

A descriptive study of culture related terms in translation of Harry Potter Novel from English to Urdu language

Asia Pacific Journal of
Multidisciplinary Research
Vol. 4 No.2, 44-50
May 2016
P-ISSN 2350-7756
E-ISSN 2350-8442
www.apjmr.com

Sana Mansoor¹, Abdul Bari Khan², Sundas Zuhra (Corresponding author)³, Sundas Kamran⁴, ZaraArif⁵

Department of English, University of Lahore Sargodha Campus, Sargodha, Pakistan

¹sanamansoor966@yahoo.com, ²a.barikhan43@yahoo.com,

³sundas.zuhra15@gmail.com, ⁴englishstudentsuos@gmail.com,

⁵romaarif@yahoo.com

Date Received: February 24, 2016; Date Revised: March 31, 2016

Abstract - Translation of children fantasy novels and problems faced by translators in translating these novels into different languages is one of the core issues in the field of translation studies. This issue has got attention of many researchers and an extensive study has been carried out on various novels. The Harry Potter series of novels written by British author J.K. Rowling is one of the famous children fantasy novels that gained popularity worldwide and was translated into 73 languages. The use of various cultural terms and made up words in the novel has posed a great challenge for the translators. The purpose of the present study is to identify these cultural related terms and made up words in the novel "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets" and to investigate the strategies used by the translator in translating them into Urdu language. A descriptive analysis of the translation of culture related items and made up words was made using the strategies proposed by Davies (2003). The findings of this research showed that translator mostly emphasized and predominantly used localization and transformation strategies for food items, magical objects and imaginative words.

Key Words: Harry Potter Novels, Translation, Cultural specific items, Translation strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Harry potter series of seven fantasy novels written by British author J.K. Rowling is worldwide famous for creating a new fantasy world for the entertainment of children. The humor effects, varieties of language, word-play, puns, and idiomatic expressions have been incorporated in the text which shows the author's remarkable work. Due to its immense popularity and huge number of fans across the globe, it has been translated into 73 languages. The translation of such fantasy novel is not an easy task for the translators. The translators face lot of problems while translating the novel. The biggest challenge is posed by cultural related terms which are scattered throughout the text. As this series of novels is translated into various languages, the translators have adopted different ways to deal with cultural specific terms.

Cultural specific items have an immense consideration in the translation of children fantasy literature. These items affect the whole text and for

that reason they seem to be an interesting area of investigation within the field of translation studies [1]. Identification and treatment of such items pose a great challenge for the translators who intend to translate them into different languages. Scholars of translation studies have designated such items by different names such as cultural terms, culture specific items, culture markers, cultural references, cultural bound items and realia. These embody various material items like food, cloths, currency, and cultural notions like customs, institutions and proper names representing a particular culture. Such items are abundantly present in children literature and have been dealt in different ways while translating them into different cultures and languages.

Cultural specific items in Harry potter novel:

The story of Harry Potter novel is set up in British background culture and the culture specific terms are scattered throughout the story including English proper names, names of persons, animals, locations,

food items and traditional celebrations. Davies (2003) [2] argues that the author of the source texts targeted British teenagers as her audience and set the storyline around setups with which most of her original target readers would be familiar (66). The author has merged the real world and magical world in such a way that it touches the peak of realness. The author has also used made up words, magical objects and creatures that do not exist in the real world. These invented terms are named as 'irrealia' as opposed to realia [3]. This word is used to refer those invented items presented as real in fictional world but do not exist in the real world. In the discussion of cultural references, some scholars do not make such distinction between real and fictional terms, as long as these terms exist in the ST but unknown to target audience. Aixela [4] defines such terms as:

Those textually actualized terms whose function and connotations in a source text involve a translation problem in their transference to a target text, whenever this problem is a product of the non-existence of the referred item or of its different inter-textual status in the cultural system of the readers of a target text (58).

Translation of Culture specific terms in Harry Potter novel

As mentioned earlier, Harry Potter series is full of cultural related terms and newly invented words, so its translation into other languages is not an easy task. Translators have faced various problems while translating the original text into different languages. According to Jentsch [5] one of the main difficulties faced while translating the Harry Potter is to deal with the made-up words (285). The translators get in dilemma whether to use them as original or to translate as per need of the target text. According to Goldstein [6] the main challenge that the translators face in translating this novel into languages other than English is at both linguistic and cultural level. He gives the list of items that pose serious problems for the translator which include proper names, magical creatures, made up words, magic spells, and descriptive names. Davies [2] explains the challenge posed by cultural references in translation is very complex. He argues that it is needed for the translator to provide the British cultural background to his readers which is easily comprehensible and accessible to the audience of

target culture. (97) This consideration could be described by the world-wide admiration that the Harry Potter novels have attained. The name of the main character Harry Potter, and other proper names conceived by J.K. Rowling like Quidditch, Muggles, Mudbloods, Hogwarts, Gringotts, are well known as English names by the readers. Thus, it is essential that the translators respect this 'Britishness' in the translated text, so as to preserve the original cultural framework of Harry Potter and also keep in mind the readers of targeted culture. The range of challenges involved in the translation of Harry Potter books is vast and the translators have dealt with these issues in different ways and selecting various techniques for the transformation of this magical world for the children and adults of their native culture.

Translation Strategies for dealing Culture Specific terms

Scholars of translation studies have proposed different strategies to deal with such cultural references. Venuti [7] indicates that cultural term can either be domesticized to make it acceptable in target culture or be foreignized to add foreign elements in the target culture. Newmark [8] distinguished various strategies including naturalization, cultural equivalence, synonymy, transposition, and modulation. Graedler [9] puts forward some techniques to deal with cultural terms, such as preserving the source language term, making a new word, explaining the meaning of SL expression in translation, or finding a relevant word which is equivalent to term of source language. Davies [2] presents seven ways, addition, localization, omission, preservation, transformation, globalization and creation to deal with cultural terms. The strategies proposed by various scholars are similar in many ways. Davies [2] points out that the books of Harry Potter novels offer the opportunity to compare the tactics used in different translations. She is of the view that Harry Potter novel provides with abundance of material for all those who want to learn how the professional translators deal with cultural specific references (65). The present research will provide with sufficient material for all those who seek to analyze different translated texts. It will be helpful for the future translators to know the positive and negative impacts of different translation strategies used in tackling cultural issues in the translations of different texts especially while dealing the children fantasy novels.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research is to identify the cultural specific terms and made up words in the Urdu translation of the novel "*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*" and to analyze the strategies adopted by the translator in translating the cultural terms.

Literature Review

Many research workers made significant contribution in analysing the translated versions of the Harry Potter novels in terms of cultural specific items. They exhibited a descriptive analysis regarding the tactics of the translators in dealing with culture items and up to what extent they are successful in conveying the real essence of the story to the target readers. In this connection, one of the earlier contributions was made by Davies [2] who discussed about various procedures adopted by the translators in translating the J K Rowling's Harry Potter books. He recognizes the usefulness of various strategies dealing with the cultural problems. He also argued that it not necessary to have relationship between the use of particular strategy and in making the target text domesticated or foreignized. Furthermore, he was at opinion that the cultural specific items should be dealt in a broader perspective in the whole text rather to look them individually.

Goldstein [6] points out that the American version of the Harry potter novels has altered some of the British cultural terms to make it suitable for the target culture. They even changed the title of the first book from "*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*" to "*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*". Feral (2006) [10] investigated the French translation of *Harry potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and depicted that the translator enhanced the fantasy and the magical aspects of the novel to the extent that it portrayed a displacement from the reality and originality of the source text and culture. Liang [11] gives forward a study on translation problems and strategies regarding culture-specific items by investigating different books of Harry Potter novel and their Taiwanese translated versions. He analysed that the usefulness of the translation strategies applied can be used as a standard while talking over the issue of appropriateness of translating cultural terms in children's literature.

Rizqiyyah [12] gave suggestions on the consideration of the target culture background while

translation. She focussed on the importance of lexical equivalence, the context imparting the story and the target reader's culture. Standowicz [13] presented a case study in which she analysed the successfulness of Polish translation of "*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*". She investigated the strategies adopted by the translator in translating various proper nouns and rendering the meaning of the names used and invented by Rowling. In her view, the equivalents used by the translator are not less creative than the author's original ideas. The translated version is immensely popular in Poland which reflects its good quality. The words which are left untranslated in the text are appreciated by children, because they find it fascinating to discover the meaning on their own. She concludes that in the age of globalization the necessity of using domesticating elements in the target text is seems to be waning.

Musschee and Williems [1] presented a detailed description of proper nouns and culture specific items in the Arabic translation of first three books of Harry Potter series. They analysed that in the translated text foreignization is involved whereas domestication is virtually absent. Atun [14] examined the Indonesian translation of "*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*" and analysed that the translator has been successful in translating the text using pragmatic equivalence making the target text more communicative and understandable. Zee [15] put forward her analysis on specific translation problems with respect to cultural terms and proper names in Dutch translation of Harry potter series and also investigated the solutions to these problems. She analysed that the translator has been successful in the transfer of text as he has tried to remain faithful to the effects in original text by using different strategies as phonetic adaption, preservation, literal translation and sometimes localization. She analysed that the translator has been able to preserve the humour whenever possible and he also remained faithful to the style. The ways adopted by translator gave the Dutch reader what the English reader gets the original version.

Dukmak [16] analysed the treatment of culture specific items in translation of Harry Potter novel in Arabic. He investigated which strategies are most frequently used to deal cultural terms and he analysed that preservation strategy is mostly used, transliteration is used for the invented games, currency, as well as spells based on Latin and foreign languages,

standardization is used for the category of food items , ideological adaptation is used for customs and practices. He concludes that the translators have balanced between adequacy oriented and acceptability oriented approaches.

Lin [17] made a study on analysis of cultural issues in Spanish translations of J.K Rowling Harry Potter novels. She discovers that Aixela's conservation strategy has been adopted by the translators as the main solution in translating the culture specific items of the source text. This is manifested through the fact that most proper names and common expressions are not translated in the target text and there is a certain degree of inconsistency with the treatment of culture specific items in target text; while some items are translated others are not. As a result readers couldn't get access to important connotative meanings, humorous effects, and cultural information. Gharyan *et al* [18] made a descriptive study of culture specific items in Persian translation of Harry Potter novels. He analysed culture bound food and goods. He used strategies proposed by Davies [2] for analysis. He comes up with the conclusion that preservation strategy was applied most frequently and localization strategy is also used frequently.

METHODS

In view of above mentioned work represented by different researchers who made analysis of various

Names of locations:

Source text	Target text
Leaky Cauldron	لیکی کالڈرن
Borgin and Burkes	بورگن اینڈ بروکس
Flourish and Blotts	فلورس اینڈ بلاٹس
Gringotts	گرنگوٹس
Hogwarts	ہوگورٹ
Azkaban	اژقبان

Names of food items:

Custard tart	کسٹرڈ تارٹ
--------------	------------

Name of magical creatures:

Goblin	غو بلن
Dobby	ڈوبی

Currency:

Sickles	سکلز
Galleons	گلیونز
Knuts	نٹس

translated versions of Harry Potter novels, the present research work was designed to make a descriptive analysis of Urdu Translation of Harry Potter novel. For this purpose, "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets" is selected for the analysis of culture bound terms from Harry Potter series of novel. The analysis was made by identifying the cultural terms in the Urdu version of this book translated by Moazzem Javed Bukhari. The cultural terms viz. name of locations, currency, magical objects, creatures, names of spell and some food items were identified, categorized and analysed by using the strategies proposed by Davies (2003) viz. preservation, localization and transformation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In context to the adopted methodology, the identified cultural terms were categorized and examined under the following strategies.

Preservation: This strategy is used for those cultural terms that do not exist in the target culture. The translator has used this strategy for translating those terms that have no equivalents in Urdu language. This strategy has mostly been used for the names of places, shops, food items, currency and also for some magical creatures. The translators prefer to preserve these elements to show the foreignness of the original. Following are some of the terms which are preserved in the target text.

Localization: This strategy is used to translate the cultural terms keeping in view the culture and norms of the target language. The translator has used this strategy for various magical objects including names of potions, charms, creatures and some food items. He has translated them into Urdu language with respect to the targeted culture.

Names of magical objects:

Source text	Target text
Broomstick	بُہاری ڈنڈا
Invisibility cloak	غیبی چوغہ
Magic wand	جادوی چھری
Vanishing cupboard	غائب ہونے والی الماری

Names of charms:

Memory charm	یادداشت مٹانے والا جادو
Tickling charm	گد گدی کرنے والا جادو

Names of potions:

Pepper potion	سبز مرچوں کا چریرا شربت
Love potion	مُحبت کی جادوی دوا

Names of magical creature:

House elf	گھریلو خرس
Unicorn	یک سنگھے
Banshee	چُر بِل

Names of food items:

Egg nog	انڈوں کا شربت
Pumpkin juice	کدو کا رس
Shepherd pie	گوشٹ کی کھچڑی
Sausages	کباب
Turnees of porridge	فالو دے سے بھرے پیالے
Plates of kippers	تلی ہوئی نر سا لمن مچھلی
Jam doughnut	جام والا سالم کیک

Transformation: This strategy is applied when the cultural terms can neither be preserved nor localized, hence transforming and altering the terms in translation. According to Davies (2003:87) this strategy is used when the translators are faced with those terms that have no equivalents or do not exist in the first place. Following are some of the examples which are completely altered and transformed in the target text by the translator.

Names of locations:

Source text	Target text
The Burrow	ویزلی بھٹ
The Forbidden Forest	اندھیرا جنگل
Diagon Alley	جادوی بازار
Knockturn Alley	شیطان بازار

Names of magical objects:

Floo powder	سفوف انتقال
The Whomping Willow	جھگڑالو درخت
Sorting Hat	بولتی ٹوپی

Names of spells

Expelliarmus	چھوٹم جھوٹم
Rictusempra	گد گد م گڑ گڑام
Obliviate	یا دم گم گشتم
Serpensortia	ازدبم غصتم

From the above analysis it can be examined that the translator has preserved most of the names of locations, some magical creatures and currency in the target text and he has used the localization strategy most frequently for the magical objects, creatures, names of potions and charms. He dealt the magical objects and spells that have no existence in real life and are of fantasy value; by transforming and changing the meaning of these terms in the target text. Translator has localized the food items that are related to British culture to make them easily expressible in the target culture. The findings of this research showed that translator mostly emphasized and predominantly used localization and transformation strategies for cultural words, imaginative terms and food items.

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, it is concluded that the localization and transformation strategies used most frequently in Urdu version of Harry Potter novel have distorted and fractured the realness and fantasy world created by J.K. Rowling in her original work. It is also concluded that the essence of original is lost in translated version up to great extent. The translated version lost the real beauty and creativities of the original work. The terms that are transformed and localized are not able to give an impact of the author's real work and the readers of the target text cannot get the same flavour as that of original text. The terminologies used in the translated text do not happen to match the levels of children brain. The humorous effects that are present in the original text are lost up to a great extent in the translated version of the novel.

RECOMMENDATION

From the above conclusion it is recommended that the translator should consider to be faithful with the terms of the original text whenever possible, the foreign elements must be preserved in order to reach the heights of adequacy in target text. This will give same impact to audience of translated text as gained by persons who read the original text.

Suggestion for further research

The present study was conducted on one aspect of the problems of translation that is culture specific terms; other researches can also be done on the challenges faced by translators in the translation of this novel. Besides cultural terms there are many other problems that the translators face, these are the problems created by language varieties used in the novel, idiomatic expressions, and metaphors. The researchers can make descriptive analysis on these issues, and provide ways to resolve and unravel these issues.

REFERENCES

- [1] Mussche, E. & Willems, K. (2010). "Fred" or "farīd", "bacon" or "bayḍun" ('egg')? Proper Names and Cultural-specific Items in the Arabic Translation of "Harry Potter". *Meta*. 55. 474- 498.
- [2] Davies, E. E. (2003), 'A Goblin or a Dirty Nose : The Treatment of the Cultural-Specific References in Translations of the Harry Potter Books', *The Translator*. 9(1):65- 100.
- [3] Loponen, M. (2009). "Translating irrealia: Creating a semiotic framework for the translation of fictional cultures." *Chinese Semiotic Studies*, 2, 165-175.
- [4] Aixelá, J.F. (1996). 'Culture-Specific Items in Translation', in Álvarez, R., M. C.-Á. Vidal, (eds). *Translation, Power, Subversion, Multilingual Matters*, USA, pp.52-78.

- [5] Jentsch, N. (2002), 'Harry Potter and the Tower of Babel: Translating the Magic', in Whited, L., (ed.), 2002, *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter: Perspectives on a Literary Phenomenon*, University of Missouri Press, Columbia and London, pp285-301.
- [6] Goldstein, S. (2004). Translating Harry – Part 1: The Language of Magic. http://bytelevel.com/global/translating_harry_potter.html.
- [7] Venuti, L. (1998). Strategies of translation. In: Mona Baker, ed. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. London: Routledge, 240-244.
- [8] Newmark, P. (1988b). *Approaches to Translation*. Hertfordshire: Prentice Hall.
- [9] Graedler, A.L. (2000). Cultural shock. Retrieved December 6, 2006 from <http://www.hf.uio.no/iba/nettkurs/translation/grammar/top7culture.html>
- [10] Feral, A. (2006). "The translator's 'magic' wand: Harry Potter's journey from English into French." *Meta: Translator's Journal* 51(3):459-481.
- [11] Liang, W. (2007). "A descriptive study of translating children's fantasy fiction." *Perspectives: Studies in Translation Theory and Practice*. 15(2) : 92-105.
- [12] Rizqiyah, (2009). The Translation of Culturally-Bound Words in the Novel "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince" Translated by ListianaSrisanti (A Descriptive Study). A thesis submitted in Teacher Training and Education Faculty SebelasMaret University Surakarta.
- [13] Standowicz, A. (2009). "Chosen Aspects of the Polish Translation of J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone by Andrzej Polkowski: Translating Proper Names." *Translation Journal* 13(3): 1-6.
- [14] Atun, S. (2010). An Analysis of The Indonesian Translation of J.K. Rowling "Harry Potter and The Chamber of Secret's", English Department of Education Faculty State Islamic Studies Institute (Stain) Salatiga.
- [15] Zee, S. (2011). An analysis of translation problems and strategies in the Dutch translation of Harry Potter, Master's Thesis Translation Studies, Faculty of Humanities Universiteit Utrecht.
- [16] Dukmak, W. (2012). The Treatment of Cultural Items in the Translation of Children's Literature: The case of Harry Potter in Arabic, A Ph.D. thesis submitted to School of Modern Languages and Cultures, The University of Leeds.
- [17] Lin, J. (2013). Harry Potter through the Translator's Looking-Glass: An Analysis on Cultural Issues in the Spanish Translation of J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter Novels, Deptt. of Spanish and Latin American Studies, University of Sydney.
- [18] Gharyan, A., R. Jelveh and A. Taghipour. (2013). A Descriptive Study of Culture-Specific Items in Persian Translations of Harry Potter Novels. *Case Studies Journal*. 2(7): 8-13.

Copyrights

Copyright of this article is retained by the author/s, with first publication rights granted to APJMR. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)