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# *Exploring Challenges in Translation in the Harry Potter Book Series*

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## **Introduction**

The main focus of this study is to explore the challenges encountered by the translators when translating the *Harry Potter* book series into various languages. In this dissertation an analysis on the language evolution of the novels and the neologisms coined by J.K. Rowling will be conducted.

The *Harry Potter* saga, written by J.K. Rowling is composed of seven novels. The author published the novels between 1997 and 2007. Indeed, *Harry Potter* does not need any introduction since it became a global phenomenon, having sold more than half a billion copies worldwide, additionally eight films based on the book series have been produced by Warner Bros, increasing even more its popularity. Gunelius (2008: 11) refers to the author J.K. Rowling by stating: “She created a time-honored story of the fallible hero and good versus evil that people have always loved”. According to her these are the key ingredients for a success that persists to this day.

The novels have been translated into over 80 languages around the world (including Ancient Greek and Latin). Since the translators did not have to follow specific guidelines when translating the *Harry Potter* novels, each translation differs from the others. The *Harry Potter* book series is one of the most important works in children’s literature and has brought many young people closer to the world of reading, making them passionate about literature.

The first chapter of the dissertation will focus on attempting to give a definition of children’s literature. The chapter will continue by exploring the challenges in translating children’s literature. Specifically, analysing the role played by the translator, providing a definition of translation and finally exploring the translation techniques used in children’s literature.

The second chapter of the dissertation will concern the language analysis of the *Harry Potter* book series. Firstly, an analysis of the evolution of the audience of the saga will be conducted, in order to demonstrate how the readers grew up alongside the characters of the novels. The second part of this chapter will focus on the analysis of the language complexity of the *Harry Potter* book series, by taking into consideration the average sentence length, the word length, the word frequency and the actual word complexity. After that, the *Harry Potter* novel with the widest vocabulary, the most frequently used

words and the most frequently used words filtered by names in the novels will be established. The final part of the chapter will investigate the neologisms coined by J. K. Rowling in the *Harry Potter* book series. Firstly, a definition of the word *neologism* will be given, then an analysis of some of the neologisms present in the novels will be conducted using the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). In addition, those neologisms will be looked up in the Oxford Dictionary, highlighting their frequency in common use. The last section will be dedicated to the translations of the neologisms analysed previously.

The third and last chapter of this dissertation will concentrate on the translations of the *Harry Potter* novels, centring on the analysis of the second volume of the series, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. Firstly, the challenges in translating the book series will be examined by comparing the translations of the names of the characters, of the locations and of the Hogwarts houses into different languages. The second section of the chapter will focus on investigating the reasons behind the decision to adapt the *Harry Potter* book series for the American audience. Consequently, a comparison of the differences between the original version and the one adapted for the American audience of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* will be presented. The final part of the chapter will focus on the Italian translation of the *Harry Potter* book series, discussing the reasons that led the Italian translators to rewrite the translation once J. K. Rowling had concluded the novel series. Once again, the second volume of *Harry Potter* will be taken into analysis by presenting the differences between the first and the second edition of the Italian translation of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*.

## 1. Translating children's literature

The following chapter will focus on introducing children's literature by explaining how difficult it is to give a proper definition to this genre. After that, the challenges that a translator has to face when translating children's literature will be presented.

### 1.1. Introduction to children's literature

Roger Sale observed that everyone knows what *children's literature* is, but when someone is asked to give a definition of it none seems to be able to answer (Sale in Gubar, 2011). Karín Lesnik-Oberstein (1999) believes that the definition of *children's literature* lies at the heart of its endeavour. Children are at the core of the existence of this literary genre. "The definition of *children's literature* therefore is underpinned by purpose: it wants to be something in particular, because this is supposed to connect it with that reading audience, *children*, with which it declares itself to be overtly and purposefully concerned." (Lesnik-Oberstein in Hunt, 1999: p. 15).

Garcia de Toro (2020: 463) wonders: "Is children's literature a literature written for children, by children, or about children?". The term *children's literature* incorporates different meanings: "It refers to literature for children, including both texts written specifically for them and texts considered appropriate for them." *Children's literature* comprehends texts written about children, in most of which children are the main characters. In addition, it can also comprehend literary texts written by children, even if often they are not published (Garcia de Toro, 2020; p. 463).

The Library of Congress Collections Policy Statements tries to summarise a genre that is not as simple to theorise as it may seem, with this definition: "Children's Literature is defined as material written and produced for the information or entertainment of children and young adults. It includes all non-fiction, literary and artistic genres and physical formats" (Library Of Congress Collections Policy Statements). In order to be able to understand properly the definition of children's literature, it is better to divide the two terms (*children* and *literature*) and to give them a proper definition separately.

The first word to analyse is *children*. The first article of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, adopted in 1989 states: "A child means every human being below the age of

eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.” This definition explains what a child is from a legal point of view. However, when referring to children as readers, it is not simple to find a suitable definition. Children are defined by Fadiman and Clifton (2022) as: “All potential or actual young literates, from the instant they can with joy leaf through a picture book or listen to a story read aloud, to the age of perhaps 14 or 15, may be called children. Thus, *children* includes *young people*”. This definition is not accurate though, because children and young people cannot be defined as such, only on the basis of chronological age. In fact, it is important to consider not only the maturity of the person, which sometimes can be precocious, but also the fact that being chronologically adult does not mean that the “inner child” disappears. This means that it is possible for young people, as well as adults, to read both children’s and adults’ literature (Fadiman, Clifton, 2022).

Children’s literature is considered to be multi-layered, this means that it can be read and understood at different levels of sophistication and maturity. Children’s literature is not merely designed for a single audience, it has a dual audience instead which comprises both children and adults (Bland, 2013). Due to its complexity, the word *literature* is difficult to define. The Cambridge Dictionary gives this definition: “Written artistic works, especially those with a high and lasting artistic value”. Fadiman and Clifton insist that the word *literature* does not only comprehend written production. “To use the word *writing* when describing literature is itself misleading, for one may speak of *oral literature* or the *literature of preliterate peoples*.” Literature is an art and it cannot be reduced to the words on the page; their presence is exclusively a consequence of the craft of writing (Fadiman, Clifton, 2022).

Lesnik-Oberstein suggests that when defining *children’s literature* as “books which are good for children”, it is not possible to part *children* and *literature* (as the two constituent terms of *children’s literature*), to trace them back to original independent meanings, and subsequently to reassemble them in order to achieve a greater understanding of what *children’s literature* is (Lesnik-Oberstein in Hunt, 1999). *Children* and *literature* are two terms that qualify mutually and change each other’s meaning. “The *children* of *children’s literature* are constituted as specialised ideas of ‘children’, not necessarily related in any way to other ‘children’ [...], and the *literature* of *children’s literature* is a special idea of

‘literature’, not necessarily related to any other ‘literature’” (Lesnik-Oberstein in Hunt, 1999: p.16).

Perry Nodelman (2008) considers children's literature as a literature genre which is distinct and definable, which has characteristics that arise from deep-rooted adult ideas about childhood. During the time *children's literature* has been produced, those ideas remained stable over the course of time. He believes that the literature is ambivalent, as a consequence of the ambivalence of those ideas. The purpose of children's literature is to offer children what adults think children will like and what they want them to need. Hence, children's literature satisfies adults' needs concerning children (Nodelman, 2008; p. 242). Adults are conscious of their ability to manipulate a narrative. “Their presence, while *hidden*, is overwhelmingly controlling. [...] Nodelman sees the adults behind the scene as intent on maintaining the status quo” (Enciso, 2010; p. 258).

## **1.2. Challenges in translating children's literature**

### **1.2.1. The role played by the translator**

Van Coille (2006: iii) states: “It is common practice today to describe the role of the translator as a mediator, as one who facilitates the negotiating ‘dialogue’ between source text and target audience.” The translator plays a crucial mediating role, which is deeply felt in translating children's literature. The translator is not merely a neutral figure that stands between the author and the reader, though. Translators play a central role in the negotiating ‘dialogue’ mentioned above. Their mission is not exclusively translating what the author had written, but also balancing the imposed norms of the publishing industries, the expectations of the adults (who are buyers and co-readers), their personal interpretation of the source to translate and the assessment of the target audience (Van Coille, 2006: p. iii). Nevertheless, translators of children's literature often seem ‘invisible’ to the readers, also due to the low status of children's books. “It would be easy to imagine that the book had been transposed from one language to another by some kind of literary osmosis with no human agent involved. Yet there *is*, of course, evidence of the translator's existence” (Van Coillie, 2006: p. 2). Van Coillie refers to Zohar Shavit, who states that when comparing text sources and target texts the presence of the translator is evident. The translator makes linguistic choices, adapts the context of the original, aligns



it with models in the target culture, omits text and adds explanations when necessary (Shavit, 1987 in Van Coillie, 2006: p. 2). Thanks to translators, children worldwide can discover foreign literatures and new cultures, enjoying them to the fullest (Van Coillie, 2006: p. iii).

### **1.2.2. Definition of translation and challenges in translating children's literature**

Having mentioned the role played by the translator in children's literature, it is important to give a definition to the word *translation*. Munday (2016: 8) gives a technical definition of the process: "The process of translation between two different written languages involves the changing of an original written text (the source text or ST) in the original verbal language (the source language or SL) into a written text (the target text or TT) in a different verbal language (the target language or TL)".

Yaroslav V. Sokolovsky in an article published on the Journal of Siberian Federal University Critical refers to important translation dichotomies, such as: *source text – target text*, *process – result*, *invariant – variant*, *direct – mediated*, and so on. On the basis of the criteria listed above, a system of traits may arise, defined as *constitutive traits of translation activity (CTTA)*. "Translation is a process and a result of this process; [...] a socially oriented interlingual communication; [...] an interlingual communication with a mediator; [...] approximation of a multilingual communication to a monolingual one" (Sokolovsky, 2010; p. 287).

It is believed that translating children's literature is easier than translating adults' literature, but this is not always true. Since the target audience of children is diverse, Vid argues that it is crucial to take into account their interests and abilities before proceeding with the translation (Vid, 2008). Zohar Shavit's work is also mentioned by Natalija Vid. She focuses on the term *freedom of manipulation*, used by Shavit. The term seems to suggest that the translator of children's literature may be allowed to make changes to the source text in order to make it more comprehensible and suitable for the young reader (Vid, 2008). The translator has the freedom even to make adjustments to the plot, to the characters and to the language. Certainly, the changes must be made by taking into

consideration the comprehension ability of the target audience (Shavit, 1986 in Vid, 2008).

Riitta Oittinen (2003) states that translating is partly domestication. “The verbal text will always be translated into a new language, for new target-language readers with different backgrounds from those of the readers of the original” (Oittinen, 2003). Shavit sets out two important criteria for the translators’ work: “Nevertheless, the actual decision of what to omit is the result of the need to revise the text in accordance with two main criteria, in addition to the systemic affiliation: first, the norms of morality accepted and demanded by the children's system; second, the assumed level of the child's comprehension” (Shavit, 1986). Sutherland argues that foreign names, titles, complex syntax, or allusions to cultural heritage or common knowledge unfamiliar to members of recipient cultures may be a serious barrier for a child. Thus, instead of merely translating, it is more suitable to create a whole new domesticated text that ends to be more familiar to the audience (Sutherland, 1981 in Vid, 2008).

Sokolovsky (2010: 285) raises an issue about original text and translation: “The term *problem of identity between translation and original* refers to objective impossibility of translation to convey all amount of information, which is contained in the original text”. Nikolajeva (2015) insists by stating that accuracy and closeness to the original is not fundamental as the reception by the readers is. “Any translator who decided to translate an *untranslatable* book should acknowledge the fact that a functioning translation can only be achieved at the expense of some elements in the original” (Vid, 2008; p. 221).

After having introduced the definition of children’s literature and the challenges in translating children’s literature, the second chapter will focus on the language analysis of the *Harry Potter* book series.



## **2. Language analysis of the *Harry Potter* book series**

The second chapter focuses on the target audience, on the language analysis and on the neologisms in *Harry Potter* series of books. In the first part of the chapter the evolution of the target audience of *Harry Potter* is described. In the second part, an analysis of the language of the books is presented, focusing on word complexity. The final part of the chapter focalizes on the neologisms in *Harry Potter* throughout the use of Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) and the Oxford Dictionary.

### **2.1. Analysis of the evolution of the audience in the *Harry Potter* book series**

J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* book series comprehends a total of seven books, written and published between 1997 and 2007. The first book is *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, and it was published in 1997. The second one, called *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* was released in 1998, followed by the third one, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, the following year. The fourth book, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, first came out in 2000. The fifth book, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, is the longest one of the series and it was published in 2003, three years after the fourth. In 2005 *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* was released, followed by the last book of the series in 2007, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*.

It is difficult to classify the *Harry Potter* novels literary genre, to refer to this book series only as fantasy literature could be misleading. *Harry Potter* can be described as a mosaic of literary genres, which are intertwined. "Harry Potter is at once a prime example of pulp fiction, horror books, mystery novels, sports books, and fantasy novels, among others" (Keller, 2009; p. 1). Brennan defines J.K. Rowling's writing style and her books rapid, plain, and direct in expression. "Rowling's prose is never stilted, never cluttered up with purple patches; it never gets in the way of the story she sets out to tell" (Brennan, 2005).

*Harry Potter* can be represented as a coming-of-age story. The storyline covers a time span of seven years: it begins when Harry Potter turns eleven years old (when wizards and witches can start attending the school of Hogwarts) and it finishes when he is seventeen (considered to be the beginning of adulthood for witches and wizards). Therefore, the readers are able to witness the process of growth experienced by Harry

Potter and all his friends (and enemies). Essentially, *Harry Potter* is a novel of development: “A novel which usually follows a character from an early age on his or her journey into adulthood” (Sellers, 2017; p. 1). In the case of Harry Potter, the storyline focuses on his evolution from a boy to a man and it represents the process throughout which he develops his identity as a human and as a wizard (Sellers, 2017). In a novel of development, the main character must follow a quest. In *Harry Potter* book series the quest is his self-discovery and how the fact that he is “the chosen one”, selected to defeat Voldemort, influenced his growth process (Sellers, 2017).

J.K. Rowling decided to use the basic third person as the writing style in *Harry Potter* used and there is not the presence of any evident experimental style. However, the narrator is not completely omniscient. The story is narrated with Harry's perspective, the reader can experience his thoughts and feelings.

Book One, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, is 223 pages long in its first edition. The novel is addressed to young readers with an age between nine and eleven years old (Rowling, 1997). It is interesting how this book, addressed to such a young audience, was able to capture it even if it is so long. Given the fact that in the mid-1990s, the children's publishing industry was in decline. Studies showed that kids were more interested in watching television and playing video games, rather than in reading (Sanderson, 2018). The language used in the book is simple and suitable for a child. Throughout the novel, many humorous scenarios can be found, especially when referring to the characters disliked by Harry. For instance, Aunt Petunia is described as an indiscreet neighbour, Uncle Vernon is depicted as a rule-following and annoying man and Dudley as a spoiled child (Rowling, 1997). Thus, the tone of the book is humorous. The plot is mainly focused on introducing the magical world of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry by presenting the main characters to the reader. The main themes of the book are discovery, friendship and courage: Harry Potter discovers that he is a wizard at the age of eleven and this completely changes his life, which was miserable before; he gets to know his new friends Ron and Hermione, who will always be by his side throughout the course of the book; to conclude, he shows a great courage when facing Professor Quirrell (and therefore Voldemort) (Rowling, 1997).

The second and the third book, *Harry Potter and The Chamber of Secrets* and *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, are respectively 251 and 317 pages long. The language used in those books is simple, as in the first book (Rowling, 1998). In Book Two a few of the main themes, which are recurrent in all the following books, are presented: discrimination, racism and inequality. The readers are introduced to the concepts of *Mudblood*, *Half-blood* and *Pureblood*. *Mudblood* is an offensive term, with which wizards or witches born from *Muggles* (non-magical persons) parents are called. *Half-blood* witches and wizards are the one born from one Muggle parent and one with magical powers. To end, *Pureblood* wizards and witches are the ones born from both parents with magical powers. Ron Weasley explains: “There are some wizards — like Malfoy's family — who think they're better than everyone else because they're what people call pure-blood... I mean, the rest of us know it doesn't make any difference at all” (Rowling, 1998; p. 121). The discrimination of the Mudbloods has its roots with Salazar Slytherin, the founder of Slytherin house, who believed that muggle-borns were unworthy to study magic. He created the so-called *chamber of secrets*, where a horrible monster lives in. This monster called *Basilisk*, once the chamber is unsealed, has the task to purge the school from the Mudbloods (Rowling, 1998). This discrimination against muggle-borns is a central theme in all the books following the second one, indeed Voldemort (and his *Death Eaters*) is the heir of Salazar Slytherin and he persecutes Mudbloods as his predecessors.

Starting from the fourth book, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, there is a significant increase in the number of pages: 636 pages for the fourth, the fifth 766, the sixth and the seventh respectively 607 pages each. The tone of the books becomes darker and darker as the series goes on. As Harry and his friend grow older, starting to experience their first loves, the return of Voldemort is nearer than ever. By the end of the fourth novel, Voldemort comes back to life in a new strong body and the reader witnesses the first important death, this passage in the story marks the border for the end of carefreeness (Rowling, 2000). From that point, Harry and his friends will experience attacks from numerous enemies and they will witness the deaths of important people.

The structure of the *Harry Potter* series of books is itself a proof of how the novels are intended to narrate the evolution of a young boy, who becomes an adult by the end of the story. At this point, it is evident that after the first two/three books of the series the target

audience has changed, from young children to young adults. Due to the increase of violence and deaths scenes, the latest books of the series are not suitable for children anymore. To conclude, it is right to say that the target audience is expected to simultaneously grow up along the protagonists of the novel. Huler, in 2007, tells the story of Erin, a girl who was 9 years old when the first *Harry Potter* book was released. Erin is 18 and had finished school by the time Harry begins his final year at Hogwarts and turns 17. “By the time she finishes *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, she and Harry will take their first steps into the world together” (Huler, 2007).

## **2.2. Language analysis of the *Harry Potter* book series**

There is an evident progression in the *Harry Potter* target audience, which is reflected in the books’ complexity. Not only, the books’ pages length is longer book after book, but there is also a richer language complexity as the series progress.

Beard (2016) conducted an interesting analysis of the language in *Harry Potter*, quantifying its complexity. The method used was to analyse specific metrics of all the seven books of the series, using SpaCy NLP library, including average sentence length and word length, word frequency and eventually the final word complexity. NLP, acronym for Natural Language Processing, is defined as: “A theoretically motivated range of computational techniques for analysing and representing naturally occurring texts at one or more levels of linguistic analysis” (Liddy, 2001; p. 2). The study conducted by Beard starts with the analysis of the first two metrics: the average word length and average sentence length. The average sentence length is defined as the average number of words in a sentence. According to Bochkarev (2012), word length is linked considerably to other typological criterions. It is also a crucial parameter, together with word frequency, useful to analyse psychological processes of language acquisition and usage. Bochkarev (2012) states that the average word length for the English language is 5.1 letters.

In order to understand the data in *Figure 1*, it is important to give a definition to the words *Mean, Median and Std (Standard Deviation)*. The *mean* is a value “Obtained by dividing the sum of observed values by the number of the observations” (MacMillan, 2021). “The

*median* is the middle value of a set of data containing an odd number of values, or the average of the two middle values of a set of data with an even number of values” (MacMillan, 2021). Lastly, the standard deviation is defined as a value, which gives an indication of the proximity of the entire set of data to the average value (MacMillan, 2021).

Book	Sentence_length			Word_length		
	Mean	Median	Std	Mean	Median	Std
1	19.34	15	15.63	4.31	4	1.97
2	20.56	16	16.73	4.42	4	2.07
3	18.94	15	16.51	4.45	4	2.12
4	20.47	16	17.24	4.43	4	2.11
5	23.57	18	20.81	4.46	4	2.15
6	22.87	18	19.52	4.48	4	2.21
7	21.57	17	18.07	4.43	4	2.14

Figure 1: Average Sentence Length and Average Word Length in *Harry Potter* (Beard, 2016)

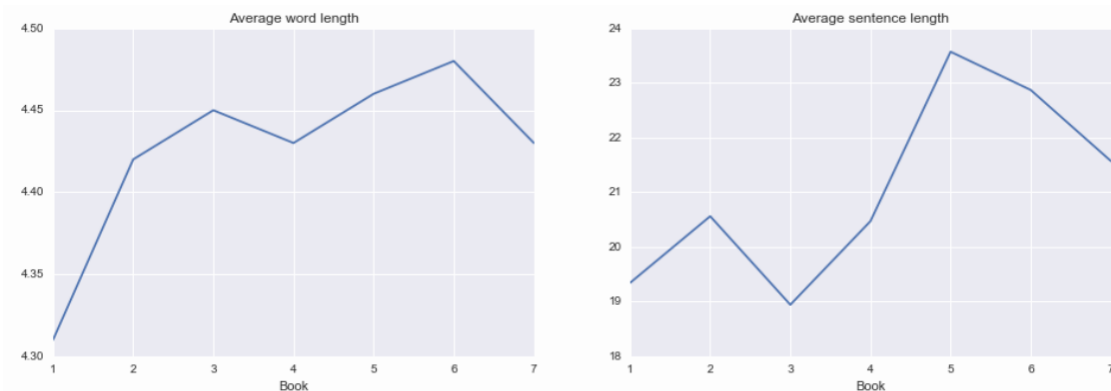


Figure 2: Average Word Length and Average Sentence Length in *Harry Potter* (Beard, 2016)

In *Figure 1* and *2*, the increasing average sentence length value is evident. With a mean of 23.57 words per sentence the fifth book, *Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix*, has the highest average sentence length. This book is also the longest one of the series. The lowest average sentence length of the series is in the third book, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (18.94 words per sentence). However, the average word length is approximately the same throughout the book series with a value ranging between 4.31 and 4.48 (Beard, 2016).



By quantifying word frequency in a text, it is possible to establish its word complexity. “As has been seen in previous corpus studies, frequency is a very strong predictor of the complexity of a word” (Kauchak, 2016; p. 1050). Beard analyses the word frequency distribution. In *Figure 3* for each book, the percentage of the words appearing from 1 to 10 times of all the word occurrences is represented (Beard, 2016).

Book	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Word_freq							
1	45.2	46.8	45.5	42.2	39.3	44.1	42.5
2	16.9	16.7	16.6	16.2	16.3	16.2	16.6
3	9.1	8.9	9.0	8.9	9.3	9.6	9.3
4	5.8	5.2	5.4	5.8	6.3	5.7	5.8
5	3.6	4.4	4.0	4.2	4.2	3.8	4.2
6	2.5	3.1	2.8	3.4	3.4	2.9	2.8
7	2.5	2.1	2.4	2.1	2.4	2.2	2.2
8	1.5	1.7	1.6	2.0	2.0	1.7	1.9
9	1.3	1.2	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.4	1.6
10	1.5	1.2	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3

Figure 3: Word Frequency in *Harry Potter* (Beard, 2016)

As can be seen in *Figure 3*, the percentage of rare words (the ones that appear from one to two times maximum) decreases in the latest books, instead of increasing. The use of uncommon words is more frequent in the first three books, and its frequency decreases in the last four of the series (Beard, 2016).

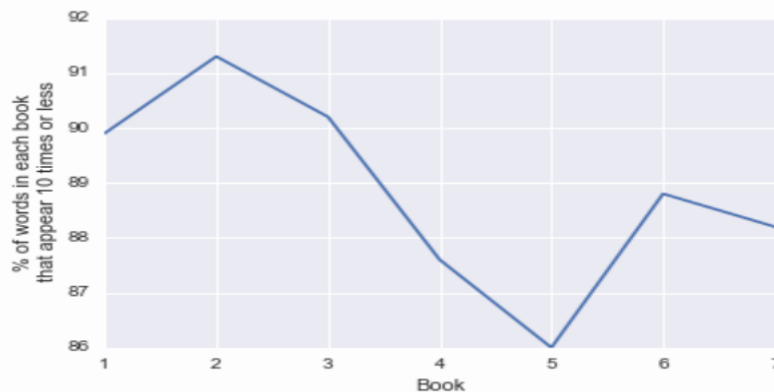


Figure 4: Percentage of Words in Each Book That Appear 10 Times or Less in *Harry Potter* (Beard, 2016)

In *Figure 4*, the graphic represents the percentage of words in each book that appear ten time or less. On one hand, Book Two has the highest percentage (approximately 91,3%). On the other hand, Book Five has the lowest (86%) (Beard, 2016).

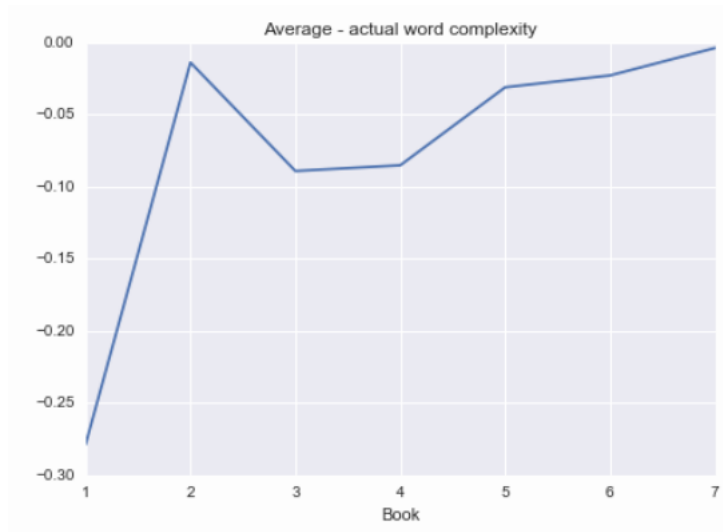


Figure 5: Actual Word Complexity in *Harry Potter* (Beard, 2016)

In *Figure 5*, the actual word complexity is analysed. Taking into consideration the total length of the books, the word complexity of Books One, Three and Four is overall low. On the contrary, the word complexity of the second, fifth and sixth books is close to the average (fixed at 0.00). The only book that reaches the average of word complexity is the last one. Hence, this analysis leads to the consideration that as *Harry Potter* grows up, the word complexity increases accordingly (Beard, 2016).

Siebel conducted a study in which he established which of the seven books has the widest vocabulary. In *Figure 6* and *7*, the two charts represent the total words per book and the frequency of unique words per book (Siebel, 2020).

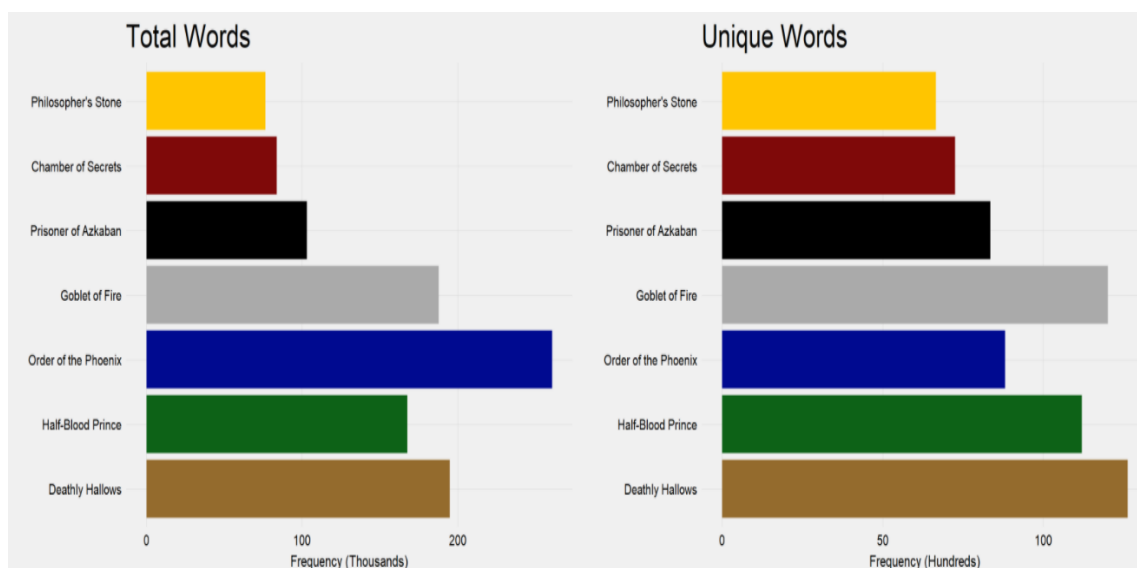


Figure 6: Total Words and Unique Words in *Harry Potter* (Siebel, 2020)

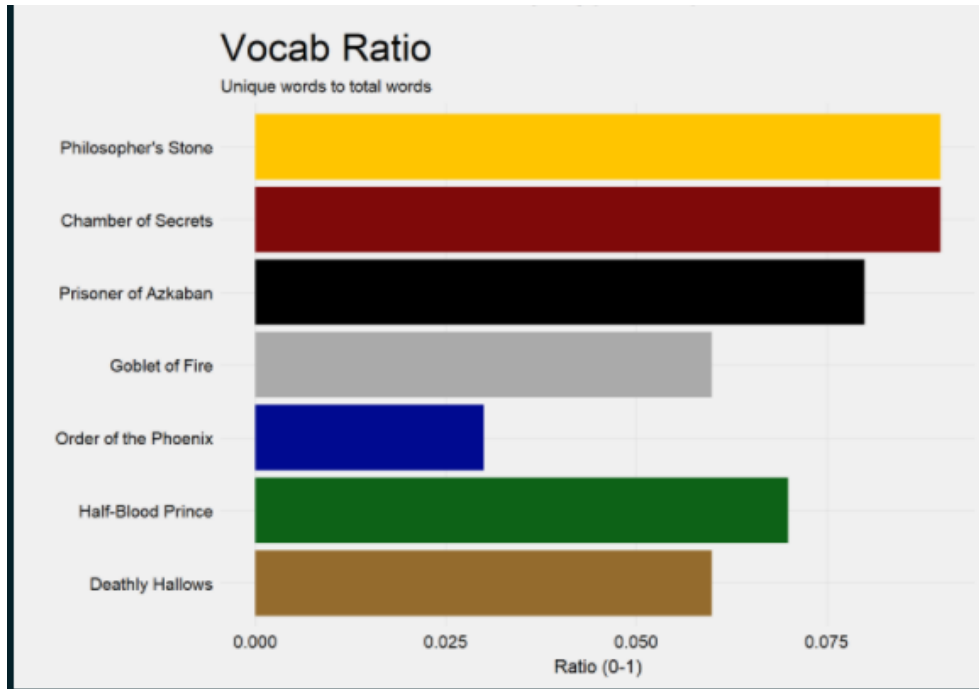


Figure 7: Vocabulary Ratio in *Harry Potter* (Siebel, 2020)

Taking in consideration the page length of the books, it is not surprising that *Harry Potter and the Philosopher Stone* has the lowest rate of total words, while *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* has the highest one. Nevertheless, Book Five seems to have the lowest density of vocabulary, despite of having the highest word count. This is an indicator of the fact that *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* has the most repetitive vocabulary. On the other hand, as for the frequency of unique words, the first book is still in the lowest position. However, the highest frequency of unique words is found in the *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (Siebel, 2020).

Siebel continues his analysis of the *Harry Potter* books by looking at the most frequently used words. The first step was to remove stop words (very common words, such as *the*, *and*, *said* and so on). From the analysis, it can be observed that the most frequently used words in the books are the names of the characters.

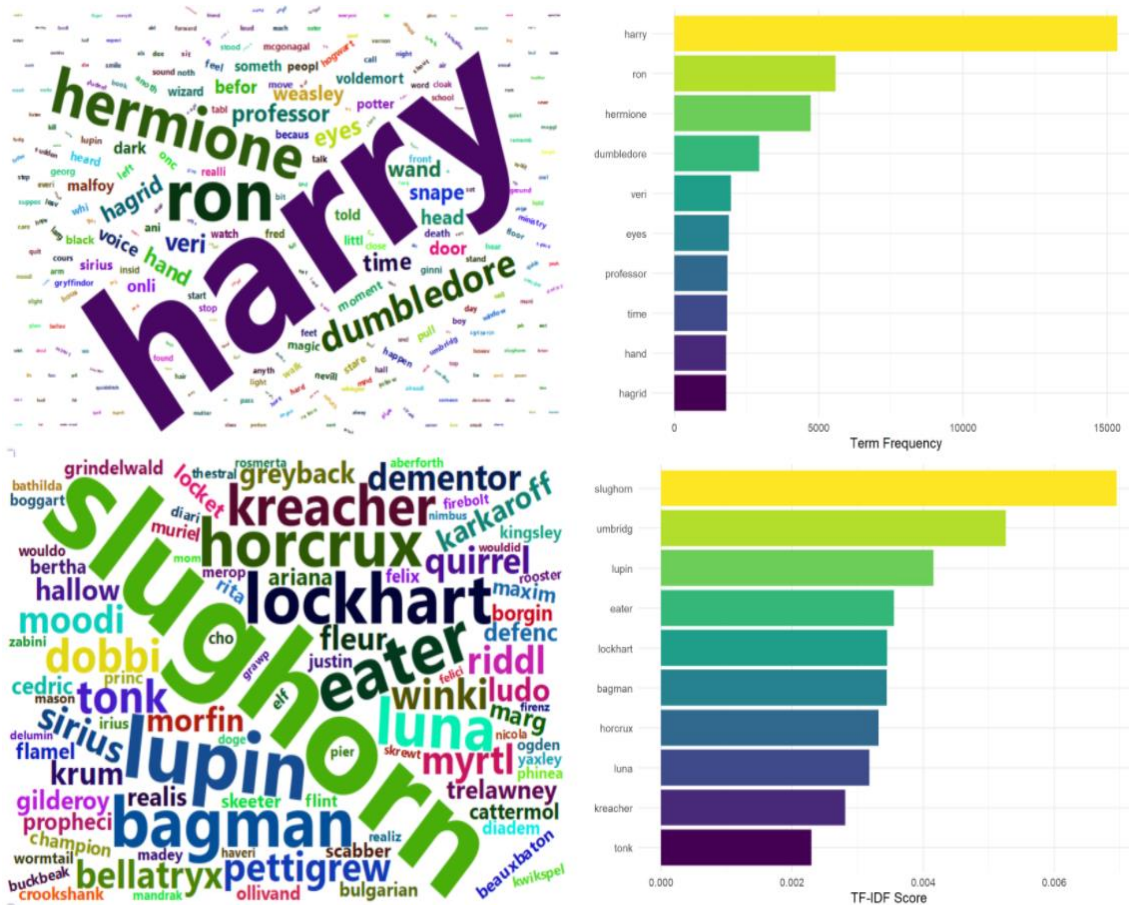


Figure 8: Most Frequently Used Words (with TF and TF-IDF) in *Harry Potter* (Siebel, 2020)

In *Figure 8*, there are two graphs and two word clouds created by using two different approaches. In the first one the examination was made on the Term Frequency, which is the number of times a word appears in the books divided by the total number of words in the books. Unsurprisingly the most used word in this case is *Harry*, followed by *Ron* and *Hermione*. In the second graphic TF-IDF Score method was used, the acronym stands for Term Frequency - Inverse Document Frequency: “It provides a simple model to evaluate the relevance of keywords within a corpus or large collection of documents” (Erra, 2014; p. 147). In particular: “The importance increases proportionally with the number of times that a word appears in a document, compared to the inverse proportion of the same” (Erra, 2014, p. 147). As a result, the most frequently used word in TF-IDF Score is *Slughorn*, *Umbridge* and *Lupin*. These three characters appeared in the story later, the first in Book Six, the second in Book Five and *Lupin* in Book Three. The explanation of these results is that these three characters are frequently referred to, but only in a few of the books. On

the contrary, the TF-IDF Score of the word *Harry* is equal to zero, because his name is the most frequent one in each of the series' books (Siebel, 2020).

In *Figure 9* and *10* observations from a study conducted by Martin and Babac (2022) are showed.

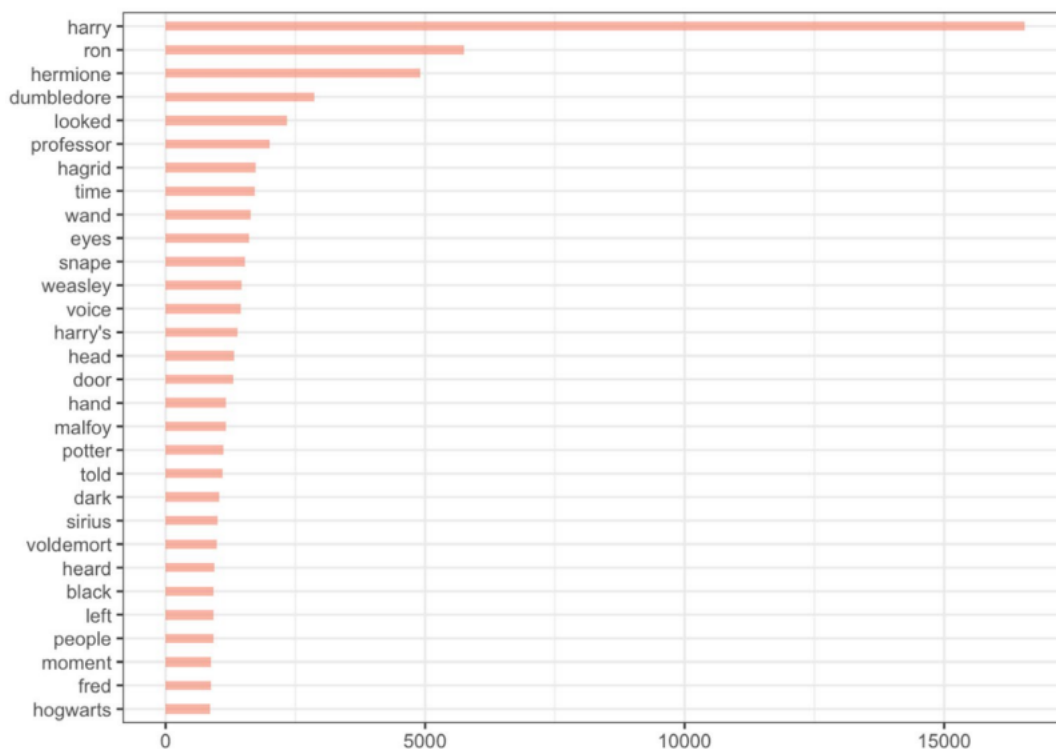


Figure 9: Most Frequently Used Words in the *Harry Potter* Book Series (Martin, 2022)

In *Figure 9* the most frequently used words in the *Harry Potter* book series are presented. This study is similar to the one presented in *Figure 8*, in which most prominent words in the *Harry Potter* book series using the Term Frequency method are analysed. The main characters of the saga *Harry*, *Ron*, *Hermione* and *Dumbledore* occupy the first four positions both in Siebel's and Martin's analysis. Not surprisingly *Harry* is at the top of the list, and as can be seen from *Figure 9* his name appears many more times within the novels, over 15,000 times, as opposed to *Ron* and *Hermione* whose names appear respectively over 5000 and just under 5000 times in the text (Martin, 2022).

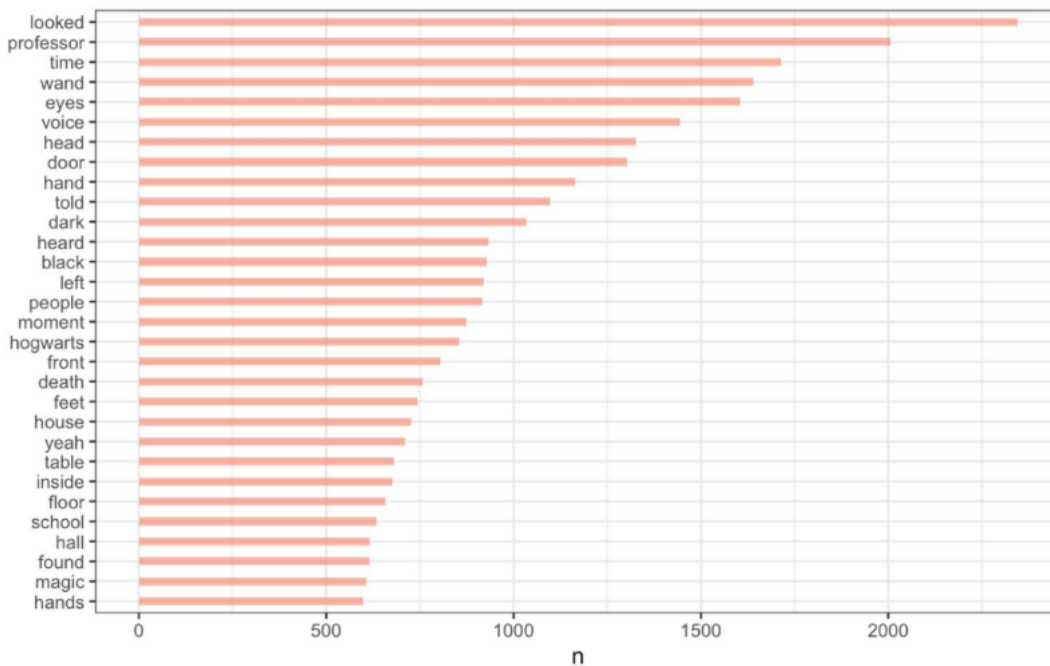


Figure 10: Most Used Words Filtered by Names in the *Harry Potter* Book Series (Martin, 2022)

In *Figure 10* the most used words filtered by names in the *Harry Potter* book series are presented. The first position is occupied by the verb *looked* which appears more than 2,000 times in the novels, followed by the word *professor* which can be found in the novel 2,000 times (Martin, 2022).

### 2.3. Neologisms in the *Harry Potter* book series

#### 2.3.1. What is a neologism?

The Collins Dictionary defines the word *neologism* as: “A new word or expression in a language, or a new meaning for an existing word or expression.” The creation of neologisms in fantasy books is not unusual, *Harry Potter* is no exception. J.K. Rowling invented various new words related to the magical world she had created. Given the enormous success of *Harry Potter*, some of the neologisms created by her are in common use for English language speakers.

### 2.3.2. Analysis of the neologisms in *Harry Potter* with Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) and the Oxford Dictionary

In order to investigate the neologisms created by J.K. Rowling which are in use for English Speakers nowadays, the procedure is to carry out a search on a corpus. According to Sinclair a corpus is “A collection of naturally-occurring language text, chosen to characterize a state or variety of a language” (Sinclair, 1991; p. 171). The analysis in *Table 1* is performed using COCA, the Corpus of Contemporary American English, one of the most widely used corpus, containing more than one billion words of text from eight genres: spoken, fiction, popular magazines, newspapers, academic texts, TV and Movies subtitles, blogs and other web pages. A similar study to the one presented in *Table 1* was previously conducted by Norton in 2017, using the Cambridge English Corpus (Norton, 2017).

The following analysis takes into consideration nine of the most known and used neologisms coined by J.K. Rowling: *muggle*, *quidditch*, *Azkaban*, *horcrux*, *butterbeer*, *sorting hat*, *Gryffindor* and *Slytherin*. The purpose of the analysis is to demonstrate that those neologisms are used in common language nowadays, by examining the context in which those are registered in the corpus. The neologism is written in the first column of *Table 1*, in the second one the neologism’s meaning is explained. In the third column an example of the neologism used in a different context from that of talking/writing about *Harry Potter* books or films is presented. In the fourth and fifth columns the definition in the Oxford Dictionary of the neologisms and their frequency in common use are presented (if present).

NEOLOGISM	MEANING	EXAMPLE OF NEOLOGISM’S USE IN ANOTHER CONTEXT	DEFINITION IN THE OXFORD DICTIONARY	FREQUENCY (IN COMMON USE)
<b>Muggle</b>	Person without magical powers.	“[...] there are a number of unique terms in geocaching that you may not know if you're still a <b>muggle</b> .”	“In the fiction of J. K. Rowling: a person who possesses no magical powers. Hence in allusive and extended uses:	<i>Muggle</i> occurs between 0.01 and 0.1 times per million words in typical modern English usage.

			a person who lacks a particular skill or skills, or who is regarded as inferior in some way.”	
<b>Quidditch</b>	The most famous sport played by Witches and Wizards.	“[...] I might declare the End of Automobiles, and the birth of the <b>Quidditch</b> Economy.”	“In the fantasy fiction of J. K. Rowling: a magical ball game played on flying broomsticks.”	<i>Quidditch</i> occurs between 0.01 and 0.1 times per million words in typical modern English usage.
<b>Azkaban</b>	High-security prison for Wizards and Witches.	“My fear of going to hell is perfectly equal to my fear of going to <b>Azkaban</b> Prison.”	Not present	
<b>Horcrux</b>	Objects in which part of someone’s soul can be put in order to become immortal.	“Did you make me your <b>Horcrux</b> ? Because my heart stopped when I met you.”	Not present	
<b>Butterbeer</b>	Popular beverage in the wizarding world.	“[...] Families with an affinity for mouse ears, <b>butterbeer</b> [...]”	“In the fictional world of Harry Potter: a drink consumed by witches, wizards, and magical beings. Hence also: any of various real drinks made in imitation of this.”	<i>Butterbeer</i> occurs fewer than 0.01 times per million words in typical modern English usage.
<b>Voldemort</b>	Aka Tom Riddle, the	“[...] have deluded themselves into believing that Dr. Offit is	Not present	



	antagonist of Harry Potter.	the <b>Voldemort</b> of vaccines [...]"		
<b>Sorting hat</b>	A magical hat with the power of sorting the students of Hogwarts into one of the four Houses.	"Anyway, I try to have a healthy mixture of both, and allow the customer to wear their own <b>sorting hat.</b> "	Not present	
<b>Gryffindor</b>	One of the Hogwart's houses, founded by Godric Gryffindor. The house of Harry and his friends.	"And <b>Gryffindor</b> awards five points to Carrie Courogen for being not a tool."	Not present	
<b>Slytherin</b>	One of the Hogwart's houses, founded by Salazar Slytherin. The house of Voldemort and Draco Malfoy.	"[...] as one-third of the Be The Serpent podcast along with two other red-headed <b>Slytherin</b> authors [...]"	Not present	

Table 1: Analysis of the Neologisms in *Harry Potter* with COCA and the Oxford Dictionary ([www.english-corpora.org/coca/](http://www.english-corpora.org/coca/); [www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com))

As can be observed in *Table 1*, neologisms used in different contexts might assume different meanings. For instance, *muggle* assumes the meaning of a person who is not informed enough on a specific argument. Indeed, muggles in *Harry Potter* are people without magical powers and the majority of them are not even aware of the existence of wizards and witches. In the example above, *horcrux* is employed in a romantic way. In

addition, *Voldemort* is used to refer to a person against vaccines who wants to impose his idea on the others. The reference here is to the way Voldemort tried to impose his ideology in a violent way all over the *Harry Potter* book series.

In *Table 1* the neologisms which occur in the Oxford Dictionary are represented, highlighting their definition and their frequency in common use. Three words out of the nine analysed are present in the Oxford Dictionary: *muggle*, *quidditch* and *butterbeer*. These three words occur respectively in typical modern English usage between 0.01 and 0.1 times per million words for the first two words and fewer than 0.01 times per million words for *butterbeer*. Their definition in the Oxford Dictionary makes reference to the author J. K. Rowling and the *Harry Potter* book series. The results showed from the data in *Table 1* are important: even though only a third of the neologisms analysed are present in the Oxford Dictionary, it is interesting to note how the *Harry Potter* book series has become such a phenomenon, to the extent that some of the neologisms featured in it have been included in the Oxford Dictionary.

### 2.3.3. Translating neologisms in the *Harry Potter* book series

It was not simple for the translators of the *Harry Potter* book series to translate the numerous neologisms invented by J. K. Rowling.

*Table 2* presents how neologisms (from *Table 1*) were reported in various languages, focusing on the languages into which these neologisms have been translated by making adjustments that could help the target audience better understand their meaning.

NEOLOGISM	TRANSLATIONS	ORIGIN OF THE TRANSLATIONS
<b>Muggle</b>	Italian: <i>Babbano</i>	From <i>babbeo</i> , which means <i>fool</i> .
	Portuguese (Brazil): <i>Trouxa</i>	<i>Trouxa</i> means <i>fool</i> .
	Romanian: <i>Încuiat</i> (M)/ <i>Încuiată</i> (F)	The literal translation is <i>locked</i> , but the word is an

		archaic word which means <i>ignorant</i> .
<b>Quidditch</b>	Croatian: <i>Metloboj</i>	From “metla” ( <i>broom</i> ) and “boj” ( <i>fight</i> ). of the balls in the game.
	Portuguese (Brazil): <i>Quadribol</i>	From “quadri” ( <i>four</i> ) and “bol” ( <i>ball</i> ), as the number
	Slovak: <i>Metlobal</i>	It is translated literally as <i>broomball</i> .
<b>Azkaban</b>	The word was kept original in all the translations.	
<b>Horcrux</b>	Catalan: <i>Horricreu</i>	Translated as <i>horror cross</i> .
	Chinese: 分靈體 ( <i>fēn líng tǐ</i> )	Translated as <i>portion of a soul</i> .
	Vietnamese: <i>Trùng sinh Linh giá</i>	Translated as <i>immortal soul frames</i> .
<b>Butterbeer</b>	Italian: <i>Burrobirra</i>	Literal translation in Italian.
	Romanian: <i>Berezero</i>	The word means <i>zero-beer</i> and derives from the non-alcoholic characteristic of the beverage.
	Swedish: <i>Homungsöl</i>	Translated as <i>honey-beer</i> .
<b>Voldemort</b>	Lithuanian: <i>Valdovas Voldemortas</i>	<i>Valdovas</i> means <i>ruler</i> .
	Romanian: <i>Lord Cap-De-Mort</i>	The literal translation is <i>Lord Dead Man’s Head</i> .
	Dutch: <i>Heer Voldemort</i>	<i>Heer</i> means <i>lord</i> .
<b>Sorting hat</b>	Czech: <i>Moudrý klobouk</i>	From <i>moudrý</i> , which means <i>wise</i> and <i>klobouk</i> ,

		which means <i>hat</i> . Literally “wise hat”.
	Italian: <i>Cappello Parlante</i>	The literal translation is “talking hat”
	Romanian: <i>Jobenul Magic</i>	The literal translation is “magic hat”.

Table 2: Neologisms in Translation (harrypotter.fandom.com)

The neologism *muggle* is reported using a word with a similar assonance in most of the languages. However, both in Italian (*babbano*) and Brazilian Portuguese (*trouxa*) the neologism is translated using a word which means , while in Romanian the word used to translate *muggle* is an archaic form of *ignorant*. The second neologism, *quidditch*, was translated into Croatian (*Metloboj*), Brazilian Portuguese (*Quadribol*) and Slovak (*Metrobal*) using terms that contain the word *ball* in them. These translations are acceptable, since according to Prené (2012: 24): “The word *Quidditch* seems to be a mixture of the names for the balls that are used in this wizard sport played on brooms, which are quaffle, bludger and snitch”. The beverage *butterbeer* was translated literally in Italian (*burrobirra*). In the Romanian translation, the non-alcoholic characteristic of the beverage is stressed, calling it *berezzero* (literally zero beer). The Swedish translator translated *butterbeer* as *honey-beer*. The Romanian translation of the name of Harry Potter’s worst enemy, Voldemort, is different from the other translations in which the original name was kept, or one with a similar assonance was used. Romanian translator decided to change Lord Voldemort’s name into *Lord Cap-De-Mort*, which literally means *dead man’s head*. Finally, the *sorting hat* is translated differently from the original version in Czech (*moudrý klobouk*), Italian (*cappello parlante*) and Romanian (*jobenul magic*), respectively translated as *wise hat*, *talking hat* and *magic hat*. The name of the prison of Azkaban was kept original in all the translations. *Gryffindor* and *Slytherin* are not present in the table above, because in chapter 3.1 a more detailed analysis of the translations of the Hogwarts houses will be carried out.

After having analysed the language, the neologisms and their translations in the *Harry Potter* book series, the next chapter will present the challenges in translating the book series in various languages.

### **3. Translating the *Harry Potter* book series: analysis of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets***

The initial part of the chapter will focus on the challenges in translating the *Harry Potter* book series, focusing on the translation of proper names. The names of the characters, the locations and Hogwarts houses will be analysed and compared to some of the translations in which changes were made. The second part of the chapter will focus on the reasons behind the choice to adapt the *Harry Potter* book series for the American audience. In particular, the differences between the original and the American adaptation of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* will be highlighted. The last part of the chapter will discuss the Italian translations of the *Harry Potter* book series, explaining why it was chosen to publish a new edition of the translation and analysing the changes made between the first and the second Italian translation of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*.

#### **3.1. Challenges in translating the *Harry Potter* book series**

Given that the *Harry Potter* saga had a strong impact on the world of children's literature from the very beginning, whoever bought the rights to translate J. K. Rowling novels had to start a race to get it translated and published as soon as possible. The *Harry Potter* book series translation have become a real business that has yielded and still nowadays yields good profits to the parties involved.

Each translation of the *Harry Potter* book series differs from the original edition, written by J.K. Rowling in English. The various translators of the *Harry Potter* book series did not have to follow specific guidelines. This is the reason why the names of the characters and the location can be different depending on the language the book is translated in. Lathey (2005: 143) states: “Translators make decisions and choices on a word-by-word basis that affect the conveyance of the tone, cultural nuances, and style of the original”. Thus, the translator has the last word. The translators’ aim, when deciding to adapt the names of the characters and of the locations, is to make the text more suitable for the target-text readers by evoking the same associations experienced by the source-text readers.

### 3.1.1. Translating proper names

Translating proper names in children's fantasy literature is not an easy task, given the fact that names have the purpose to convey messages directly to the readers in literary works. Fernandes (2006) points out what was observed by Marmaridou (1991): "Names can function to convey semantic, social semiotic and sound symbolic meaning(s) directly from the writer to the reader in relation to, for instance, a character, place, or object being referred to in the narrative" (Marmaridou, 1991; p. 88 in Fernandes, 2006; p. 46). Fernandes continues by examining the semantic and the semiotic meanings mentioned above. The semantic meaning of a name implies that it is used to describe a specific quality of the character's personality. In addition, the name may help to guess what the destiny of a character will be. Hence, the semantic meaning of the characters names plays an important role in children's literature. As a consequence, when translating semantically loaded names, it is crucial to preserve their original meaning by adapting them to the target language background knowledge (Fernandes, 2006).

Fernandes continues by defining the semiotic meaning: "Names in many cultures act as signs, generating ancient or more recent historical associations [...], indicating gender [...], class [...], nationality [...], religious identity [...] and so on" (Fernandes, 2006).

According to Tymoczko, the semiotic significance, which is often related to culture, might be difficult to translate due to the challenges occurring when translating cultural patterns. However, this is not always true, since many of the names conveying semiotic meaning belong to international characters (Tymoczko, 1999 in Fernandes, 2006: 224).

Rowling made a large use of puns, connotation, acronyms, and other devices to deliver information and humour to the reader. This choice of the author obliged translators to choose between two paths: whether to leave the names as they are in the original version, allowing readers from all over the world to participate in the global conversation about *Harry Potter*, or to change them into more comprehensible names for the target audience. The latter option would make it easier for the readers to relate to the characters depicted, who will be represented as more similar to the readers' culture. However, changing the original names could make the series lose its Britishness. As a result, most translators of the series followed a mix of the two approaches (Diment, 2018).

Valero Garcés (2003) explains the different degrees of adaptation when translating proper names and gives some examples regarding the translation of Harry Potter books. The first technique is the substitution of an equivalent name in the corresponding language. Its aim is to maintain the implicit meanings. In the Italian translation *Cornelius Fudge* (the Minister for Magic) becomes *Cornelius Caramell*. For the Italian readers the message conveyed is that this man is sweet, since the surname refers to something sweet. However, the Italian translator (Marina Astrologo) stopped ahead to the first definition of the word *fudge*, without considering its other meaning. According to the Oxford Dictionary *fudge* means: “A way of dealing with a situation that does not really solve the problems but is intended to appear to do so”. This meaning describes his role of the Minister for Magic who at first did not want to admit that the Dark Lord had returned because he would not know how to deal with that uncomfortable situation. In addition, *Professor Snape*, becoming *Professor Piton* in the Italian version, producing the same associations as the English version. In fact, both surnames make the reader think of the words *snake* and *pitone* (meaning *python*) (Garcés, 2003).

The second technique is to use names, whose sound is more familiar to the Target Language readers, even though they may not produce specific associations. Examples are the translation in Portuguese of *Bill* and *Charlie*, becoming *Gui e Carlinhos* and *Peeves* which is translated as *Pirraça* (Garcés, 2003). In the specific case of the translation of *Peeves*, the name is derived from the word *peeve* which according to the Collins Dictionary means: “Something that irritates; vexation”. The Portuguese word *pirraça* has a similar meaning, again according to the Collins dictionary the word indicates a spiteful thing. Hence, the Portuguese translator decided to use a quite literal translation for this word.

The third technique consists in using names that preserve the metaphorical meaning or the allusions produced in the original text, and also that produce the phonological effects, such as alliteration, that the name produces in English. The Catalan, Italian and Portuguese translators have successfully produced humorous translations. For instance, the transposition of *Moaning Myrtle* was not an easy task. Both Catalan and Italian translators maintained both the meaning of name and the appellative with alliteration. In Catalan the name becomes *Gemma Gemec* and in Italian it is translated as *Mirtilla Malcontenta*. By doing so, they aimed to produce a similar effect on the Target Language



readers as the one Rowling produced in the English ones (Garcés, 2003). Likewise, in the Italian translation of Filch's cat, *Mrs. Norris*, which becomes *Mrs. Purr*, the name was changed into one that evokes association to the sound produced by cats (Garcés, 2003).

The names of the Golden Trio, the main characters of the series, (*Harry Potter*, *Hermione Granger* and *Ronald Weasley*) were not changed in any of the translations, the adjustments made have had the only purpose to help the readability in languages which, for example, present a different alphabet from the Latin one (e.g., Russian, Greek, Ukrainian, Serbian). Helping the readability of certain names is crucial because names which are too foreign sounding may be an obstacle for foreign readers (Fernandes, 2006).

The most significant changes were made in the secondary characters' names. Before presenting some of the names of characters which were changed in other languages, it is appropriate to make an analysis of the original ones. The names taken into analysis will be: *Albus Dumbledore*, *Minerva McGonagall*, *Severus Snape* and *Neville Longbottom*. The first name to analyse is *Albus Dumbledore*, the headmaster of Hogwarts: *Albus* means "white" in Latin, while *Dumbledore* derives from the ancient English word "bumblebee", which is a type of bee (Shamsian, 2018). *Minerva McGonagall* is one of the most important professors at Hogwarts and the head of Gryffindor house: *Minerva* is connected to Athena, the goddess of justice and wisdom, values that also belong to Professor McGonagall. Her surname is referred to William McGonagall, who is considered to be the worst poet in the British history. Rowling stated (on the blog Pottermore) that she founded it amusing to associate such a brilliant woman with her opposite (Shamsian, 2018). *Severus Snape* is Potion Master at Hogwarts and the head of Slytherin House: according to [wizardingworld.com](http://wizardingworld.com) the name *Severus* derives from Latin and it means "stern" or "harsh". The last name *Snape*, not only reminds of the word *snake*, but it seems to have its roots in the Old Norse word "sneypa", which has three meanings "to outrage, dishonour, disgrace". *Neville Longbottom* is a young wizard, sorted into Gryffindor house: the name *Neville* derives from a Norman French word meaning "new town", whilst according to [www.surnamedb.com](http://www.surnamedb.com), the surname *Longbottom* has an Anglo-Saxon origin and indicates someone who lives in a long valley.

In *Table 3*, some of the main secondary characters, whose names were changed with the purpose of describing more appropriately their personalities, are listed.

<b>ORIGINAL NAME</b>	<b>TRANSLATED NAME</b>	<b>ORIGIN OF THE TRANSLATION</b>
<b>Albus Dumbledore</b>	Italian: <i>Albus Silente</i>	From <i>silente</i> , which means “silent”, as a reference to his quietness.
	Portuguese (Brazil): <i>Alvo Dumbledore</i>	From <i>alvo</i> , “white, shiny, clean”.
	Dutch: <i>Albus Perkamentus</i>	From <i>perkament</i> , which means “parchment”.
<b>Minerva McGonagall</b>	Italian: <i>Minerva McGranitt</i>	From <i>granito</i> , “granite” is a reference to her strictness.
	Dutch: <i>Minerva Anderling</i>	From <i>anders</i> meaning “different”.
	Finnish: <i>Minerva McGarmiwa</i>	From <i>karmiva</i> , meaning “spine-chilling”.
<b>Severus Snape</b>	Italian: <i>Severus Piton</i>	From <i>pitone</i> , “python”.
	Finnish: <i>Severus Kalkaros</i>	<i>Kalkaro</i> is an old-style term for “rattlesnake”.
	French: <i>Severus Rogue</i>	From <i>rogue</i> , “arrogant”.

<b>Neville Longbottom</b>	Italian: <i>Neville Paciock</i>	From <i>pacioccone</i> : “chubby, fat”.
	Dutch: <i>Marcel Lubbermans</i>	From <i>lubber</i> , “slacken” and <i>mans</i> , “male”.
	Lithuanian: <i>Nevilis Nevėkšla</i>	The surname means “clumsy”.

Table 3: Analysis of the Translated Names of the Characters in Harry Potter (harrypotter.fandom.com)

### 3.1.2. Translating locations names in *Harry Potter*

The same techniques used to translate the names of the characters were used to translate the names of the locations in *Harry Potter*. There are few names of locations, which did not need major changes because otherwise they would have lost their British characteristic. For example, the name of *Platform 9¾* at the King’s Cross train station, from where the train to Hogwarts departs, was translated rendering it literally in every language, except for Portuguese in which it became *Plataforma Nove e Meia*, which means Platform Nine and a Half (Garcés, 2003). In the Italian translation *platform* becomes *binario*, leaving the original meaning of the word unchanged.

*Table 4* will focus on some names of locations in *Harry Potter*, which were changed in translation. Three of the most important in the story *Hogwarts*, *Diagon Alley* and *Privet Drive*. *Hogwarts* is the short name of *Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry*, attended by Harry Potter and where most of the narration takes place. Porck (2021) states that the etymology of the name *Hogwarts* is unknown. Its origins links to pigs, given the prefix “hog-”. However, J.K. Rowling believes she was unconsciously inspired by the name *hogwort*, which is a plant (Porck, 2021). *Diagon Alley* is the name of a secret street in London where wizards and witches can buy every sort of product. In *Diagon Alley* Harry Potter, with the help of Rubeus Hagrid, bought all his supplies for Hogwarts in the

first volume. According to [languagerealm.com](http://languagerealm.com), the word *diagonal* derives from the Latin *diagonalis*, meaning from angle to angle. *Alley* comes from Old French *alee*, which means walking or passage. Finally, *Privet Drive* is the name of the street where Harry Potter lived with the Dursleys, his only living relatives, until he was admitted to Hogwarts. Anatol states: “It designates [...] a streetway which are typically British, but it may also bring to one's mind the idea of privacy and normality on which the Dursleys are so keen” (Anatol, 2003 in Mulliez, 2009). The name is correlated to both *private* and *privy*, alluding to Dursley’s obsession with privacy (Mulliez, 2009).

ORIGINAL NAME	TRANSLATED NAME	ORIGIN OF THE TRANSLATION
<b>Hogwarts</b>	French: <i>Poudlard</i>	From Poux de lard, “hog's lice”.
	Hungarian: <i>Roxfort</i>	From Roquefort and Oxford.
	Czech: <i>Bradavice</i>	Literal translation of Hogwarts.
<b>Diagon Alley</b>	Hungarian: <i>Abszol út</i>	Written in one word means absolute; “út” means road.
	Dutch: <i>de Wegisweg</i>	The translation is “The road is gone” or “gone is gone”.
	French: <i>Chemin de Traverse</i>	The translation is “crossroad” or “side street”.
<b>Privet Drive</b>	Czech: <i>Zobí ulice</i>	Literally “Seedy Street”.
	Dutch: <i>Ligusterlaan</i>	Literally “Privet Avenue”.
	German: <i>Ligusterweg</i>	Liguster: privet, a bush, genus Ligustrum, used for hedges.

Table 4: Analysis of the Translated Names of Locations in Harry Potter ([harrypotter.fandom.com](http://harrypotter.fandom.com))

### 3.1.3. Translating the names of Hogwarts houses

Another important element to analyse are the names of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry's four houses: *Gryffindor*, *Hufflepuff*, *Ravenclaw*, and *Slytherin*. The founders of the houses inspired their names. *Gryffindor* was named after Godric Gryffindor, its colours are red and gold and a lion represents the house. It is the house in which Harry Potter and his friends were sorted; *Hufflepuff*'s house was founded by Helga Hufflepuff, its colours are yellow and black and it is represented by a badger; *Ravenclaw* was founded by Rowena Ravenclaw, its colours are blue and bronze and an eagle represents the house; *Slytherin*'s name comes from Salazar Slytherin, its colours are green and silver and it is represented by a snake. This is Lord Voldemort's house.

In *Table 5* distinctive behavioural traits of each house will be presented.

Hogwarts House	Values
Gryffindor	Bravery, helping others, and chivalry.
Hufflepuff	Hard work, patience, loyalty, and fair play.
Ravenclaw	Intelligence, knowledge, planning ahead, and wit.
Slytherin	Ambition, cunningness, heritage, and resourcefulness.

Table 5: Distinctive Behavioural Traits of the Hogwarts Houses (Jakob, 2019)

Translators decided to make some changes to the names of Hogwarts houses in order to make them more suitable for the Target Language readers.

In *Table 6* some of the translations of the Hogwarts houses are presented:

English	Italian	Portuguese	French
<b>Gryffindor</b>	Griffondoro	Grifonória	Gryffondor
<b>Hufflepuff</b>	Tassorosso	Lufa-Lufa	Poufsouffle
<b>Ravenclaw</b>	Corvonero	Corvinal	Serdaigle
<b>Slytherin</b>	Serpeverde	Sonserina	Serpentard

Table 6: Translations of the Hogwarts's Houses Names into Italian, Portuguese and French (Garcés, 2003)

Minor changes were made to the word *Gryffindor* in Italian (*Griffondoro*), Portuguese (*Grifonória*) and French (*Gryffondor*). The name *Hufflepuff* was completely changed in Italian (*Tassorosso*), Portuguese (*Lufa-Lufa*) and French (*Poufsouffle*), although translators tried to keep the assonance between the two parts of the word. The Italian translation of *Hufflepuff*, *Tassorosso* (*tasso* means *badger*, while *rosso* means *red*) has a significance since the badger is the emblem animal of the house and red is its colour. The same cannot be said for the Portuguese translation of *Hufflepuff*, *Lufa-Lufa*, which is an invented word. In Italian and Portuguese, the *raven-* of *Ravenclaw* was translated literally as *corvo* and *corvinal*. The house of *Slytherin* which derives from the verb “to slither”, indicating the way snake move, in Italian (*Serpeverde*) and French (*Serpentand*) was translated alluding to the word *snake*, which is the emblem animal of this house (Garcés, 2003).

### **3.2. *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*: comparison between the original and the American edition**

English is considered a global language, a sign of globalization, diversification, progress and identity. Crystal (2003; p. 3) states: “A language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country”. In order to achieve this ‘special role’ the language must play an important role in a number of countries in which the mother-tongue speakers of that language are a minority. There are two ways in order to do so: making that language one of the official languages of a country, where it will be considered as a ‘second language’ (English language is an official language in more than seventy countries). The second way is to make the teaching of that language in schools as a foreign language mandatory (English language is taught as a foreign language in more than one hundred countries, making it the most widely taught one) (Crystal, 2003). The countries where English language is spoken as a mother-tongue are UK, USA, Canada, Ireland, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and many Caribbean countries (Crystal, 2003).

As mentioned above, *Harry Potter* novels were translated in various languages, but few people know that they were adapted into American English by Arthur A. Levine and published in the United States by the publishing house *Scholastic*. As mentioned by

Eastwood (2010; p. 1) Arthur A. Levine modified the original version of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* in order to make the text more comprehensible to the American audience. Eastwood defines this intralingual translation as a 'fantastic failure'. The purpose of this choice was to give a literary experience to the American target audience, similar to the one experienced by the British audience. He managed to do this by modifying the syntax and diction of the novels (Eastwood, 2010). The reason behind this decision is not clear, though. Editing a text which is understandable for an audience whose mother-tongue is English might seem unreasonable. "The rationalization behind the American translation of the text suggests that American English seeks to represent itself as a universally accessible language, one with the authority to impose itself upon other Englishes and yet which operates under a guise of neutrality" (Eastwood, 2010; p. 5).

In *Harry Potter* the strong presence of British elements is visible all over the series of books. The effect of translating British terms to American English makes the series lose its 'magic' and its characteristic footprint (Eastwood, 2010). This desire to 'Americanise' the novel is clear since the release of the first novel, whose title was changed from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* to *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. According to Anelli (2011), Levine wanted to modify the title of the first novel because he believed that the American audience would think about *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* as a book on philosophy. He proposed to change it to *Harry Potter and the School of Magic*, but Rowling disagreed and came up with *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. The author later confessed that she regretted this change of the title, because of the important story behind the philosopher's stone (Anelli, 2011). No other titles of the *Harry Potter's* saga were changed after the first one, but still it was the first sign of the perceived need to adapt the novel to the American audience.

In *Table 7*, the differences between the original edition of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1998, *Bloomsbury*) and the one edited for the American audience by Arthur A. Levine (1999, *Scholastic*) will be highlighted. The analysis was conducted by examining chapter by chapter the two editions of the novel and scouting out the differences.

<b>ORIGINAL TEXT</b> (J.K. Rowling, <i>Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets</i> ; 1998. Bloomsbury)	<b>AMERICAN ENGLISH TEXT</b> (J.K. Rowling, <i>Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets</i> ; Edited by Arthur A. Levine; 1999. Scholastic)
<b>Chapter 1: The worst birthday</b>	
Top-of-the-range	Top-of-the-line
Fortnight	Two weeks
Joint	Loin
<b>Chapter 2: Dobby's warning</b>	
Was hard-done-by	Had it bad
Completely at the sea	Completely lost
Wardrobe	Closet
Tinned soup	Canned soup
<b>Chapter 3: The Burrow</b>	
"Bit rich coming from you."	"You should talk."
Wound down	Rolled down
Windscreen	Windshield
Wellington boots	Rubber boots
Father Christmas	Santa Claus
<b>Chapter 4: At Flourish and Blotts</b>	
Tank top	Sweater vest
Holiday	Vacation
Pulled the doors to	Pulled the doors closed
An apothecary's	An apothecary
Wonky	Lopsided
<b>Chapter 5: The Whomping Willow</b>	
Cockcrow	Dawn
Boot	Trunk
Bonnet	Hood
Good on you	Good for you
<b>Chapter 6: Gilderoy Lockhart</b>	
Timetables	Schedules



Can't say fairer	Can't do better
Waste bin	Waste basket
Candelabra	Iron chandelier
<b>Chapter 7: Mudbloods and Murmurs</b>	
It's mad	It's ridiculous
Treacle toffee	Treacle fudge
Shift the slime	Get the slime off
<b>Chapter 8: The Deathday Party</b>	
Peaky	Pale
Jump-jets	Missiles
He's got flu	He's got the flu
Go to the loo	Have a pee
Hadn't got	Haven't got
<b>Chapter 9: The Writing on the Wall</b>	
Nutter	Maniac
Cistern	Tank
<b>Chapter 10: The Rogue Bludger</b>	
Prised	Wrenched
Prised open	Opened
<b>Chapter 11: The Duelling Club</b>	
<b>Chapter 12: The Polyjuice Potion</b>	
Much the most difficult bit	By far the hardest part
Cupboard	Closet
Treacle-thick	Glutinous
Gormless	Clueless
<b>Chapter 13: The Very Secret Diary</b>	
Newsagent's	Variety store
<b>Chapter 14: Cornelius Fudge</b>	
Grass on Hagrid	Squeal on Hagrid
Rubbish	Lousy
<b>Chapter 15: Aragog</b>	

They went, crocodile fashion	They marched
A second later, Harry spotted something that made him hit Ron over the hand with his pruning shears.	A second later, Harry spotted something. Several large spiders were scuttling over the ground on the other side of the glass, moving in an unnaturally straight line as though taking the shortest route to a prearranged meeting. Harry hit Ron over the hand with his pruning shears.
Harry was pointing at the ground a few feet away. Several large spiders were scurrying across the earth.	Harry pointed out the spiders, following their progress with his eyes screwed up against the sun.
Harry watched the spiders running away.	Harry's eyes narrowed as he focused on the spiders. If they pursued their fixed course, there could be no doubt about where they would end up.
Hatching Aragog out in	Hatching Aragog in
<b>Chapter 16: The Chamber of Secrets</b>	
Revising	Studying
<b>Chapter 17: The Heir of Slytherin</b>	
Monkey-like	Monkeyish
<b>Chapter 18: Dobby's Reward</b>	
Straight away	Right away
Mr Malfoy almost knocked Harry over as he swept into the room. Dobby went scurrying in after him, crouching at the hem of his cloak, a look of abject terror on his face.  'So!' said Lucius Malfoy, his cold eyes fixed on Dumbledore. 'You've come back. The governors suspended you, but you still saw fit to return to Hogwarts.'	Mr. Malfoy almost knocked Harry over as he swept into the room. Dobby went scurrying in after him, crouching at the hem of his cloak, a look of abject terror on his face.  The elf was carrying a stained rag with which he was attempting to finish cleaning Mr. Malfoy's shoes. Apparently Mr. Malfoy had set out in a great hurry, for not only were his shoes half-polished, but his

	<p>usually sleek hair was dishevelled. Ignoring the elf bobbing apologetically around his ankles, he fixed his cold eyes upon Dumbledore.</p> <p>“So!” he said “You’ve come back. The governors suspended you, but you still saw fit to return to Hogwarts.”</p>
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Table 7: Differences Between *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* Original Version and *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* Edited by Arthur A. Levine

As can be observed in *Table 7*, most of the changes involved small words and phrases in order to suit them to the American audience, some examples are: ‘wardrobe’ which became ‘closet’ in the version edited by A. Levine; ‘tinned souped’ changed into ‘canned soup’; ‘tank top’ turned into ‘sweater vest’; ‘holiday’ changed into ‘vacation’; ‘treacle toffee’ became ‘treacle fudge’, etc. Although these elements are not important for the storyline, their change affects the British setting of the novel.

The American adapted version of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* presents not only minor changes to the words, but also additions to the original novel. In particular, two important passages were modified. The first one is in the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter, entitled *Aragog*. Harry Potter and Ron Weasley go to the Dark Forest to meet Aragog, a giant spider friend of Hagrid’s, in order to have some information about the Chamber of Secrets. After talking to the boys, Aragog decides to attack them with an army of large spiders. This passage is briefly described in the original, Levine instead decided to extend the scene by adding a more detailed description of what the spiders were doing and Harry and Ron’s reaction. In the final chapter, entitled *Dobby’s Reward*, Mr. Malfoy together with his elf Dobby comes to Dumbledore’s office and there they find Harry. Levine added a part of text in which Dobby’s slavery is emphasized, describing how he was attempting to finish polishing Mr. Malfoy’s shoes. In addition, Levine added a description of Mr. Malfoy’s unusual appearance, as if he was in a great hurry. The reason behind the choice to add a part of text is not clear, since this addition does not have the purpose of making the novel more comprehensible to the American audience.

### **3.3. Differences between the first and the second edition of the *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* Italian translation**

#### **3.3.1. The decision to rewrite the Italian translation of the *Harry Potter* book series**

The first Italian edition of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* was published in 1998, a year after the publication of the original edition. The Italian edition of the *Harry Potter* saga was released by the Italian publishing house *Salani Editore*. Marina Astrologo translated the first two books and Beatrice Masini translated the following five ones.

The translators of the *Harry Potter* saga had the task of translating each book singularly, without knowing what is going to happen in the following books. The mystery surrounding the story represented a problem for the translation in Italian, especially when it came to translating the names of the characters. Marina Astrologo chose to “rename” some of the characters in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, in order to express their personality through their names and surnames. In chapter 3.1.1., *Table 4* presents five of the names of the characters changed in the Italian translation of *Harry Potter: Albus Dumbledore* is translated as *Albus Silente* (the translation refers to the quiet personality of the Master of Hogwarts), *Minerva McGonagall* becomes *Minerva McGranitt* in the Italian translation (the translation alludes to the fact that Professor McGonagall is a strict person), *Severus Snape* is translated as *Severus Piton* (the translation is a reference to the word *python*, the image of the snake alludes to the symbol of the house of Slytherin, to which Professor Snape belongs), *Neville Longbottom* was changed into *Neville Paciock* (the translation's origin is from the word *pacioccone* which describes a chubby person with a jovial and good-natured character). The last book of the series was published in 2007, completing the story and answering most of the questions that had arisen over the years. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* can be considered the last piece of a giant puzzle. With the release of the latest book, the translators had the opportunity to know the work in its totality. It was in this exact moment that, certain choices of translation are being questioned and others are being confirmed. As a result, Italian translators decided to edit the translation made previously. This choice was justified by Stefano Bertezzaghi, the editor of the new translation, who stated on the official website of *Salani Editore*:

“Sono stato un appassionato di Harry Potter già dalla prima ora, lo sono stato fino all’ultima pagina. All’inizio sembrava una bellissima storia per ragazzi; alla fine del settimo volume, era un’opera diversa, i cui personaggi erano cresciuti assieme ai loro lettori. Neville Paciock era il nome giusto per il ragazzino pasticciere dell’inizio, non certo per il coraggioso eroe del settimo volume, nonché futuro professore di Erborologia... Fare questi cambiamenti mi è perciò parso come restituire al testo qualcosa che gli era dovuto.”

Stefano Bertezzaghi

“I was a Harry Potter fan from the very first hour, I was a fan until the last page. At the beginning, it seemed like a beautiful children's story; by the end of the seventh volume, it was a different work, whose characters had grown up with their readers. Neville Paciock (ed: Neville Longbottom) was the right name for the bungling boy at the beginning, not for the brave hero of the seventh volume, and future professor of Herbology... Thus, making these changes felt like giving the text back something it was due.”

### 3.3.2. Differences between the first and the second edition of the Italian translation of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*

In *Table 8*, the differences between the first Italian edition of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (*Harry Potter e la Camera dei Segreti*) and the second one are presented.

<b>ORIGINAL VERSION (J.K. Rowling, <i>Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets</i>, Bloomsbury 1998)</b>	<b>FIRST TRANSLATION IN ITALIAN (J.K. Rowling, <i>Harry Potter e la Camera dei Segreti</i>, Salani Editore 1999)</b>	<b>SECOND TRANSLATION IN ITALIAN (J.K. Rowling, <i>Harry Potter e la Camera dei Segreti</i>, Edited by Stefano Bertezzaghi. Salani Editore 2020)</b>
<b>Chapter 1: The Worst Birthday</b>	<b>Capitolo 1: Il Peggior Compleanno</b>	
Smeltings	Snobkin	Smeltings
<b>Chapter 2: Dobby’s Warning</b>	<b>Capitolo 2: L’Avvertimento di Dobby</b>	
<b>Chapter 3: The Burrow</b>	<b>Capitolo 3: La Tana</b>	

Gilderoy Lockhart	Gilderoy Allock	Gilderoy Lockhart
<b>Chapter 4: At Flourish and Blotts</b>	<b>Capitolo 4: Alla libreria Il Ghirigoro</b>	<b>Capitolo 4: Al Ghirigoro</b>
At Flourish and Blotts	Alla libreria Il Ghirigoro	Al Ghirigoro
The ghoul in the attic	Lo spiritello della soffitta	Il ghoul in soffitta
Miranda Goshawk	Miranda Gadula	Miranda Goshawk
<i>Break with a Banshee</i>	<i>A Merenda con la Morte</i>	<i>A Banchetto con la Banshee</i>
<i>Gadding with Ghouls</i>	<i>A Spasso con gli Spiriti</i>	<i>A Spasso con lo Spettro</i>
<i>Holidays with Hags</i>	<i>In Vacanza con le Streghe</i>	<i>Footing con la Fattucchiera</i>
<i>Travel with Trolls</i>	<i>Trekking con i Troll</i>	<i>Trekking con il Troll</i>
<i>Voyages with Vampires</i>	<i>In Viaggio con i Vampiri</i>	<i>In Viaggio con il Vampiro</i>
<i>Wanderings with Werewolves</i>	<i>A Passeggio con i Lupi Mannari</i>	<i>Luna di Miele con il Lupo Mannaro</i>
<i>Year with a Yeti</i>	<i>Un Anno con lo Yeti</i>	<i>Un Inverno con lo Yeti</i>
Borgin & Burke	Magie Sinister	Borgin & Burke
Three large strawberry and peanut-butter ice-creams	Tre grossi gelati alla fragola e al burro di noccioline	Tre grossi gelati alla fragola e al burro di arachidi
In Gambol & Jape Wizarding Joke Shop	Nella bottega di Scherzi Da Maghi	Nella bottega Gambol & Jape: Scherzi Da Maghi
<b>Chapter 5: The Whomping Willow</b>	<b>Capitolo 5: Il Platano Picchiatore</b>	<b>Capitolo 5: Il Salice Schiaffeggiante</b>
The Whomping Willow	Il Platano Picchiatore	Il Salice Schiaffeggiante
Hogwarts Express	L'Espresso per/di Hogwarts	Hogwarts Express
Professor McGonagall	Professoressa McGranitt	Professoressa McGonagall
Hufflepuff	Tassorosso	Tassofrasso
Neville Longbottom	Neville Paciock	Neville Longbottom

<b>Chapter 6: Gilderoy Lockhart</b>	<b>Capitolo 6: Gilderoy Allock</b>	<b>Capitolo 6: Gilderoy Lockhart</b>
Professor Sprout	Professoressa Sprite	Professoressa Sprout
Colin Creevey	Colin Canon	Colin Creevey
Crabbe & Goyle	Tiger & Goyle	Crabbe & Goyle
<b>Chapter 7: Mudbloods and Murmurs</b>	<b>Capitolo 7: Mezzosangue e Mezzevoci</b>	<b>Capitolo 7: Sussuri e Sanguemarcio</b>
Mudblood	Mezzosangue	Sanguemarcio
Professor Flitwick	Professor Vitious	Professor Flitwick
Oliver Wood	Oliver Baston	Oliver Wood
Marcus Flint	Marcus Flitt	Marcus Flint
Fang	Thor	Zanna
Argus Filch	Gazza	Argus Filch
<b>Chapter 8: The Deathday Party</b>	<b>Capitolo 8: La Festa di Complemorte</b>	
Madame Pomfrey	Madama Chips	Madame Pomfrey
Her Pepperup Potion	Il suo decotto Tiramisù	La sua Pozione Peperina
Mrs Norris	Mrs Purr	Mrs Norris
Sir Properly Decapitated-Podmore	Sir Decapitato-a-Puntino Podmore	Sir Decapitato-per-Bene Podmore
Peeves	Pix	Peeves
Madam Z. Nettles of Topsham	Signora Z. Ortica di Topsham	Signora Z. Nettles di Topsham
<b>Chapter 9: The Writing on the Wall</b>	<b>Capitolo 9: La Scritta sul Muro</b>	
Professor Binns	Professor Rùf	Professor Binns
Helga Hufflepuff	Tosca Tassorosso	Tosca Tassofrasso
Rowena Ravenclaw	Priscilla Corvonero	Corinna Corvonero
Parvati Patil	Calì Patil	Parvati Patil
<b>Chapter 10: The Rogue Bladger</b>	<b>Capitolo 10: Il Bolide Fellone</b>	<b>Capitolo 10: Il Bolide Pirata</b>

Gadding with Ghouls	A Spasso con gli Spiriti	A Spasso con lo Spettro
Madame Hooch	Madama Bumb	Madame Hooch
<b>Chapter 11: The Dueling Club</b>	<b>Capitolo 11: Il Club dei Duellanti</b>	
Swelling Solution	Soluzione Dilatante	Decotto Dilatante
<b>Chapter 12: The Polyjuice Potion</b>	<b>Capitolo 12: La Pozione Polisucco</b>	
<b>Chapter 13: The Very Secret Diary</b>	<b>Capitolo 13: Il Diario Segretissimo</b>	
Fawkes the phoenix	Fenice Funny	Fawkes, la fenice
<b>Chapter 14: Cornelius Fudge</b>	<b>Capitolo 14: Cornelius Caramell</b>	<b>Capitolo 14: Cornelius Fudge</b>
Cornelius Fudge	Cornelius Caramell	Cornelius Fudge
<b>Chapter 15: Aragog</b>	<b>Capitolo 15: Aragog</b>	
The Abyssinian Shrivelfigs	Fichi Avvizziti dell'Abissinia	Grinzafichi dell'Abissinia
<b>Chapter 16: The Chamber of Secrets</b>	<b>Capitolo 16: La Camera dei Segreti</b>	
Pipes	Tubazioni	Tubature
<b>Chapter 17: The Heir of Slytherin</b>	<b>Capitolo 17: L'Erede di Serpeverde</b>	
Tom Marvolo Riddle	Tom Orvoloson Riddle	Tom Marvolo Riddle
I am Lord Voldemort	Son io Lord Voldemort	I am Lord Voldemort
<b>Chapter 18: Dobby's Reward</b>	<b>Capitolo 18: Un premio per Dobby</b>	

Table 8: Differences Between the First and the Second Edition of the Italian Translation of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*

The editor Stefano Bertezzaghi stated that he had to choose among three options: restore the name to its original, keep the translation made previously or modify the translation made previously; since choosing on option suitable for all cases was impossible, he decided to analyse the words on a case-by-case basis and then choose the best solution to



adopt. As it can be observed in *Table 8*, the changes occurring in the text principally concern the names of the characters. *Neville Paciock*, *Minerva McGranitt*, *Gilderoy Allock*, *Pomona Sprite*, *Colin Canon*, *Oliver Baston*, *Tiger*, *Filius Vitious*, *Cornelius Caramell*, *Rolanda Bumb*, *Poppy Chips*, *Argus Gazza*, *Thor*, *Marcus Flitt*, *Mrs. Purr*, *Pix*, *Cuthbert Rūf*, *Funny*, *Cali Patil*, *Priscilla Corvonero*, *Tosca Tassorosso* and *Tom Orvoloson Riddle*: these are the characters, whose names have been restored to the original in the second Italian translation. However, some characters kept the translation of their names (e.g. *Albus Silente* and *Severus Piton*). Bertezzaghi explained why he did not decide to restore *Albus*'s name to its original (*Albus Dumbledore*):

“Al momento di scegliere il cognome italiano, che era parso adeguato per un mago bizzarro ma anche solenne e capace di tenere in soggezione i suoi nemici, non si sapeva quello che J.K. Rowling avrebbe poi dichiarato: «Lo immaginavo come un mago benevolo, sempre in movimento, che mormora continuamente tra sé e sé.»; *dumbledore*, in inglese, è il nome arcaico di *bumblebee*, il calabrone. Altro che ‘*Silente*’! Eppure, la storia dimostrerà che proprio i silenzi di Albus hanno avuto un ruolo determinante, e anche negativo, nelle avventure di Harry Potter e nella lotta contro la magia oscura.”

Stefano Bertezzaghi

“At the time of choosing the Italian surname (ed. *Silente*), which seemed appropriate for a wizard who was bizarre but also solemn and capable of keeping his enemies in subjection, no one knew what J.K. Rowling would later say: "I imagined him as a benevolent wizard, always on the move, constantly muttering to himself"; *dumbledore*, in English, is the archaic name for the bumblebee. Definitely not ‘*Silente*’! And yet, the story will show that Albus's own silences played a decisive, and even negative, role in Harry Potter's adventures and the fight against Dark Magic.” (Bertezzaghi in Rowling, 2020; p. 8).

For years, an important mistake of translation made in the first Italian edition of *Harry Potter* was debated: the translation of *Pureblood*, *Half-blood* and *Mudblood*. In chapter 2.1. there is a brief explanation of the differences between these three categories. It is unclear why Marina Astrologo decided to translate *Mudblood* as *Mezzosangue*, probably this mistranslation can be attributed to the fact that at the time she did not acknowledge the importance of these three categories for the plot. Even though the mistake was corrected in the second Italian edition of the books, it is still a significant error because it has confused the Italian audience. As a matter of fact, this mistranslation was kept when transposing the books into films and, while it is easier to edit and reprint new books

correcting the mistake, it is not as easier to do the same with eight films that had already been dubbed. For the Italian audience who saw the films but did not read the new edition of the books, this mistranslation will be always a mystery.

Additionally, another important change was made in the translation of the names of Hogwarts' houses. In the first edition Italian translators associated colours to the houses: gold for *Gryffindor* (*Griffondoro*), green for *Slytherin* (*Serpeverde*), red for *Hufflepuff* (*Tassorosso*) and black for *Ravenclaw* (*Corvonero*). *Ravenclaw* was initially translated into *Pecoranera*, but it was immediately changed to *Corvonero* in the following reprints of the first edition (indeed, in the films dubbed in Italian we can hear *Corvonero*). However, this colour association is not present in the original names of the houses. This is the reason why, in the second translation, it was decided to change *Tassorosso* into *Tassofrasso*. This way, the phonetic association of *Hufflepuff* is kept in the Italian edition (*ff/ff – ss/ss*), but the translation is more suitable because it does not allude to the colour of the house (Garcés, 2003). However, the translation of *Ravenclaw* (*Corvonero*) was not changed in the second Italian translation, keeping the association with the colour of the house. In conclusion, the choices made by the editors of the Italian translations of the *Harry Potter* book series did not follow a common line, some character names were brought back to the original while a few names were left to the translation initially made by Marina Astrologo. Other terms, such as the translation of *Hufflepuff* and *The Whomping Willow* (which originally was translated as *Il Platano Picchiatore* and became *Il Salice Schiaffeggiante* in the edited Italian version) have been left translated, but were slightly modified to better match the meaning of the original.

In this chapter the challenges in translating the *Harry Potter* book series were analysed, it has been observed that the various translators have used different approaches to translate characters' names, locations and Hogwarts's house name. After that an analysis of the American edition of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* edited by Arthur A. Levine was conducted comparing it to the original text written by J.K. Rowling and highlighting the differences occurred. Many words and phrases were changed in the text edited by Levine, in order to make it more suitable for the American audience. New parts of text were even added. The last section of the chapter investigates the reasons behind the choice to edit the Italian translation written previously by Marina Astrologo for the first two volumes and subsequently by Beatrice Masini for the following five volumes of

the book series. The editors opted to change the text because they felt that, after the publication of the last novel *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, the story was complete and that the fate of all the characters was discovered. Thus, there was the need to do justice to those characters whose names were translated in the Italian version according to their personalities described in the first book, but who showed their true selves as the series went on.

## Conclusion

This dissertation aimed to explore challenges in translating the *Harry Potter* book series, analysing the choices made by the various translators. The translators of children's literature play a crucial role because they are mediators between the author of the source text and the target-language readers and thanks to them children worldwide are able to get access to foreign literature.

The results of the analysis conducted on the language in the *Harry Potter* novels showed that the language complexity increases as the book series continues. This indicates that *Harry Potter* is suitable for a children's audience who grows alongside the characters of the novels, becoming young adults by the end of the last book.

When reading a fantasy book, it is common to find neologisms invented by the author. J.K. Rowling took this concept to another level, bringing the neologisms she invented in *Harry Potter* into use in everyday language. This dissertation showed how these neologisms are used nowadays in everyday language and how they have taken on different meanings, not correlated to the *Harry Potter* book series. In the subsequent examination of the translations of the neologisms in *Harry Potter* can be observed that translators attempted to translate the neologisms by creating new ones in the target language that provoke the same association to the target-language reader as for the source-language reader.

The study conducted on the translations of the proper names in the *Harry Potter* book series showed that the greatest challenges encountered by the translators concern the translation of the names of the secondary characters. The translations investigated in the dissertation demonstrate that translator's aim was to describe the personality of the characters by inventing allusive names.

The names of the locations in *Harry Potter* have been kept original in most of the translations (e.g. in Italian). However, the translators who opted to adapt them used rather literal translations of the locations invented by J.K. Rowling.

The *Harry Potter* book series was translated into a great number of languages (even dialects and dead languages), even the American publishing house *Scholastic* decided to edit and adapt the novels before publishing them for the American audience. The editor

Arthur A. Levine in his adaptation of the second novel of the series *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, besides modifying words and phrases to suit them better to the target audience, also added new parts to the novel. The reason behind this choice is not clear, since it does not have the purpose to make the story more understandable to the target audience.

“One has to have lingered over the text with a microscope to realise the precision with which the author has had the unity of the seven volumes that make up the work in mind right down to the minutiae” (Bertezzaghi in Rowling, 2011; p. 6). The readers of the *Harry Potter* were not able to fully appreciate and understand the novels until after the publication of the seventh and final volume, it is in that moment that all parts of the story connect and the answers to all questions are given. Not only the readers, but also the translators had to wait until the last volume to know the whole story. Each volume of the saga was translated as soon as it was published. This is the reason why Italian translators questioned certain translation choices and decided to rewrite the Italian translation once the book series was finished. For instance, the translation of the names of secondary characters such as *Neville Paciock* (*Neville Longbottom*) and *Minerva McGranitt* (*Minerva McGonagall*) were perfect to describe these characters in the first volume, however in the last volume they proved to be unsuitable to describe their fate at the very end. Hence, it was decided to restore all the names to their original version, except for *Albus Silente* (*Albus Dumbledore*) and *Severus Piton* (*Severus Snape*).

To conclude, this dissertation shows how difficult it is for a translator to understand and be able to convey in translation exactly what the author intends to express. Therefore, translations of the same text could be different depending on the way translators perceive it.

Taking into consideration this dissertation, further studies on the neologisms in the *Harry Potter* book series could be carried out. In addition, the comparison between the original and the American version of *Harry Potter* and the comparison between the first and the second edition of the Italian translations could be made for all the books of the series.

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### Summary in Italian

In questo elaborato vengono esplorate le sfide nella traduzione della saga letteraria di *Harry Potter*. Le scelte fatte da diversi traduttori nella traduzione dei neologismi, dei nomi dei personaggi, dei nomi delle località e dei nomi delle case della scuola di Hogwarts verranno osservate. In questo elaborato inoltre, viene eseguita un'analisi sulla lingua in *Harry Potter*. Infine, prendendo in esame il secondo volume della saga *Harry Potter e la Camera dei Segreti*, vengono fatte due comparazioni: la prima riguarda la ricerca delle differenze tra la versione originale del romanzo e la versione a cura di Arthur A. Levine adattata al pubblico statunitense. La seconda comparazione tratta delle differenze tra la prima e la seconda traduzione italiana del romanzo a cura di Stefano Bertezzagli, spiegando i motivi dietro alla revisione della traduzione italiana.

Il primo capitolo si apre cercando di dare una definizione alla letteratura per bambini, il che non è facile come può sembrare. Per dare tale definizione, vengono esaminate separatamente le definizioni di *letteratura* e di *bambini*. La seconda parte del capitolo si concentra sulle sfide che i traduttori affrontano nella traduzione della letteratura per bambini. Viene spiegata l'importanza del traduttore che assume il ruolo di mediatore tra l'autore del testo di origine e il pubblico di lettori di destinazione. Successivamente viene fornita una definizione tecnica di traduzione, spiegando poi che tradurre la letteratura per bambini può risultare più complicato rispetto a quella per adulti, per via del fatto che il pubblico a cui sono rivolte tali traduzioni ha età diverse e quindi capacità e abilità di comprensione differenti. Perciò, il traduttore di un testo letterario per bambini non dovrebbe meramente tradurre, ma piuttosto cercare di adattare il testo il più possibile al pubblico di riferimento contando il fatto che titoli e nomi stranieri, sintassi complessa e riferimenti a un retaggio culturale diverso potrebbero rappresentare una barriera per il giovane lettore. Viste queste considerazioni, non è fondamentale la massima fedeltà della traduzione al testo originale, ma è più importante la ricezione della traduzione da parte del lettore. L'esperienza letteraria del lettore del testo tradotto deve essere più simile possibile a quella vissuta dal lettore del testo originale. Una traduzione efficace può essere ottenuta soltanto alle spese di qualche elemento dell'originale.

Il secondo capitolo della tesina si concentra sull'analisi della lingua in *Harry Potter*. La prima parte introduce la saga letteraria di *Harry Potter*, descrivendone il genere letterario.

L'autrice inglese J.K. Rowling pubblicò il primo libro *Harry Potter e la Pietra Filosofale* nel 1997, l'anno seguente arrivò il sequel *Harry Potter e la Camera dei Segreti*, seguito da *Harry Potter e il Prigioniero di Azkaban* nel 1999 e da *Harry Potter e il Calice di Fuoco* nel 2000. Il quinto libro si fece attendere ben tre anni e nel 2003 venne pubblicato *Harry Potter e l'Ordine della Fenice*, il libro più lungo della saga. Due anni più tardi l'autrice pubblicò *Harry Potter e il Principe Mezzosangue* e nel 2007 *Harry Potter e i Doni della Morte* concluse la serie letteraria più famosa del mondo. Sarebbe riduttivo definire il genere della serie di libri sul famoso maghetto soltanto come fantastico. La serie infatti, riesce a racchiudere al suo interno in particolare il fantastico, l'horror, il romanzo sportivo e il romanzo romantico. La storia racconta di questo ragazzino orfano che al compimento del suo undicesimo anno di età scopre di essere un mago e viene ammesso alla Scuola di Magia e Stregoneria di Hogwarts, proprio qui incontrerà i suoi amici Ron e Hermione che lo accompagneranno nel corso di tutti i libri. Il protagonista cresce durante la saga passando dall'essere un innocente bambino ignaro dei suoi poteri nel primo libro, a diventare un giovane adulto che deve affrontare la durissima lotta tra il bene e il male nell'ultimo volume. Il lettore cresce insieme ai protagonisti della saga. E questo è dimostrato anche dallo studio sulla complessità del linguaggio dell'intera saga eseguito nella seconda parte del secondo capitolo. Vengono analizzati la lunghezza media della parola, la lunghezza media della frase e la reale complessità della parola in *Harry Potter*. Lo studio dimostra che durante la crescita di Harry nella saga, la media della complessità della parola cresce di conseguenza. Successivamente viene stabilito quale libro della saga ha il più elevato vocabolario, attraverso il calcolo delle parole totali e delle parole uniche in tutti e sette i volumi. Il libro con la maggiore percentuale di parole uniche è l'ultimo *Harry Potter e i Doni della Morte*. L'ultima analisi studia le parole usate più di frequente nei libri, inizialmente viene eseguita togliendo articoli, congiunzioni, preposizioni, ecc. e successivamente togliendo anche i nomi propri. Dal primo studio emerge che le parole più frequentemente usate sono i nomi propri dei protagonisti principali *Harry, Ron, Hermione e Albus*. Dalla seconda analisi invece si evince che le prime tre parole più frequentemente utilizzate sono il verbo *guardare*, e i sostantivi *professore* e *tempo*.

L'ultima parte del secondo capitolo tratta dei neologismi conati da J.K. Rowling in *Harry Potter*. L'analisi di nove neologismi (*babbano, quidditch, Azkaban, horcrux, burrobirra,*

*Voldemort, cappello parlante, Griffondoro e Serpeverde*) verrà condotta attraverso l'utilizzo del Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), l'obiettivo di questa analisi è scoprire se questi neologismi sono usati nella lingua parlata al di fuori del contesto di *Harry Potter*. Vengono quindi riportati i neologismi con il loro significato e un esempio del loro uso in contesto. L'analisi continua con la ricerca dei neologismi sull'Oxford Dictionary, solo tre dei neologismi sono presenti nel dizionario però: *muggle* (*babbano*), *butterbeer* (*burrobirra*) e *quidditch*. Il secondo capitolo si chiude con l'analisi della traduzione dei nove neologismi in diverse lingue.

Il terzo capitolo si focalizza sulle difficoltà nella traduzione dei libri di *Harry Potter*, in particolare prendendo in attenta analisi il secondo libro della saga *Harry Potter e la Camera dei Segreti*. Il capitolo inizia con un'osservazione delle difficoltà nella traduzione della saga letteraria di *Harry Potter*. In particolare, ci si concentra sull'analisi delle traduzioni in varie lingue dei nomi di alcuni personaggi secondari (*Albus Dumbledore, Severus Snape, Minerva McGonagall e Neville Longbottom*), di tre nomi di località presenti nella saga (*Hogwarts, Diagon Alley e Privet Drive*) e dei nomi delle quattro case della scuola di Hogwarts (*Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw e Slytherin*).

La seconda parte del terzo capitolo prende in analisi la versione di *Harry Potter* adattata per il pubblico statunitense da Arthur A. Levine. Innanzitutto, viene fornita una definizione della lingua inglese come lingua globale. Successivamente, si tenta di spiegare il perché si sia sentito il bisogno di modificare *Harry Potter* per adattarlo ad un pubblico perfettamente in grado di comprendere la versione originale dei romanzi. In conclusione, viene eseguita un'analisi approfondita del secondo libro della saga (*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*), comparandolo con la versione adattata per il pubblico statunitense. Dalla comparazione si può notare che sono state modificate molte parole tipicamente britanniche, che però conferivano il tono culturale giusto per un libro ambientato nel Regno Unito. Oltre a questo però, l'autore della versione americana del libro ha anche aggiunto parti nuove al testo nel quindicesimo e nel diciottesimo capitolo, questa scelta non è chiara dato che non ha lo scopo di rendere il testo più facilmente comprensibile per i lettori del testo di destinazione.

La parte finale del capitolo e della tesina investiga le ragioni dietro le quali la traduzione italiana della saga di *Harry Potter* è stata modificata dopo la pubblicazione dell'ultimo

volume. Stefano Bertezzaghi, curatore della nuova edizione italiana di *Harry Potter*, spiega che il motivo per il quale è stato deciso di modificare la traduzione italiana risiede nel fatto che soltanto dopo la pubblicazione dell'ultimo libro si è riusciti ad avere una panoramica completa sulla storia, la risposta a tutte le domande è stata data e finalmente si è scoperto il destino di tutti i personaggi. È stato così che alcuni nomi che erano stati dati nella prima traduzione italiana come *Minerva McGranitt* e *Neville Paciock* non erano più adatti a descrivere il vero carattere di questi personaggi. Da una comparazione attenta delle differenze tra la prima e la seconda traduzione di *Harry Potter e la Camera dei Segreti* si scopre che quasi tutti i nomi sono stati riportati alla loro versione originale (ad eccezione di *Albus Silente* e *Severus Piton*), il *Platano Picchiatore* diventa *Salice Schiaffeggiante* e la casa di Hogwarts *Tassorosso* viene modificata in *Tassofrasso*.

In conclusione, si può affermare che il lavoro del traduttore non è facile, viste le difficoltà nel riportare nel testo tradotto esattamente quello che vuole esprimere l'autore del testo originale e perciò la traduzione è strettamente legata a come il traduttore interpreta il testo da tradurre.