

English Text	Urdu Text	Strategies
Quidditch	کیو ڈچ	Transcription
Bludger	بالجر	Transcription
Quaffle	قواف	Transcription
Golden Snitch	سنہری گیند	Translation

5. Discussion

From the above data, it is explicit that the translator has mostly used the Transcription Strategy for proper nouns of characters, places, shops names, animals, and the names of houses and sports items. This shows that the translator has tried to give his readers the same impression of these names as received by the readers of the original text. He has been successful in preserving the essence of these names. The purpose of such proper nouns and names is identification as described by Patrick Chaffey. So we can say that the translator has retained these names in the Urdu language for identification purpose. The name of the main character *Harry Potter* and all other characters are preserved in Urdu text by using the transcription technique. The names such as the school name *Hogwarts* and the bank name *Gringotts* are also retained in the translated text. The names of shops are also maintained in the translated version. This helps the readers of the target text to get the same picture of the story as that of the original.

The above data also shows that the Translation Strategy is frequently used for nouns and names which have descriptive meanings. Such nouns and names provide the reader with some kind of information or about the work performed by such names. The translator has preferred to translate them into the target language so the readers of the target culture can understand such names in a better way. These names include the proper nouns of subjects, books and newspapers, which have some kind of information encoded in their names, and their translation into the Urdu language, gives its readers the benefit of understanding them easily and knowing the function performed by such names at first glance. For example, the names of subjects like *Dark Arts* and *Transfiguration* are translated as "tareeq jadu" and "tabdeeli e hait" to make the meaning clear as to what these subjects are about. In the same way the names of books like *Break with a Banshee* and *Year with a Yeti* are translated as "charaylon ko bhganay ka fun" and "barfeelay insaan kay sath aik saal". The names of newspapers are also tackled in the same way, by translating them. So *Daily Prophet* became "roznama jaduger" and *Witch Weekly* became "haft roza jadugurni". The names of ghosts *Nearly Headless Nick* and *Moaning Myrtle* are dealt by using techniques transcription and literal translation, the names Nick and Myrtle are retained where as their descriptive elements have undergone literal translation.

For some nouns like the names of magical subjects that are created by the author's mind, the translator has added a little information to these names to make the impression clear, for example, name of a magical subject *Potion* is translated into Urdu language using some additional words to make its meaning clear. The word "potion" itself means medicine but in the novel, it is used as a name of a subject in school in which students are taught how to make magical medicines and serums. And same is the case with the subject name *Arithmacy*, it has been translated using some additional words. The term

"arithmacy" is taken from the word arithmetics which is the oldest branch of mathematics. But in the novel it is used as a proper name for the subject which is studied by wizards. So the translator thought it necessary to explain to the target text readers by inserting some extra words in its translation. This kind of strategy is known as Insertion as described by Hermans (1988). The translator has successfully translated such names to make the meaning clear to the readers by using this strategy.

The strategy of Deletion is seen only in one place in a text. The name *Ottery St. Catchpole,* is deleted in the translated Urdu version, maybe the translator did not think of its need to be translated into the target text. The strategy of substitution is rarely seen, whereas the strategies Copy and Replacement are not seen in the case of the translation of proper nouns in the novel.

6. Conclusion

From the above discussion, it is concluded that the proper nouns and names that posed a challenge for the translator are dealt with very technically by the Urdu translator. The translator has been successful in dealing with these names. He has tried to maintain the plot of the story by retaining the proper names as much as possible, mostly the conventional names. The names with descriptive meaning are not retained in the target text but rather translated into the Urdu language for the benefit of the target audience. The translator has tried as much as possible to make the text nearer to the original, but keeping in view his target audience he has also undergone translation of some names. So it can be concluded, whatever technique the translator has used to handle the proper nouns or names, did not affect the overall scenario of the story.

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