Lingue e Linguaggi
Lingue Linguaggi 68 (2025), 105-123
ISSN 2239-0367, e-ISSN 2239-0359
DOI 10.1285/i22390359v68p105
http://siba-ese.unisalento.it, © 2025 Università del Salento

TRANSLATING THE UNIVERSE OF *HARRY POTTER* INTO A PLURICENTRIC LANGUAGE
How culture influences the translator's choices

MARIA JOÃO FERRO
LINGUISTICS RESEARCH CENTRE OF NOVA UNIVERSITY LISBON (CLUNL)
UNIVERSITY OF LISBON CENTRE FOR ENGLISH STUDIES (ULICES/CEAUL)
POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY OF LISBON (IPL)

Abstract – Portuguese is the official language in seven countries and is co-official in three more territories. It is also a pluricentric language, given that it has two distinctly codified norms, i.e., two standard varieties – the Brazilian one used in Brazil, and the European one used in the remaining territories. The first translation of the Harry Potter series into Portuguese was published in Portugal in 1999, followed by the translation published in Brazil in 2000. While the language is the same (albeit with two different standards), the choices made by the Portuguese and Brazilian translators differed much more than the grammatical and lexical differences that exist between the two varieties and characterise them as such. Resorting to a comparison of the translation of selected characters' names and neologisms, this paper analyses the choices made by the Portuguese translators (initially one, but ultimately a team that included, at different moments, six translators) and the Brazilian translator (only one and always the same for the seven volumes). The different choices point to two very different translation projects that were grounded on cultural assumptions about the series' readership – since the translation project was defined for the first book, clearly a children's fantasy book, the target-audience was composed of children aged 9-12. Children that age in Brazil are not as familiar with English as Portuguese children, which justifies, to a great extent, the domesticating translation published in Brazil as opposed to the foreignizing one published in Portugal.

Keywords: Harry Potter series; literary translation; fantasy; neologism; pluricentric languages.

1. Introduction

The year 2024 marks the 25th anniversary of the publication of the translation of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* in Portugal. At the time I am writing these lines, 63 editions of *Harry Potter e a Pedra Filosofal* have been published. The Harry Potter series went far beyond that first volume with six others, eight films, a spin-off prequel, an unstoppable merchandising machine, and a series of published subproducts in the form of cooking books, almanacs, and others, based on the elements that comprise the Wizarding World, a fantasy media franchise built around the fictional universe that J. K.

Rowling created.

The Harry Potter series has become a generational phenomenon, but its greatest impact was on the Millennials, those born between 1981 and 1996, who were the first target-audience for what was then, in 1997, a children's book. Gierzynski and Eddy (2013) stress the importance of the Harry Potter series for this generation:

> Hundreds of millions of Millennials grew up captivated by the world of the boy wizard – they read the books, attended midnight book-release parties (many dressed as the characters), watched the movies, and joined the Harry Potter fan community. By the time the seventh and final book in the series was released, the first six books had already sold more than 325 million copies, many of which were read multiple times by their owners (Gierzynski, Eddy 2013, p. 1).

Children today keep on reading Harry Potter's story, either encouraged by their parents, who have read all about the young wizard's adventures when they were younger and the books were first published or influenced by popular culture where references to Harry Potter's world abound, or even following the suggestion of their teachers or their peers.

After being rejected a dozen times, Bloomsbury accepted to publish what would be the first volume of the series, although no one at the time, not the least J. K. Rowling, would be able to guess the hype that would follow. However, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* started to gain attention when its rights were sold at an auction to the American publisher Scholastic, which paid an unprecedented amount for the rights of what was then a children's book by an unknown author.[1]

> This sale was the spark for what was to become a Harry Potter craze that first swept across Britain and Canada, then America, and finally the globe. In May of 1999, the term 'Pottermania' was coined to describe the uniquely intense, hysterical reaction generated by Potter fans worldwide, and by October it had become the exclusive term used to describe this phenomenon (Van der Wey 2011, p. 10).

Some would disagree with Van der Wey's enthusiasm, but others will not shy from saying that it is the most popular fantasy novel in the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Although mixing several genres, the Harry Potter series was initially classified as a fantasy book for children with its fan base growing up into young adults as the series progressed. Zsubori and Das (2018) argue that fantasy texts play an important role in children's lives and are one of the most

[1] See: https://www.dailydemocrat.com/2007/07/01/potter-mania-is-upon-us-all/

relevant ways for them to acquire self- and social knowledge. They state that fantasy intertwines the everyday and the exceptional, providing a safe harbour for children to reflect on reality.

This article explores how the world created by J. K. Rowling in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and enhanced in the subsequent books of the series was translated into Portuguese, taking into account that two versions of the translation exist in the same language – one published in Portugal and the other published in Brazil. Although the language is the same, the two standard varieties are different and accepted as such by its speakers and academic institutions in both countries. This is the case because Portuguese is a pluricentric language, currently with two codified varieties, a number that will possibly increase in the near future as more standard varieties are codified (i.e., provided with dictionaries and grammars) in other countries where Portuguese has an official status.

This article is organized into four sections after this Introduction. The next section looks into the concept of pluricentric languages and how it applies to Portuguese; after that, the translation processes that underlay the two versions translated into Portuguese will be briefly described; next, a selected number of differences between the two versions will be compared; finally, on the last section, some reasons will be put forward that explain those differences.

2. Portuguese as a pluricentric language

Portuguese is the official language in seven countries (Portugal, Brazil, Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and São Tomé and Príncipe) and is co-official in Macau, East Timor, and Equatorial Guinea.

The Lusophone Community is represented by the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (*Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa – CPLP*), an international organization and political association that spans the five continents and aims to strengthen bonds of friendship and mutual cooperation, gathering all of the above, except Macau, which has, however, shown a formal interest in becoming a member.

The number of speakers of Portuguese in the territories where it is an official language varies. While it is the dominant mother tongue in Portugal and Brazil, where monolingualism is the standard,[2] African countries have a

[2] Portuguese is the only official language in Brazil, where there are, however, thousands of speakers of indigenous languages. It is also the only official language in Portugal, although Mirandese (*lhéngua mirandesa*), an Asturleonese language spoken by a few thousand native speakers in Northeastern Portugal has been granted special rights by law in 1999, acquiring a near-co-official status but not quite.

wider variety of languages. Although Portuguese is the only official language in the five Portuguese-speaking African countries that were former colonies, all of them have several regional languages. Portuguese, in fact, a remnant of colonial times, serves, in many cases, as a unifying factor because it theoretically provides inhabitants from different ethnic groups (with different languages) with a common means of communication. Mostly because of that, Portuguese is still the language of education, used in almost all these countries at least in official or more formal settings. However, although the theoretical conditions are the same – multiethnic and multilingual countries, Portuguese as the only official language, Portuguese used in official contexts – the outcome has been widely different, ranging from São Tomé and Príncipe, where according to CIA's World Factbook, 98.4 % of the population speaks Portuguese fluently[3] to Guinea-Bissau, where the role of *lingua franca* is played by a Portuguese-based Creole and only between 11 % and 14 % of the population speaks Portuguese.[4]

The remaining members of CPLP have very different contexts. Although the Portuguese are credited with having been the first Europeans to reach Equatorial Guinea in the 15th century, the land was passed on to Spain in the 18th century with the Treaty of El Pardo, which meant that Portuguese remained only as a residual language in the country. Portuguese was used by the administration in East Timor until the end of colonial times in 1975. However, although it is the official language in the country together with Tetum, Portuguese is also residual in the country. In Macau, the situation is similar, with only 0.6 % of the citizens speaking Portuguese as their mother tongue.[5]

In each of the countries where Portuguese is an official language and effectively used by the population, it has developed specificities inherent to those countries. The Portuguese language spoken in Angola is different from the one spoken in Mozambique or in any other part of the Lusophone Community. So far, these differences have resulted in the codification of two different standard varieties – the Brazilian one, used in Brazil, and the European one (officially) used in the remaining territories – with time, more standard varieties will certainly emerge, depending only on the codification of those specificities. Portuguese is, therefore, a pluricentric language in the sense of Clyne (1992, p. 1), given that it has more than one "interacting centres, each providing a national variety with at least some of its own (codified) norms".

[3] See CIA's *World Factbook*: https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/sao-tome-and-principe/.
[4] See *WorldAtlas*: https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-languages-are-spoken-in-guinea-bissau.html.
[5] See CIA's *World Factbook*: https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/macau/.

Muhr (2012, pp. 29-30) distinguished five criteria that characterise pluricentric languages:

1. "*Occurrence*: A certain language occurs in at least 2 nations that function as 'interacting centres'". – Portugal and Brazil play the role of interacting centres as far as Portuguese is concerned.
2. "*Linguistic distance (Abstand)*: The variety must have enough linguistic (and/or pragmatic) characteristics that distinguish it from others and by that can serve as a symbol for expressing identity and social uniqueness". – Although the linguistic characteristics of the variety of Portuguese spoken in several countries have not been codified yet, Portugal and Brazil have their own codified standard varieties.
3. "*Status*: The language must have an official status in at least 2 nations […] The language therefore must have official recognition that exceeds the status of a minority language as it otherwise cannot function as a norm setting centre". – As seen above, Portuguese is the official language of ten territories.
4. "*Acceptance of pluricentricity*: The language community must accept the status of its language as a pluricentric variety and consider it as part of its social / national identity". – The European and the Brazilian standard varieties are widely accepted (e.g., Portuguese language proficiency for foreign students is certified by the Portuguese as a Foreign Language Assessment Centre (CAPLE) in Portugal and by the Certificate of Proficiency in Portuguese for Foreigners (CELPE-BRAS) in Brazil).
5. "*Relevance for identity*: The national norm has to be relevant to social identity and must be (to some degree) aware to the language community and lead 'to at least some of its own (codified) norms'". – The national standards in Portugal and Brazil are the most widely used varieties in their respective countries.

Later, the author added a sixth criterium (Muhr 2016, p. 21):

6. "*Codification of norms*: The linguistic norms of the national variety must be codified in books of reference to a certain degree in order to achieve certainty about common language use and nation-specific features of the PCL". – There is a multitude of reference materials, such as dictionaries and grammars, in both European Portuguese and Brazilian Portuguese.

Given that there are two standard varieties for the Portuguese language, the foreign rights market in the publishing business is also divided into two. Usually, Portuguese publishers will buy the rights for the Portuguese language except Brazil and translate a book into European Portuguese to be sold in Portugal and elsewhere; whereas Brazilian publishers will buy those rights for the Brazilian market and publish their own translated version. If this is not explicitly mentioned in the foreign rights contract and a publisher

buys the rights for "Portuguese", it will imply the whole Portuguese-speaking market, effectively preventing the other standard variety to translate that book unless they pay their counterparty for those rights.

For this reason, there are two translated versions of the Harry Potter series in Portuguese, one for each currently recognised standard variety of the Portuguese language. We can find in both versions the expected differences that result from differing grammatical structures and lexicon – e.g., in Brazilian Portuguese, the proclitic position (*Ele me disse,* 'He told me') is the standard whereas the enclitic position (*Ele disse-me*) is the standard in European Portuguese; some words have different meanings in both varieties, such as *banheiro* that means 'toilet' in Brazil and 'lifeguard' in Portugal. However, other differences in both translations are not explained by this and derive from deliberate choices made by the translators.

3. Translating *Harry Potter* into Portuguese

Le Lievre (2003) classifies the *Harry Potter* series as a subgenre of fantasy called "wainscot fantasy", which characterises works where fantastic elements are hidden under or among the unsuspecting everyday world.

> In wainscot fantasy a particular relationship exists between two cultures which share the same physical space. The dominant culture— the culture the text's readers are presumed to share— is mundane, large, and presumed to hold power over its environment, but is largely unaware of the existence of the wainscot culture. The wainscot culture is fantastic in some way, but also small (often literally tiny, but also in terms of numbers) and marginal, vulnerable to the power the dominant culture can exercise over its environment (which includes the wainscot culture) and therefore fearful of attracting the dominant culture's attention. (Le Lievre 2003, p. 26)

The relationship between the two cultures – the mundane and the fantastic – leads to the migration of lexical units between them. These lexical units, in turn, often assume different values in the fantastic world and are accompanied by new lexical units created by the author of the story. The translation of the new lexical units – clearly fantastic elements that make the hidden world come alive and distinguish it from the mundane reality – imply a marked translation strategy – the translator can either choose to be more "domesticating", in the sense of Venuti (1995), adapting those new elements to the target language and culture or more "foreignizing", keeping the exotism of the elements of the source language.

Before looking at some of the different options presented by the Portuguese and the Brazilian translations of the Harry Potter series in the next section, let us first look at their respective translating processes.

3.1. The Harry Potter series translated in Portugal

The history of the Harry Potter series in Portugal began in 1999 when Presença, a major publishing house in the country, published the first volume, which was followed by the remaining volumes of the original series.

Between the translation of the first and the seventh volumes of the series,[6] eight years elapsed, and six translators were involved.[7] Although the first three volumes had the same translator and proofreader, from book 4 onwards, the increased number of pages (from 246 pages of the translated version of book 1 to 582 pages of book 4) and the short time between the publication of the original book 4 (July 2000) and its translated version (November 2000) imposed a new way of working and a team of translators had to be formed. The initial proofreader became part of the team of translators that went from three translators in book 4 to four translators in the remaining three volumes of the series, thus employing a strategy of collaborative translation in its narrower meaning – "the situation where two or more translators work together to produce one translated product" (O'Brien 2001, p. 17).

Although the translators changed throughout the process and by book 7 none of the initial two people (translator and proofreader) were involved, the strategies defined by Isabel Fraga (translator) and Isabel Nunes (proofreader) for books 1 to 3 were kept until the end. With so many people involved and given the time constraints, not everything was constantly maintained, which meant there were some isolated differences in the choices of equivalents and particularly in the creation of neologisms both between different volumes and sometimes within the same volume – these have been, nonetheless, consistently corrected in subsequent editions of the seven volumes of the series.

Isabel Fraga, the first translator of the Harry Potter series in Portugal, has explained in an interview (Gonçalves 2017) that the publishing house let her decide, for instance, whether she would translate the names of characters or not. She chose to maintain some names because she felt the original versions conferred more dignity to the characters, but adapted some neologisms, such as *serpentês* (parselmouth) or *sem-forma* (Boggart). During

[6] For the sake of conciseness, I will often refer to the seven books in the series by their order of appearance: *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (book 1), *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (book 2), *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (book 3), *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (book 4), *Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix* (book 5), *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (book 6), *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hollows* (book 7).

[7] The six translators were Isabel Fraga (books 1-5), Isabel Nunes (books 4-6), Manuela Madureira (books 5-7), Alice Rocha (books 5-7), Maria do Carmo Figueira (books 6-7), and Maria Georgina Segurado (book 7). Isabel Nunes was the proofreader of books 1-3, and the coordinator of the translation in books 4-6.

the interview, she also adds that a good translation, harmonious and balanced, is very important, but she honestly does not think that how the translation of Harry Potter was carried really influenced its reception in Portugal. She believed that as long as the translation was relatively good, it would always be a success because it is a rich enough story.

3.2. The Harry Potter *series translated in Brazil*

The *Harry Potter* series was translated by a single translator in Brazil, Lia Wyler,[8] and the first volume was published by Rocco, also a major publishing house, in January 2000. Probably since a single translator undertook this herculean work by herself (and let us not forget that from book 4 onwards, the translated versions are more than 500 pages long), the Brazilian translations were all published later than their Portuguese counterparts (from one month in books 5 and 6 to nine months in book 3), with the exception of book 7, published a week before the Portuguese version.

Lia Wyler (1934-2018) was a celebrated translator, who had just earned an award for the translation of Sylvia Plath's *The It-Doesn't-Matter Suit*, when Rocco asked her to translate what was then "an interesting adventure for 9 to 12-year-olds, with all the ingredients of other well-known English children's classics, minus the illustrations" (Wyler 2003, p. 6). In this 2003 article I have just quoted, Wyler describes what Berman (1995) would call her translation position and her translation project.

> The book belongs to the long tradition of popular tales and has all of the elements first identified by Propp in his studies of the genre: natural dialogues, worthy deeds and rewards, verisimilitude, mythical oppositions, the prevalence of Good over Evil, fast pace, suspense. All this had to be rendered into fluent Portuguese while preserving British customs, humor, formality and their manifestations. In my translations I also intended to let the Brazilian reader perceive that Harry Potter was an Other, with body language, facial expressions, habits and institutions different from his own, but with very similar longings, fantasies and conflicts. (Wyler 2003, p. 8)

Although Wyler stresses her will to let the foreignness of British traits appear throughout her translation, as we will see ahead, her translation was more domesticating than that of the Portuguese translator(s). Her options were often criticised, but the general consensus is that she was a great translator and she followed the strategy she delineated at the start that shows that her

[8] I will mention Lia Wyler extensively because she has provided much insight into her work in an article published in *Meta* that I quote here. To my knowledge there is no such material regarding the Portuguese translators, apart from the interview given by the first translator of the Portuguese version, Isabel Fraga, also quoted here.

audience was centre stage for her choices, even when fitting the translation to her audience meant abandoning some characteristics of the original text (Martins 2016).

4. Selected differences in translation options in Portugal and Brazil

Wyler (2003, p. 12) justifies her option for the translation of names because "Young Brazilians who are not yet proficient in reading find English words difficult to pronounce". This is the case in a country where children start learning English compulsorily in the 6th grade and where only 5.1 % of the population states they have some knowledge of the English language (Mira 2023, quoting a British Council Brasil survey of 2014).

In Portugal, the situation is very different. English is part of the national curriculum from 3rd grade[9] onwards and exposure to the language is very high: although many children's TV shows are dubbed nowadays, that was not the case until two decades ago, and shows for adults are never dubbed. In addition, music heard on the radio or on streaming services is mainly sung in English (even some Portuguese artists sing in English).[10] As a result of the language policy of the country, 41 % of the Portuguese people surveyed in the *Special Eurobarometer 540: Europeans and their languages* (2024) have stated that they speak English "well enough in order to be able to have a conversation" against 12 % that say they master French, 8 % Spanish (in spite of the large similarity between the two languages), and 1 % for both German and Italian. The same survey has found that 85 % of Portuguese people "prefer to watch foreign films and programmes with subtitles, rather than dubbed" (35 % totally agree and 50 % tend to agree).

Table 1 below shows a list of the names of some main characters in the Harry Potter series and their respective Portuguese and Brazilian versions.

[9] Introduced by Decree-Law 176/2014 of 12 December. When the translations of all the seven volumes of the series were initially published in Portugal (1999-2007), English was obligatory from the 5th grade onwards.

[10] The minimum quota for music sung in Portuguese and broadcast on the radio is 30 %.

Original	Portuguese version	Brazilian version
Names of main characters		
Harry James Potter	Harry James Potter	Harry Tiago Potter
Ronald Weasley	Ronald Weasley	Rony Weasley
Hermione Granger	Hermione Granger	Hermione Granger
Names of minor characters		
Seamus Finnigan	Seamus Finnigan	Simas Finnigan
Dean Thomas	Dean Thomas	Dino Thomas
Lee Jordan	Lee Jordan	Lino Jordan
Charlie Weasley	Charlie Weasley	Carlinhos Weasley
Semi-transparent names in English		
Albus Dumbledore	Albus Dumbledore	Alvo Dumbledore
Severus Snape	Severus Snape	Severo Snape
Remus John Lupin	Remus John Lupin	Remo João Lupin
Descriptive names in English		
Moaning Myrtle	Murta Queixosa	Murta Que Geme
Nearly Headless Nick	Nick Quase-Sem-Cabeça	Nick Quase Sem Cabeça
Alastor 'Mad-Eye' Moody	Alastor 'Olho Louco' Moody	Alastor 'Olho-Tonto' Moody

Table 1
Original names and their Portuguese and Brazilian equivalents.

While both versions have kept surnames unchanged, the Portuguese version has only translated descriptive names, such as the epithet 'Mad-Eye', but the Brazilian version has either translated the characters' proper names using their customary equivalents in Portuguese (*Tiago* for "James", *Carlinhos* for "Charlie", *Lúcio* for "Lucius") or adapted the unusual ones, following the common rules used in Portuguese for that sort of adaptation.

Brøndsted and Dollerup (2004) discuss the translation of some names in the Harry Potter series into five languages – viz. Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, German and Italian – dividing them into the four categories I have used to organise Table 1: names of main characters, names of minor characters with English names, semi-transparent names in the Hogwarts universe, descriptive names in English. Let us look in more detail at the examples in each category:

- Names of main characters: in the languages surveyed by the authors, these names tend to remain unchanged with few exceptions (Norwegian: *Ronny Wiltersen* and *Hermine Grang* / German: *Hermine Granger*). The Brazilian translator used the common equivalent in Portuguese for "James" – *Tiago*, and created *Rony* for "Ronald/Ron";
- Names of minor characters: considering the three names selected by the authors (*Seamus Finnigan*, *Lee Jordan* and *Dean Thomas*), only the

Norwegian version offers alternative forms. In the Brazilian version, all the proper names have been translated, following Portuguese morphological rules, while surnames were maintained. I have added "Charlie Weasley" to the list to highlight this strategy followed by Wyler: just as "Charlie" is the diminutive of "Charles", so *Carlinhos* is the diminutive of *Carlos*;

- Semi-transparent names in English: "Albus Dumbledore" is a case in point, given that both his proper name and surname are semi-transparent. "Albus" in Latin means white. The Portuguese word *Alvo* used by the Brazilian translator albeit not being the most common equivalent of "white" (that would be *branco*) conveys the same meaning, nonetheless. Brøndsted and Dollerup point out that from the five translations they surveyed, only the Norwegian version was able to offer an equivalent for the character's surname that points to the dialectal meaning of "dumbledore" as "bumblebee" (Oxford English Dictionary) – *Humslesnurr*, a common word for 'bumblebee' in Norwegian. The Brazilian translator also acknowledges this association, stating that Dumbledore "is an archaic name for the golden bumblebee" (Wyler, 2003, p. 8), but she could not find anything related in Portuguese;
- Descriptive names in English: Table 1 above shows three examples of descriptive names that have been translated in both versions, the Portuguese and the Brazilian, although with different options. For "Moaning Myrtle" both translators used common equivalents for the verb 'to moan', *queixar-se* in the Portuguese version and *gemer* in the Brazilian version. Interestingly, besides choosing different equivalents,[11] the translators also chose different grammatical structures. The Portuguese translator used an adjective, mimicking the English form, while the Brazilian translator opted for a relative clause. In the case of *Nearly Headless Nick*, the difference between the two versions lies only in the hyphens. As for Alastor "Mad-Eye" Moody, both versions offer a translation for "Mad-Eye", *Louco* in the Portuguese version and *Tonto* in the Brazilian one. These two adjectives (*louco* and *tonto*) have a slight difference in both standard varieties of the Portuguese language. While the first sense of the word *tonto* is "dizzy" in both, the sense of "crazy, mad" is more common in the Brazilian variety.[12]

[11] *Gemer* and *queixar-se* are near synonyms. *Gemer* focuses on the sound made, whereas *queixar-se* includes not only the sound but also the complaint in the form of words, which is not usually the case with the former.

[12] See the Brazilian Dictionary of the Portuguese Language *Michaelis*: https://michaelis.uol.com.br/moderno-portugues/busca/portugues-brasileiro/tonto/.

Christiane Nord (2003, p. 182), although accepting that "proper names are never translated seems to be a rule deeply rooted in many people's minds" – and that certainly is the case in the Portuguese translation practice, exception made in the case of children's books where they are sometimes translated – found a great deal of translation strategies when she analysed eight translations of *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll (German, French, Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, Italian). In her words, "translators do all sorts of things with proper names" (Nord 2003, p. 182): nontranslation (the standard case in the Portuguese version of the translation of the Harry Potter series), nontranslation that leads to a different pronunciation in the target language (the pronunciation of Hermione's name raised so many doubts around the world, that J. K. Rowling had her teach another character how to pronounce her name in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*), morphological adaptation to the target language (this was the standard case in the Brazilian version), cultural adaptation (also widely used in the Brazilian version), among others.

Nord adds that "It is interesting to note, moreover, that translators do not always use the same techniques with all the proper names of a particular text they are translating" (Nord 2003, p. 183). The Brazilian version seems to be more coherent as far as the use of strategies to translate names is concerned. The translator has kept every surname (with the exception of "Jim McGuffin" that was translated as *Jorge Mendes*), adapted as many names as she could using established translations or the morphological rules of the Portuguese language, and kept the meaning of the descriptive names in general. The Portuguese translators did not translate names as a rule with the exception of some descriptive ones, but not all – e.g., "Fang" is *Canino* in the Brazilian version (a word that denotes "canine, eye tooth" but also "canine, of, relating to, or characteristic of the canids", which being the name of a dog makes perfect sense) and "Crookshanks" is *Bichento* in the Brazilian version – Wyler (2003, p. 10) explains her option: "For Crookshanks, a cat with arched hind legs, I found and used the word *bichento*, a Northeastern regionalism for humans with bow legs which sounds very similar to *bichano* a noun that we also use for cats" – although the European Portuguese variety of the language has the word *bichento*, its meaning has nothing to do with bow legs, it means someone/something that has bugs. Both "Fang" and "Crookshanks" were not translated in the Portuguese version.

From a list of eighteen characters that includes only beasts and beings,[13] none was translated in the Portuguese version, while only three have

[13] Available at https://harrypotter.fandom.com/wiki/List_of_characters_in_translations_of_Harry_Potter.

remained the same in the Brazilian version (all three of them easily pronounced in Portuguese: "Fawkes", "Dobby" and "Winky").

Another interesting point to compare is the translation of neologisms in both versions.

Original	Portuguese version	Brazilian version
The four Houses of Hogwarts		
Gryffindor	Gryffindor	Grifinória
Slytherin	Slytherin	Sonserina
Hufflepuff	Hufflepuff	Lufa-Lufa
Ravenclaw	Ravenclaw	Corvinal
The game Quidditch		
Quidditch	Quidditch	quadribol
Beater	*beater*	batedor
Chaser	*chaser*	artilheiro
Keeper	*keeper*	goleiro
Seeker	*seeker*	apanhador
Bludger	*bludger*	balaço
Quaffle	*quaffle*	goles
Golden Snitch	*snitch* dourada	pomo de ouro
Food and beverages		
Bertie Bott's Every Flavour Beans	Feijões de Todos os Sabores da Bertie Bott	Feijõezinhos de todos os sabores Beto Botts Feijõezinhos de todos os sabores Bertie Botts
Butterbeer	Cerveja de Manteiga	cerveja amenteigada
Other elements		
Muggle	Muggle	trouxa
Sorting Hat	Chapéu Selecionador	Chapéu Seletor
Howler	Gritador	berrador
Knight Bus	Autocarro Cavaleiro	Nôitibus Andante

Table 2
Neologisms from the Harry Potter universe and their translations into Portuguese.

The Harry Potter series is a work of extraordinary creativity. Table 2 above shows some examples of elements created by J. K. Rowling to give life to the wizarding universe, often borrowing concepts from the "real world" where the fictional world is typically hidden in a wainscot fantasy and assigning them new meanings (i.e., repurposing) or creating new words using various strategies in keeping with the grammatical rules of the language – e.g., derivation, back formation, compounding, reduplication.

One of the major challenges for the translation of these lexical units is keeping the associations of those words: often they are created taking into account not only their intended meaning, but also their sound, and cultural

traits. As with the onomastic elements, the strategies employed in the Portuguese translation and in the Brazilian one were usually different. Again, the Portuguese translation tends to foreignize the text and the Brazilian one to domesticate it. Let us look at the four categories of Table 2.

The Brazilian translator entirely reformulated *Quidditch* terminology, including the name of the game itself. Wyler (2003) explains that she used terminology associated with well-known games, namely football, from where she borrowed *goleiro* and *artilheiro*, for example, but also part of the name of the game that ends with *bol*, similarly to *futebol*, preceded by *quadri-*, a Latin suffix that means four, because the game is played with four balls. In the Portuguese translation, all the terms have been maintained. They are, therefore, loan words and, as such, following the Portuguese practice they are marked with italics. The translator also chose to write them in lowercase, except for the name of the game. This seems to have been a purely idiosyncratic choice, given that there is no rule in Portuguese that dictates that the name of sports or games is written in upper case. In the Portuguese version, two terms were used to translate *Golden Snitch*, "*snitch* de ouro" and "*snitch* dourada". The qualifiers of snitch are near synonyms: *de ouro* means "[made] of gold" and *dourada* means "golden". The options are, thus, equivalent. In the first book, "golden snitch" occurs twice and it was translated as "snitch de ouro" in the first occurrence, and simply "snitch" in the second. In the second book, the term occurs twice, the first one translated as "snitch dourada" and the second as "snitch de ouro". From book 3 onwards, only "snitch dourada" was used.

The four Houses of Hogwarts have kept their names in the Portuguese version and were adapted in the Brazilian one using different strategies: *Grifinória* is a morphological adaptation of the original; *Sonserina* is derived from *sonso*, which means "sly", an element of the original; *Lufa-Lufa* is made by duplicating the word *lufa*, thus winking at the air that is breathed out and the sound of the original that is also duplicated; and *Corvinal* is made from *corvo*, the Portuguese word for "raven".

Where the Portuguese translation diverges from both the original and the equivalent chosen by the Brazilian translator is in the equivalent of "House" – the direct translation for "house" is *casa*, the word used by the Brazilian translator. The Portuguese translator, instead, used *equipa* probably because she felt the concept of having a school divided by houses would be too foreign for a Portuguese reader, whereas having teams (*equipas*) would not sound strange at all.

A favourite of Hogwarts students, "Bertie Bott's Every Flavour Beans" have given rise to a series of forms in both translated versions. In the Portuguese version, the most common form is *Feijões de Todos os Sabores da Bertie Bott*. It is a literal translation that has, nonetheless, a simple mistake – it uses de preposition *de* plus the article *a*, which contracted are *da*,

indicating Bertie Bott is female – since the identification of gender is not transparent in English and nothing in the text lets us know whether the inventor of the famous every flavour beans was a man or a woman, the translator must have thought on a diminutive form of Bertha, which could be Bertie. However, much later, the character appears in a Chocolate Frog Card in a video game, and it is shown to be a man.

Besides this confusion, made right at the beginning in book 1, in book 4 (the first one to be translated by a team of three translators, which may account for the lack of coherence), we find three different translations, which differ only in the part related to the name of their creator: *da Bertie Bott*, *da Bertie Botts* and *de Bertie Botts*. The second and the third forms imply a confusion between the possessive *'s*, including the *-s* in the surname as if it belonged to it. The third form uses the preposition without article, *de*, a noncommittal form that could be used for either male or female, but which does not fall into the pattern used throughout the book (and common practice in children's literature) that implies using the article before every character's name. The Brazilian version uses the name only twice (in the other occurrences, it was eliminated), once as *Bertie Botts* and once as *Beto Botts*. In both instances, the *-s* was also mistaken as part of the surname.

The translation of "Butterbeer" was a much simpler case. The different solutions are idiosyncrasies of the translators: *de manteiga* literally means "[made] of butter" and *amanteigada* means "buttery". Arguably, if we consider that butter (either butter syrup or in any other form) is an ingredient of the beverage, than *de manteiga* would be closer to the intended original meaning.

The remaining four elements of Table 2 show very different options taken in both versions. "Muggles", those born into non-magical families with no magical powers, are very important elements of the Harry Potter series – they are the ones who inhabit the "real world" where the magical world is hidden. The Portuguese version did not translate the form, but the Brazilian translator wanted to convey the idea of a gullible person that is included in the first syllable of the word, "mug" and used *trouxas*, a word with a similar meaning in Portuguese. However, she did not add anything to the word, nor did she change it in any form, making it ambiguous. In some situations, the reader might be unsure whether the characters are calling another character a "dupe" or a "muggle".

The "Sorting Hat" was translated very similarly in both versions, and the usage of different adjectives, *Selecionador* and *Seletor*, was commanded by which adjective is more common in each standard variety of the language. The equivalents for "Howler" are totally interchangeable in both variants, so they are simply a matter of style.

The translation of "Knight Bus" is a more interesting case. The Portuguese proofreader assumed that the full meaning of the word would be

untranslatable and added a footnote to the translator's choice – *Autocarro Cavaleiro*, literally Knight Bus, leaving the pun knight/night aside. In the footnote, the proofreader provides information on that pun, and also on the cultural reference to the night buses in London that operate after the underground closes, crossing the empty streets rapidly just like the Knight Bus and saving people from a long walk.

The Brazilian translator, on the other hand, created *Nôitibus Andante* "by combining the words for night, bus and errant as in knight-errant" (Wyler 2003, p. 10). It is an interesting option that would not be viable in European Portuguese, since the words for 'bus' are different in the two standard varieties: *autocarro* in European Portuguese and *ônibus* in Brazilian Portuguese.

5. Final remarks

The choices made by Lia Wyler may sound odd for a Portuguese reader, used to the English versions of most names and many neologisms found throughout the series. However, she mentions that her list of proper names was "approved by Ms. Rowling, who lived in Portugal for a couple of years and speaks Portuguese" (Wyler 2003, p. 9). As Wyler states, she was working on the assumption that *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* was a book for children aged 9-12 and proceeded accordingly.

Given this difficulty of translating a children's book that ended up having a massive young-adult and even adult fan base, Brøndsted and Dollerup suggest a strategy even they know to be utopian:

> one might consider translating the Harry Potter books into two different versions; one for young children, which would be much like the Norwegian one, and another one for adults, which would merely transfer to British names. (Brøndsted, Dollerup 2004, p. 13)

From the examples the authors present, the Norwegian version would be much similar to the Brazilian version, whereas the Portuguese version merely transfers most names.

However, cultural differences between Portugal and Brazil are at stake here: Portuguese children are much more exposed to English from a tender age, which implies a very large familiarity with English or English-sounding names and words. Showing their endorsement of the Portuguese translation project, the Harry Potter series is part of the National Reading Plan (*Plano*

Nacional de Leitura), whose authors refer that the largest number of readers are found between the fifth and the seventh graders (10–12-year-olds).[14]

Fantasy as a genre is fertile ground for creativity. Authors play not only with words but with whole universes, which makes the translation of their creative expression a challenge for any translator. I have analysed divergence areas between the Portuguese and the Brazilian translations of the Harry Potter series highlighting the choices that do not derive solely from intrinsic differences between the two standard varieties of the same language but from two different translation projects based on what the translators felt the target-audience's expectations might be. It would be interesting to make a similar experiment with another fantasy novel, but targeted at adults, such as *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy by Tolkien for which more than one translation is available for each standard variety, which would certainly add to the comparison.

Bionote: Maria João Ferro is a Coordinating Professor at the Lisbon Accounting and Business School and the coordinator of the English Section at the Lisbon School of Education, both part of the Polytechnic University of Lisbon. She is also a researcher with the Reception and Translation Studies research group at the Lisbon Centre for English Studies (ULICES/CEAUL) and a collaborator with the LLT – Lexicology, Lexicography and Terminology research group at the Linguistics Research Centre of NOVA University Lisbon (CLUNL). She holds a PhD in Linguistics (specializing in Lexicology, Lexicography and Terminology) from NOVA University Lisbon and an MA in Romance Linguistics from the University of Lisbon. Her research interests include literary translation, terminology, languages for specific purposes, intercultural communication, and the economics of language.

Author's address: mjferro@iscal.ipl.pt

Acknowledgements: This research is supported by the Portuguese national funding through the FCT – Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology, I.P. as part of the project UID/03210 - Linguistics Research Centre of NOVA University Lisbon (CLUNL).

[14] See: https://pnl2027.gov.pt/np4/284.html.

Primary References

Rowling J. K. 2020, *Harry Potter e a Pedra Filosofal*, 51st ed., trans. Isabel Fraga, Editorial Presença, Queluz de Baixo.
Rowling J. K. 2020, *Harry Potter e a Câmara dos Segredos*, 38th ed., trans. Isabel Fraga, Editorial Presença, Queluz de Baixo.
Rowling J. K. 2020, *Harry Potter e o Prisioneiro de Azkaban*, 37th ed., trans. Isabel Fraga, Editorial Presença, Queluz de Baixo.
Rowling J. K. 2020, *Harry Potter e o Cálice de Fogo*, 24th ed., trans. Isabel Fraga, Isabel Nunes and Manuela Madureira, Editorial Presença, Queluz de Baixo.
Rowling J. K. 2020, *Harry Potter e a Ordem da Fénix*, 14th ed., trans. Isabel Fraga, Manuela Madureira, Isabel Nunes and Alice Rocha, Editorial Presença, Queluz de Baixo.
Rowling J. K. 2020, *Harry Potter e o Príncipe Misterioso*, 9th ed., trans. Alice Rocha, Manuela Madureira, Maria do Carmo Figueira and Isabel Nunes, Editorial Presença, Queluz de Baixo.
Rowling J. K. 2020, *Harry Potter e os Talismãs da Morte*, 10th ed., trans. Alice Rocha, Manuela Madureira, Maria Georgina Segurado and Maria do Carmo Figueira, Editorial Presença, Queluz de Baixo.
Rowling, J. K. 2015, *Harry Potter – A Coleção Completa*, trans. Lia Wyler, Pottermore Limited.

References

Berman A. 1995, *Pour une critique des traductions: John Donne*, Gallimard, Paris.
Brøndsted K. and Dollerup C. 2004, *The names in Harry Potter*, in "Perspectives", 12 [1], pp. 56-72.
Clyne M. 1992, *Pluricentric languages – Introduction*, in Clyne M. (ed.), *Pluricentric languages: Differing norms in different nations*, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin/New York, pp. 1-9.
European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication 2024, *Special Eurobarometer 540: Europeans and their languages*. https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2979 (29.08.2024).
Gonçalves M. 2017, *Harry Potter ficou desatualizado? "Talvez estejamos a perder a magia"*, in "Expresso", 26.06.2017. https://expresso.pt/cultura/2017-06-26-Harry-Potter-ficou-desatualizado--Talvez-estejamos-a-perder-a-magia (29.08.2024).
Gierzynski A. and Eddy K. 2013, *Harry Potter and the millennials: Research methods and the politics of the muggle generation*, JHU Press, Baltimore.
Le Lievre K. A. 2003, *Wizards and Wainscots: Generic Structures and Genre Themes in the Harry Potter Series*, in "Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature", 24 [1], pp. 25-36.
Martins L. 2016, *Uma crítica de tradução: Harry Potter e a Pedra Filosofal no Brasil*, in "Belas Infiéis", 5 [3], pp. 41-56.
Mira F. 2023, *Issues and challenges faced by Brazilian adults to learn English*, in "Revista Liberato", 24 [42], pp. 111-124.
Muhr R. 2016, *The state of the art of research on pluricentric languages: Where we were and where we are now*, in Muhr R. (ed.), *Pluricentric languages and non-dominant varieties worldwide. Part I: Pluricentric languages across Continents. Features and*

usage, Peter Lang, Berlin, pp.13-36.

Muhr R. 2012, *Linguistic dominance and non-dominance in pluricentric languages. A typology*, in Muhr R. (ed.), *Non-dominant varieties of pluricentric languages. Getting the picture*, Peter Lang, Berlin, pp. 23-48.

Nord C. 2003, *Proper Names in Translations for Children: Alice in Wonderland as a Case in Point*, in "Meta", 48 [1-2], pp. 182–196.

O'Brien S. 2011, *Collaborative translation*, in Gambier Y. and van Doorslaer L. (eds.), *Handbook of translation studies*, vol. 2, John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, pp. 17-20.

Van der Wey A. L. 2011, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone: Shifting Centres, Margins, and Publics* (Master thesis), Trent University, Canada.

Venuti L. 1995, *The Translator's Invisibility*, Routledge, London/New York.

Wyler L. 2003, *Harry Potter for Children, Teenagers and Adults*, in "*Meta*", 48 [1-2], pp. 5-14.

Zsubori A. and Das, R. 2018, *Twenty years of Pottermania: British young people's experiences of fantasy at the intersections of the fictive and "real"*, in "Journal of Children and Media", 12 [4], pp. 406-419.