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# Harry Potter Character Names from English into Serbian: Lost in Translation

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## Abstract

The paper elaborates on the idea that transliterations or mere phonetic transcription from English into Serbian of the main characters names in Harry Potter caused the names' meaning to be no longer discernible in the target language (TL). Challenges of translation are posed by the fact that a richness of experience in L1 must be communicated in L2, and there are concepts in the source language (SL) which may be understood completely differently in the TL. To put it briefly, conveying clear messages to the target audience is not an easy task. It requires a thorough investigation of the underlying messages, followed by a careful selection of the most suitable lexemes to express the intended meaning. Adopting the Integrated Translation Approach by Snell-Hornby (1995), and applying the translation methods and procedures suggested by Fernandes (2006: 48–49), the problem of translating semantically loaded Harry Potter proper names is dealt with in the following way: (1) recreation of an invented name from the source text (ST) into the target text (TT) with the aim of reproducing similar effects in a different cultural settings, and (2) substitution of a formally and/or semantically unrelated name in the TT for a name existing in the ST. As it turns out, a set of invented names are not just allusions and analogies, but most commonly metaphors and metonymies, hence the meanings of proper names in Harry Potter are analysed within the theoretical framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Overall, the names prove to be neither exclusively translatable nor exclusively untranslatable. Rather, the quality of translation depends upon a translator's linguistic and cultural competence. (примљено: 4. фебруара 2022; прихваћено: 18. априла 2022)

## 1. Introduction

In view of a recently released movie *Harry Potter 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: Return to Hogwarts* – namely, an HBO Max special, which celebrates the 20th anniversary of the first *Harry Potter* film, this paper is a reminder on how characters names in *Harry Potter* could have been translated into Serbian had the aim been to make transparent their specific linguistic and historical roots. Yet, the apparent aptness of the names, which value the characters and are semantically loaded (Hirsch, 2008), was for whichever reason overlooked in translation.

J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* saga (1997–2007), or a series of seven fantasy novels, each book being a chronicle of one year in Harry's life, tells the adventure story of a young wizard, Harry Potter, and his two best friends Ronald Weasley and Hermione Granger. They are all students at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.<sup>1</sup> The epic depicts the classic battle between good and evil. It tells of Harry's quest to overcome power-obsessed dark and evil wizard Lord Voldemort, whose aims are to become immortal, conquer the wizarding world, subjugate non-magical people, and destroy all those who stand in his way, especially Harry Potter.

Given the fact that Rowling's overelaborate storytelling abounds in narrative twists and turns (Kronzek/Kronzek, 2001; Stauefer, 2008), translating the plot of each *Harry Potter* book from English into Serbian was a challenge in itself. Moreover, since Rowling's choice of the proper names is based on the function of characters in the text, it may be said that the avoidance of translation of the names means the target audience in Serbian is losing some part of the content (the characterisation and subtext) of the *Harry Potter* novels. It could possibly have diminished the value of the target text (TT).

Admittedly, in line with the Latin maxim *Nomen est omen*, the name is an omen (a sign), which means the name is fitting for the character. According to Yvonne Bertills, when names are used in narrative contexts in children's literature, and *Harry Potter* novels were basically written for kids, they do not only reveal connotative and denotative aspects of meaning embedded in their form and content, but they are also entwined in the fictional context they embody (Bertills, 2003: 4). For his part, Fernandes (2006: 44) claims that names in children's fantasy literature "have a fundamental role in creating comic effect and portraying characters' personality traits", which facilitates the unfolding of the plot. In this respect, "semantically significant names challenge static semantic theories where the lexical meanings of names are not taken into consideration" (Panou, 2021: 1). Overall, names are mini-narratives (Duranti, 1997: 334), i.e. in a given literary context names provide information about literary characters by suggesting certain traits of personality and behaviour and/or physical appearance. Nevertheless, names also have a stylistic

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1 After the first novel *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* was released in 1997, the books gained immense popularity. As of June 2011, about 450 million copies of the book series were sold, making it the best-selling books series in history that were translated into 67 languages. The books, with the seventh book split into two parts, have been made into an eight-part film series by Warner Bros. The number of *Harry Potter* fan pages is estimated to be in the thousands in multiple languages. They include everything from news, photos and videos to podcasts, contests and merchandise.

function in that they aim at creating a certain atmosphere. For this reason, names should be viewed as a system (Bertills, 2003: 165).

As argued by Windt (2005: 58, as cited in Gibka, 2018: 51), research within literary onomastics “is limited by an obvious deficit of theory and method”, and “the translation of proper names shows itself as one of the most complex issues as regards literary translation” (Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 2003: 123). The theoretical approach used in the paper to analyse *Harry Potter* names relies on the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). The theory can be employed to account for a number of phenomena in figurative language use. In general, a large portion of the *Harry Potter* series’ complicated, yet catchy character names are actually the result of a metaphorical or metonymic conceptualisation of a certain segment of the extralinguistic reality. Since most metaphorical language arises from preexisting patterns of metaphorical thought or conceptual metaphors, CMT proposed that metaphor is not just an aspect of language, but a fundamental part of human thought. To put it differently, conceptual metaphors are relevant universalities that can be found and utilised in all languages and cultures (e.g. Kövecses, 2002; 2005; 2008; 2010). It is these universalities precisely that allow translations between human languages to be carried out. Following Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 36), furthermore, (1) a metaphor is all about conceiving of one thing in terms of another (A is B, or rather A substitutes B); and (2) a metonymy uses one entity to stand for another. On this view, *he is a lion in battle* is a metaphor – namely, the word *lion* is used in substitution for displaying an attribute of character of the person. There is a real or imagined similarity between A and B on some aspect.<sup>2</sup> The metonymy, on the other hand, is displayed by the sentence *the crown summoned the army*. Here the comparison is not about substitution; instead, the association is based on contiguity. Being a form of royal head adornment, or hat, a crown is immediately associated with a Sovereign as the wearer of that ornament. In addition to this, among his/her subjects, the Sovereign is the most powerful and dignified individual. Finally, our knowledge of royal traditions includes, among other things, the notion of a link between a Sovereign and his/her soldiers (i.e. the command structure within the royal military ranks). The predication *summoned the army* triggers a non-literal interpretation of the noun phrase *the crown*. Overall, the metonymic reading involves a shift from the royal ornament to the Sovereign and as the most readily available element in the frame. Through this metonymic shift, the reference point (‘the crown’) is backgrounded and the desired target (‘the Sovereign’) is foregrounded.

2 As stated above, metaphors are highly productive cognitive models (processes) of character naming (Brozović Rončević/Žic Fuchs, 2003–2004). Cf. PEOPLE ARE PLANTS and/OR PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS. Metaphorical plant names in English can be illustrated by the first names *Yasmin* and *Daisy*, and the surname *Cotton*. The pattern is common in the Serbian language, too; hence there are the first names *Ruža*; Ros(i)e, and *Ljiljana*; Lil(l)ian(n), *Liliane*/o, and the surnames *Bor*; lit. pine tree, and *Čičak*; lit. thistle. As for the metaphor PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS, it can be illustrated by the English animal names *Tiger*, *Kitty*, and *Nightingale*, *Bird*, two first names and two surnames, respectively. In Serbian, the first names which are also animal names are for example *Vuk*; lit. wolf, and *Lav*; Leo(n), lit. lion, and animal surnames are *Kos(ić)*; blackbird, and *Zec*, *Zeč(ev)ić*, *Zeković*; all: lit. hare (or rabbit), etc. (cf. Šimunović, 1985; 2006).

## 2. General classification of *Harry Potter* characters' names

To begin with, *Harry Potter* characters can be classified as: (1) flat (static), who do not undergo important change in the course of the story, or (2) round (dynamic), who “seem to lead a life of their own; [...who] breathe with life and pulsate with energy and possibility of the unexpected” (Baker, 2000; Krombholz, 2007: 755).<sup>3</sup> It is to be noted that most *Harry Potter* characters are flat, the only ones approaching ‘roundedness’ being Ron, Hermione and of course Harry Potter himself.

As for characters' proper names in *Harry Potter*, these can be labeled as: (1) the descriptive *nomina propria*, which refer to physical appearance, dominant characteristics, generic membership, etc., e.g. (*Neville*) *Longbottom*, *Petunia* (*Dursley*), (*Ronald*) *Weasley*, or (2) the allusive *nomina propria*, which are used “as more or less ciphered allusions to real people” (Wilkoń, 1970: 83, as cited in Gibka, 2018: 50), or they are “taken over from another literary work” (Gibka, 2015: 87), e.g. *Remus* (*Lupin*) (one of the wolf-raised twins who legend tells us founded the city of Rome), *Minerva* (*McGonagall*) (the Roman goddess of wisdom and war), etc.

An even finer classification of characters' proper names in *Harry Potter*, which in essence mirrors the name taxonomy put forward by Gutiérrez Rodríguez's (2003), Straufer's (2008), Standowicz's (2009) and Panou's (2021), goes as follows:

(1) invented names, such as *Pensieve*, *Dippet*, *Malfoy*;

(2) collected strange names, e.g. *Bellatrix*, *Dumbledore*;

(3) names inspired by Greek mythology, English folklore, medieval saints, maps, dictionaries, plants, war memorials, famous people, etc.; namely, (a) the flower names, such as *Petunia* and *Narcissa*; (b) the celestial names, such as *Sirius/Regulus* (*Black*), *Luna* (*Lovegood*); (c) the Arthurian names, e.g. *Ginny* (short for *Guinevere*<sup>4</sup>), and *Percy* (short for *Percival*<sup>5</sup>), etc.

Moreover, Rowling extensively uses:

(1) alliteration, e.g. *Severus Snape*, *Peter Pettigrew*;

(2) acronyms, e.g. *D.A.* for *Dumbledore's Army*;

(3) word play, e.g. the anagram *Tom Marvolo Riddle* which is rearranged to spell *I am Lord Voldemort*; and

(4) classic rhymes, e.g. *Reeta Skeeter*.

Although such designation strategies demand careful and creative translating, in the *Harry Potter* books translated into Serbian by Vesna and Draško Roganović (Books 1–6), the character names have most often simply been transliterated or merely phonetically transcribed, usually quite inadequately; e.g. *Harry Potter* as HARI POTER, *Ron(ald) Weasley* as RON(ALD) VESLI, *Hermione Granger* as HERMIONA GREJNDŽER, *Draco Malfoy* as DRAKO MALFOJ, *Severus Snape* as SEVERUS SNEJP, *Voldemort* as VOLDEMOR, etc. Truly attempted translations are few, such as *Alastor Moody* as LUDOOKI ĆUDLJIVKO (lit. Mad-eye Moody), *Madam (Poppy) Pomfrey* as MADAM BUČKURIŠ (lit. hodge-podge, wish-wash), *Deatheater* as SMRTOŽDER (literal translation), etc.

3 Cf. also Forster (1927), that is, his conclusions on character typology in literature.

4 Guinevere was King Arthur's wife and then Lancelot's mistress, which causes the downfall of Camelot.

5 One of the Arthurian knights who was given a glimpse of the Holy Grail.

Had an effort been made, however, to keep the original meaning of Rowling's most carefully selected prophetic *Harry Potter* designations, some serious research behind each character's name etymology and consequently its meaning could have been carried out. As we already stated, this is crucial if the translation for each name is also to characterise, which is particularly significant in children's literature (Cvijetić, 2005: 21).

### **3. The importance of research into the meaning of the names in *Harry Potter***

It is well known that exact and accurate meaning of words can easily escape (slip and slide) rather than remain fixed when one undertakes the painstaking task of translating word meaning from the source language (SL), in this case English, into the TL, which is in this case Serbian. Moreover, translators who are known to be messengers not only of linguistic but also cultural goods, are often faced with the task of finding a way to express a concept (phenomenon) that does not exist *per se* (or have a near equivalent) in a culture of the TL. Grasping this, it is clear what a daunting task it is to carry over from L1 to L2 a set of semantically loaded *Harry Potter* names, the aim being a complete or at least semi-complete roundness of the given name bearers in the TL, too.

If a word or phrase, here a name, is "lost in translation" when transferred from the SL to the TL, it loses so much of its nuance and connotation that its meaning is at best badly obscured and at worst entirely lost, which means it is no longer discernible in the translated form. This has been a circumstance with the difficult task of translating *Harry Potter* names from English to Serbian. As mentioned earlier, Rowling carefully selects *Harry Potter* names to be an important method of characterisation. As it turns out, some minor characters get described solely by their name, which is often quite enough to conclude the role they play in the novels (Krombholz, 2007: 753–755). Although challenges of translation are largely attributed to the notion of translation as a cross-cultural event, they are partially due also to the environment Rowling creates in her books. Interestingly, the setting is completely separated from reality, yet intimately still connected to it. This means that, unlike other exclusive fairy tale sagas, such as *The Chronicles of Narnia* or *The Lord of the Rings*, the wizarding world of *Harry Potter* exists in parallel within the real world, and that is how Potter's world contains magical elements similar to things in everyday life. Many of its institutions and locations are recognisable, such as London. Nevertheless, it should be noted this tactic is not Rowling's genuine innovation as Dickens' *Oliver Twist* also fights against evil immersed in the nineteenth-century London environment.

The challenges of translation regarding the names in *Harry Potter* are discussed from the perspective of interpretation of the name semantics being at the core of a translator's research when translating between languages. It follows, then, that the same richness of experience in L1 must be communicated in L2 if the reader of the translated *Harry Potter* publication is to comprehend the message originating

from the data in the SL. In this respect, the Integrated Translation Approach (ITA) by Snell-Hornby (1995) seems to be an indispensable and most appropriate method to come to grips with the task. Following Snell-Hornby, ITA towards translation relates the ST to the communicative function of the TT. Translation is regarded as a cross-cultural event – namely, there is an obvious interdependence of culture and translation. As a result, the translator may often need to alter the ST to the target culture. Special notice is taken of translating metaphor for the reasons mentioned above. Snell-Hornby, furthermore, points out the significance of text analysis in the translation process. Indeed, a text which reflects the culture and society in which it was written needs to be viewed not as a string of words, but as a whole, that is, it has to be analysed from the ‘macro-level’ to the ‘micro-level’ (where the structure of the text is researched). All of this has a great impact on the translation process. The imperative for the translator, therefore, is that s/he should be not only language-competent, but also excel in cultural and encyclopaedic knowledge and expertise in specific areas. In a nutshell, the assumption is that the translator’s approach requires two things: (1) focusing on the source text (ST) as a whole, from the macro to the micro level; and (2) determining how to deal with a web of relationships, viewing the importance of individual items, here *Harry Potter* person and creature names, and in the larger context: text, situation and culture. Overall, the tactic of applying ITA is to have a deeper understanding of the ST which results in a positive influence on the translation process and the TL product. As argued by Đurić-Paunović and Halupka-Rešetar (2006, 204), “the translator should strive to reach a solution that best describes the character in question, or at least one that includes the largest number of its qualities. [...] If [...] the actions of a character and its name are not in accordance, the [...] TL audience] will not accept it”.

#### 4. *Harry Potter* names analysed in the paper

From *Harry Potter* to the Dark Lord Voldemort himself, there are some 40 characters’ names in *Harry Potter* books. Naturally, not all of them can be discussed in this paper simply for the sake of saving space.

Our corpus of analysed names can be divided into several categories:

- (a) Principal characters: *Harry Potter*, *Ron Weasley*, *Hermione Granger*;
- (b) Other Hogwarts students: *Draco Malfoy*, *Luna Lovegood*;
- (c) Hogwarts staff: *Albus Dumbledore*, *Severus Snape*;
- (d) The Order of the Phoenix members: *Sirius Black*;
- (e) Harry’s enemies: *Voldemort*;
- (f) Other citizens of the wizarding world: *Reeta Skeeter*;
- (g) Magical creatures: *Buckbeak*.

##### 4.1. Principal characters’ names

An explanatory model of character naming for each specific *Harry Potter* name dealt with in this paper goes as follows:

- (1) The specific *Harry Potter* English character’s name under discussion →

- (2) Its available Serbian form →
- (3) A newly coined Serbian designation →
- (4) Demonstrated research behind the origins of the specific name.

**Harry Potter** → HARI POTER → **KOSANKO LONČAR(IĆ), ŠIŠKO ČABRIĆ, ČUPKO ČAROBNJAKOVIĆ**, or **BORIS/BORKO SILOVITI**:<sup>6</sup>

Harry Potter is the central story character. He is also referred to as *the Boy who lived*, *the Chosen One/Boy*, etc.

*Harry* is of Anglo-Saxon origin and means 'power'. Nevertheless, it may also be interpreted as a derivation of the originally Old Norse name *Harold* which bears the meaning of an 'army commander'. The symbolism is immediate: Harry takes all good witches and wizards into the final battle against Voldemort whose formidable army is, against all odds, to suffer a terrible defeat. As argued by Evans (2003: 20–21), Harry is a warrior which is why he may be called either the Serbian first names BORIS/BORKO; a fighter, and/or the last name SILOVITI; mighty.

Furthermore, in the 1900s, there was a magician named *Harry Houdini*, and Harry's magical abilities necessary to succeed in the wizarding world are largely inborn. For example, he can immediately play Quidditch flying on a broomstick, hence the selected surname ČAROBNJAKOVIĆ; a wizard.

Finally, Harold is most often pronounced as /hærəld/, and more rarely as /heərəld/, the latter pronunciation being reminiscent of 'hair' and 'being hairy' (the onomatopoeic connection). As a result, any translation that informs on the meaning of Harry's unruly hair is also acceptable, e.g. the first names KOSANKO, ČUP(ER)KO, ŠIŠKO.

*Harry Potter* consonantal alliterated names sound most interesting, especially to a very young audience who surely find them easy to remember for their ear-catching quality.<sup>7</sup> All in all, our first suggestion is for *Harry Potter* to be translated as ČUPKO ČAROBNJAKOVIĆ.

As for Harry's surname *Potter*, Rowling explained she had been fond of it since childhood. She got this last name from the people who lived down the road from her when she was seven. Since *pot* is commonly defined as 'any of various usually domestic containers made of pottery, metal, or glass, etc.', both LONČAR(IĆ) and ČABRIĆ represent meaningful TL translations.

Moreover, *Potter's Field* is often the name given to a cemetery where a city or town buries those who have gone unclaimed or unwanted, the so-called community's orphans, which also rings a bell as Harry is an orphan himself – his parents died when he was a baby. To conclude this section, it is worth mentioning that *Potter's Field* may likewise be considered a cursed land because Judas hung

6 A newly coined designation was tested for validity and reliability by students at the Faculty of Philology, University of Novi Sad.

7 Even though the *Harry Potter* books are in fact children's literature, adults also enjoy reading them. According to Sharon Black (2003: 242) the appeal of *Harry Potter* to multiple ages of readers is simply due to the message: Good can triumph over evil and there is always a way to get through and survive.

himself in one. Yet, we believe no reference using translations such as SIROMAŠKO/SIROТANОVIĆ; both ‘poor’, САМОТНИ; lonely, abandoned, PROKLETИ; damned, cursed, etc., should be made, as in this manner the translated Potter’s name would have a negative connotation, which was certainly not Rowling’s intention.

However, we have also considered the possibility of leaving Harry Potter’s name untranslated, only to phonetically transcribe it into Serbian, which is due to the fact that the name itself is really the brand. In short, in the global world *Harry Potter* has become something we all share. If translated, its immediate recognisability is lost. Therefore, we do believe this should be the only exemption, for all the reasons stated above.

**Ron(ald) Weasley** RONALD VESLI → **РИДА** or **BRANKO**, both surnamed **LISIČIĆ**:

*Ron*, short for *Ronald*, is the name borrowed into English from the Old Norse *Rögnvaldr* which means ‘having the Gods’ Power’ and ‘a mountain of strength’. In the Anglo-Saxon Arthurian legend, Ron is the name of King Arthur’s trusty ebony spear. To the King, Ron, his lance, was in a way his counselor. Ron Weasley in *Harry Potter* is Harry’s advisor on all of his choices and adventures. Ron is always true to Harry no matter what, he never betrays him, not even when the two quarrel and temporarily split apart. The implication of loyalty as well as protective attitude towards someone or something one cares for, may be expressed by the Serbian names ALEKS((A)NDAR) (< Greek *alexein*; to ward off, keep off, turn away, defend, protect), or BRANIMIR; that who defends, protects. Being of Slavic origin, the latter designation is semantically more transparent to the reader, plus it comes in handy because it can be used in an abbreviated form, cf. RONALD: RON and BRANIMIR: BRANKO/B(R)ANE.

As for the boy’s surname, *Weasley*, Rowling states that in Britain and Ireland the weasel has a bad reputation as an unfortunate, even malevolent, animal, and the Weasleys are unfortunate because they are poor. This made us at first think of selecting the surname SIROТANОVIĆ (the poor), but it was later discarded as unacceptable because Rowling says she has always had a great fondness for the animal in question.<sup>8</sup> It turns out both Ron and other members of his family are very dear to the author which determined the choice of the first names DOBRIVOJE; good, or DRAGAN/MILAN; both ‘dear’, and the last names DOBRI(ČI)Ć/DOBRIJEVIĆ, DRAGI(ŠI)Ć/DRAGIN, or MILI((JEV)ČI)Ć/MILANKO. The earlier observed alliteration pattern is obvious once again, even though it is here absent from the ST: DOBRIVOJE DOBRI(ČI)Ć, DRAGAN DRAGI(ŠI)Ć/DRAGIN, MILAN MILI((JEV)ČI)Ć/MILANKO.

Nevertheless, since both the Weasleys and weasel the animal have red hair, and the family lives near a town that has otter in its name – *Ottery St. Catchpole*,<sup>9</sup>

8 In the minds of the middle aged to older audience, the surname *Sirotanović* echoes that of Mr. Alija Sirotanović (14 August 1914–16 May 1990), a Yugoslav miner, Hero of Socialist Labour and perhaps the most famous of all Yugoslav *udarniks*. He was held up by the Communist Party of the SFR Yugoslavia to be a model of a hard-worker in the former Yugoslavia.

9 An otter is a member of the weasel family, too.



we consider the first name RIDA; auburn haired, and the surname LISIČIĆ; a fox, to be most illustrative of the specified red-hair quality.<sup>10</sup> On one hand this combination is very appealing to the young audience, on the other hand red hair is, without a question, the Weasley family's most striking physical feature. Moreover, it illustrates how a concept in one language needs to be replaced with something different in another language if a translation is to make sense in the TL; that is, a weasel may call up in the mind a mental image of a red-haired, furry mammal in English, but not in Serbian, where the equivalent meaning is conveyed resorting to the lexeme LISICA; a fox.

*Hermione Granger* → HERMIONA GREJNDŽER → **KOSANA MUDRINIĆ**, or **NADA DOBRIĆ**:

*Hermione*, the name of Greek origin which means 'messenger, earthly', was chosen by Rowling from a character in Shakespeare's play *A Winter's Tale*; although the author says the characters are in fact not at all similar. As the explanation goes, it made sense for a couple of professional dentists to name their only daughter something like that to show how clever they were. Hermione's last name *Granger* is of Middle French origin and means 'a farmer'. As neither ANDEL(K)A/ANDELIJA; both 'a messenger', nor SELJAK(OV)IĆ; a farmer, reflect the true nature of this wonderful female character, we had to consult Miss Granger's book characterisation rather than her name etymology to be able to define Hermione's new Serbian name(s).

Being one of the three protagonists, Hermione is a close friend to Harry and Ron. She is an exceptionally talented young witch, a 'little know-it-all', or in Rowling's own words a borderline genius who often uses her quick wit, good logic, and encyclopaedic knowledge to help both her friends and those defenseless and/or oppressed. This surely makes Hermione a person who can be counted on. She always keeps her attention focused on the job that must be done, and forces people around her to obey the rules and play by them. By doing this, she gives hope that not straying off the path is the only way to a good end. This is why we choose to name her NADA; hope, whereas the selected surnames could be DOBRIĆ; good, right, proper, or perhaps PRAVDIĆ; just.

Even though it is not easily detectable at first, there is a lot of vulnerability, insecurity and a great fear of failure in Hermione's personality. This sense of insecurity makes her feel utterly inadequate. Hermione compensates it by trying to be the best at everything at school, projecting a false confidence and a bossy attitude that can irritate people. Because of her prodigious intellect, Hermione may also be provided with the surnames MUDRINIĆ; that who is wise, or KNJIŠKIĆ; that who reads a lot.

Finally, Hermione's looks, namely a lot of bushy brown hair, made us think her first name perhaps should be KOSANA; that who has (lots of) hair.

<sup>10</sup> *The Weasel* is just one out of thirty-one *nomina propria* which refer to hair colour (Gibka, 2018: 47).

## 4.2. Other Hogwarts students

***Draco Malfoy* → DRAKO MELFOJ → UGLJEŠA KVARNIĆ, or ZLOĆA TRULIĆ:**

*Draco* is Latin for a constellation that looks like a dragon but is a large serpent. There was also a tyrannical Athenian lawgiver named Draco who developed a system of severe punishments for the smallest of crimes. In result, *Draconian* means 'harsh or cruel'. In Romanian, *drac* means 'devil'.<sup>11</sup> Draco in *Harry Potter* is the dragon of bad faith. He is quite intelligent and quick-witted but arrogant, a spiteful bully and rich snob who, believing himself superior to most people because of his family's pure-blood lineage as well as great wealth and social standing, taunts other kids. Draco is cocky and volatile and is at odds many times with Harry and his friends. We are, therefore, inclined to name him UGLJEŠA; dark, KVARNIĆ; bad, evil.

The etymology of the surname *Malfoy* is old French for 'bad faith', an act with bad intentions, or a malicious act, hence the suggested name translations are ZLOĆA ZLOBIĆ; both 'bad, evil', and VATROSLAV/OGNJEN; both 'fire(-spitting), full of fire', TRULIĆ 'that who is rotten'<sup>12</sup>.

***Luna Lovegood* → LUNA LAVGUD → MILICA SANAK, DRAGICA BLES(К)IĆ, or DUŠICA ČUDNOMILA:**

*Luna* is the Roman goddess of the moon. Nevertheless, the word *lunatic* is also derived from the word *lunar*, as it was believed in old times that strange or odd behavior was caused by the moon. Luna's name in *Harry Potter* is probably reminiscent of both her large, round, moonlike eyes, and the fact that she is a bit of a lunatic. Although highly intelligent and unusually perceptive, Miss Lovegood is a complete nonconformist who displays many eccentric beliefs and qualities, and has a unique fashion sense that other people usually find bizarre. This makes her often the subject of ridicule and she has difficulty making friends.<sup>13</sup> Other students nickname her *Loony Lovegood* and even steal and hide her things. This explains our motivation behind the selected surnames ČUDNOMILA/BLES(К)IĆ, both 'awkward', the former being a compound from ČUDAN; odd, strange, and MIO/MILA; dear; sweet. Indeed, Luna is a docile, dear person who chooses to be nonjudgmental, and accept the others the way they are. In consequence, she may also be called MILICA, DRAGICA, or DUŠICA; all 'that who is dear'.

Luna's protuberant grey eyes often seem to be dreamily distracted, her demeanour and voice are often distant and dreamy, and she drifts away from a conversation she does not find interesting. Thus, her last name may also be SANAK; that who (day)dreams.

11 Cf. Vlad Dracula, the famous Vampire Count.

12 In Latin *malus* means 'bad' and *mal* means 'pale' – and for his outward appearance Draco is tall and slender with a pale, pointed face, sleek white-blond hair, and stone grey eyes.

13 Nevertheless, Miss Lovegood is very loyal to the few friends she has, supporting Harry even when he is outlawed by the Ministry of Magic. She also displays admirable bravery during both the Battle of the Department of Mysteries and the Battle of Hogwarts.

### 4.3. Hogwarts staff

**Albus Dumbledore** → ALBUS DAMBLDOR → **SVETLAN BRUJALO, DOBRICA BUMBAREVIĆ, or BELISLAV BELIĆ:**

Albus Dumbledore is the most powerful wizard in the world and also a major character of *Harry Potter* series. He is the headmaster of Hogwarts and the founder and leader of the Order of the Phoenix, an organisation dedicated to fighting the malevolent Lord Voldemort.

*Albus* is from the Latin word *alba*; white, indicating that he is on the side of light and wisdom, although it may also be associated with his old age (Hirsch, 2008: 7). And *Dumbledore* is the 18<sup>th</sup> century English word for 'bumblebee'. Rowling says she wanted this character's name to reflect her idea that he is on one hand 'the epitome of goodness', therefore the selected first name DOBRICA and the surname DOBRIĆ; both 'that who is benevolent', while on the other hand she desired to stress his hard-working nature (cf. busy as a bee).

The author, furthermore, says she imagines the Professor, whose one passion is music, wandering around the castle humming to himself, which in Serbian may be expressed using the surnames BUMBAR(EV)IĆ (< BUMBAR; a bumblebee), or BRUJALO; that who hums).

In colour symbolism, white often stands for purity, and the headmaster Dumbledore is indeed considered an adorable man not only for his serenity and composure, but also for an almost superhuman level of wisdom and personal understanding. In spite of his immense brainpower Professor Dumbledore is never arrogant, self-important or pompous. He also has a deep capacity for love, and the strong belief of giving everybody a second chance. From this point of view, we suggest new names to express and communicate the idea: (1) that who is glowing, shining; fig. brilliant; holy, such as SVETISLAV/SVETIZAR/SVETLAN: all surnamed SJAJNI; or (2) that who is white; fig. benevolent; holy, e.g. BELISLAV BELIĆ; lit. both 'that who is white'.

**Severus Snape** → SEVERUS SNEJP → **ŽESTIMIR ZMIJOLIKI, LJUTOMIR LJUTIĆ, or GVOZDEN GRIZ(L)IĆ:**

*Severus* has obvious connotations of severity, strictness, sternness and cruelty – he is arrogant, cold and bitter. Thus, this character may be named GVOZDEN; iron; fig. hard, harsh, severe, ŽESTIMIR/LJUTOMIR; that who is bitter and angry, and surnamed LJUTIĆ; also 'that who is angry'.<sup>14</sup>

Professor Snape, potions teacher and head of Slytherin house, is much disliked for the malicious bullying of his Hogwarts students, although his teaching methods prove to be precise and therefore effective.

*Severe* sounds very similar to the Latin word *servus*, meaning 'servant'. The question whom he actually serves and where his loyalties really are – Dumbledore

14 Yet, it cannot be Ljutko, or *Grumpy* in English. This gets blocked because *Ljutko* is one of the seven dwarfs from the fairy tale *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.

or still Voldemort – lingers on until the end of the final book, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*.<sup>15</sup>

As for the surname *Snape*, it is reminiscent of a snake and the crafty, mistrustful *Snape* has indeed many snake-like qualities – a slender build, yellow, uneven teeth, shoulder-length, black, lank and greasy hair, as well as cold, black eyes. The word could, however, also be associated with the verb *to snape*; to be hard upon, rebuke, snub, which is exactly how this Professor behaves.

As for Rowling's explanation, she claims she has borrowed the name from the village of Snape, Suffolk. Because of Severus Snape's numerous unpleasant qualities, this male Hogwarts professor may be surnamed ZMIJOLIKI/ZMIJ(ANOV)IĆ; both 'snake like', ZMIJOSTI; that who has the snake's mouth, *fig.* sharp-tongued, or GRIZIĆ; that who bites. Our closing consideration here is that both LJUTOMIR LJUTIĆ and GVOZDEN GRIZIĆ mirror the use of alliteration in Severus Snape.

#### 4.4. The Order of the Phoenix members

The Order of the Phoenix is a secret society founded by Albus Dumbledore to oppose Voldemort and his Death Eaters.

#### ***Sirius Black* → SIRIJUS BLEK → ZVEZDAN CRNOBRADI, or ŽARKO TAMIĆ:**

*Sirius*, from Greek *seirios*; burning, scorching, is the name of the brightest star in the Northern Hemisphere sky and in the constellation *Canis Major* (Great Dog). Like the Sirius star that lights the night sky showing the way, so is Sirius Black a guiding star for Harry, since he is his godfather.<sup>16</sup> This is why ZVEZDAN; a star, is selected as his first name in Serbian.

Moreover, the character's English name suits him so well because Sirius is a man who is a dog animagus. In fact, as Sirius often hides by transforming himself into a big black dog, he is nicknamed *Snuffles* and *Padfoot*.<sup>17</sup>

The above mentioned 'burning' quality of Sirius' personality is transferred into the TL by the use of proper name ŽARKO; that who is like live coals and glowing embers; *fig.* passionate.

As for the surname *Black*, it is an obvious reference to the colour of Sirius' canine

<sup>15</sup> Severus Snape is among the most ambiguous and complex *Harry Potter* characters. Although led to infer Snape is a principal villain, since both his name and appearance are utterly unpleasant, much to their surprise the reader discovers that this antagonist is loyal to the ones he loved – he invariably ends up protecting or otherwise helping Harry and his friends when they are in danger and, ultimately, lays down his life because of it.

<sup>16</sup> Sirius Black who was best friends with James Potter, Harry's father, was James' best man at his wedding to Lily Evans. By making Sirius Harry's godfather, James and Lily had appointed him as their son's guardian in case anything happened to them.

<sup>17</sup> *Padfoot* is the name that residents of central/northern England (i.e. Staffordshire, Yorkshire) have for the magical black dogs of their legends. Usually, *Padfoots* guard churchyards or certain roads; are said to roam the countryside at night; tend to be larger than ordinary dogs; can vanish instantly or fade slowly away while standing still, yet can run extremely quickly; typically described as having huge and blazing eyes; tend to be silent. Because of their association with graveyards, scholars once believed the black dog form was the preferred form of the Devil, and is usually considered an omen of death.

alter-ego: black. Thus, surnames such as CRNOBRADI/KARAMAN; both 'that who is black', and MRAČKOVIĆ/TAMIĆ; both 'that who is dark', are acceptable translations.

#### 4.5. Harry's enemies

**(Lord) Voldemort** → VOLDEMOR → **STRAŠIMIR DRAKULIĆ**:

Voldemort is one of the main antagonists of Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. Born as Tom Marvolo Riddle, he appears in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, and has the name that is itself a riddle because it is an anagram of 'I am Lord Voldemort'.<sup>18</sup> Although calling him ZAGONETNI TOMA; Tom Riddle, on the account that he plays a double role and does not show his real face is purposeful, it seems that a far better solution to this form-content problem is to draw a parallel between the two names like it was done in the SL, e.g. ARISTARD ŠMRKULIĆ and STRAŠIMIR DRAKULIĆ. Obviously, Riddle's name needs to be altered to make the anagram work in the TL.

A sadist by nature, Voldemort is extremely powerful,<sup>19</sup> intelligent and ruthless. He hurts and murders people for pleasure. He is particularly merciless towards Muggles, although he also killed Harry's wizard parents, James and Lily Potter. Voldemort's only ambition in life is to become all-powerful and immortal. He has no conscience, feels no remorse, and cannot comprehend love or affection for another. In 1997, he takes control of the Ministry by putting a taboo on speaking his name. The fear of speaking this taboo increases until the point where almost all witches and wizards refer to the villain by epithets such as *You-Know-Who*, *He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named*, or *the Dark Lord*.

Voldemort succeeds in splitting the wizarding world into two opposing camps by manipulating the festering relationship between pureblood and muggle-born wizards. Eventually, however, he loses everything because of his inability to love or trust anyone but himself, and because of his belief in his own infallibility.

Due to his horrifying personality and appalling appearance – chalk-white skin, skull-like face, snake-like slits for nostrils, red eyes, a skeletally thin body and long, thin hands with unnaturally long fingers, Voldemort can be given the Serbian name STRAŠIMIR; that who installs fear; DRAKULIĆ; the designation which is reminiscent of Count Dracula, the famous King Vampire.<sup>20</sup>

18 Following Gibka (2018: 48), when *Voldemort* chooses his new name for himself abandoning his English based one: *Tom Riddle*, it demonstrates his belief in the social superiority of Latin wizards' names. As it turns out, in *Harry Potter* world Latin is one of the means to have/get a higher social status.

19 For example, he can read minds and shield his own from penetration.

20 In spite of Rowling's statement that she made the name *Voldemort* up (the final 't' being silent, according to the author), its etymology can be traced back to French, *vol-de-mort*; flight from death, thief of death. In many European languages both *mort* and *mord* refer to 'death or evil'. This is a justly description of someone who is so obsessed with immortality. As both in Norwegian and Danish, *vold* means 'violence', the first compounded-name constituent could equally well relate to *Voldemort's* killing sprees. Nevertheless, it may have been inspired by the Latin *valde*; great, exceedingly, strongly, powerfully. Or perhaps, the name was taken from E. A. Poe's character *M. Valdemar*, who died under hypnosis and came back as a squishy mass of rotting flesh, which is what *Voldemort* was like, until he regained his human form in *Harry Potter*

## 4.6. Other citizens of the wizarding world

**Rita Skeeter** → RITA SKITER → **BIS(ERK)A ŠTIPALO, LIJA KRVUPIJA, or ZUJA ZUJALO/ZUJIĆ:**

*Rita* is a nickname form of Margarita, related to Margaret, from Greek *margaron*, or 'pearl'. Considering this, she can be called **BIS(ERK)A**; a pearl, in Serbian.

*Skeeter* is American slang for mosquito. Females of this insect are well-known for their annoying buzzing and blood-sucking habits when they need to lay eggs. Some people also like to call news reporters 'bloodsuckers'. Indeed, Ms. Skeeter is extremely persistent, intrusive and annoying when she desires to get information or anything interesting for her own reports. Therefore, she may be surnamed both **ŠTIPALO**; that who pinches, and **KRVUPIJA**; a bloodsucker, or be given the full alliterated name **ZUJA ZUJIĆ**; both 'that who buzzes'.

In an attempt to mirror the rhyming of Reeta Skeeter's name in the TL, we decide to call her **LIJA**; fox, which rhymes with **KRVUPIJA**; a bloodsucker.

## 4.7. Magical creatures

**Buckbeak** → БАКБИК → **SNAŽNOKLJUNI**.<sup>21</sup>

Buckbeak is a hippogriff or a legendary flying creature that combines the features of horses and giant eagles. Buckbeak's name is a compound taken from *buck*; a male animal, especially a male deer or antelope, which is a reference to his horse-half, and a *beak*; a mouth of a bird, reminiscent of his bird-half. Buckbeak is a proud creature and at first he seems to be aggressive, attacking Draco Malfoy and trying to peck him with his strong beak when insulted, hence the name **SNAŽNOKLJUNI**; strong-beaked.

In truth, Buckbeak is very affectionate and loyal to those who treat him with kindness and respect. The creature is also referred to as *Witherwings*, which means the identical formula is used to coin his other name, i.e. *wither* + *wings*. The withers are the high part of the back of a horse or similar animal, located between the shoulder blades (refers to his horse-half), and wings imply his ability to fly (refers to his bird half). On this view, the Croatian translated name **LETIMIR**; that who can fly, makes a lot of sense.

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*and the Goblet of Fire*. Last of all, there are rumors saying the name came from an evil wizard in medieval times named *Voldemortist*; Lord of Evil, Dark Lord. They even go far on to say that Voldemort once tried to kill Merlin before the time of King Arthur by bewitching good people and simply bribing those who already were evil, but was caught and fed to the many-headed-monster.

21 In the context of comparison, we dare say the translation procedure carried out in English to Croatian translation of *Harry Potter* novels was not completely satisfactory either, the translators being Zlatko Crnković (Books 1-3) and Dubravka Petrović (Books 4-7). The names in Croatian are simply used in their English form, e.g. *Harry Potter*, *Hermione Granger*, *Ron Weasley*, *Dudley Dursley*, *Quirrell*, *Peeves*, etc. The translated names are rare, nevertheless the procedure adheres to the linguistic policy of Croatian that foreign names need not be translated. When the translation is available, however, it refers mostly to magical creatures; e.g. *Scabbers* (Ron Weasley's pet rat) → **ŠUGONJA**; *lit.* that who suffers from mange, *Crookshanks* (Hermione Granger's pet cat) → **KRIVONJA**, *Buckbeak* (the hippogriff sentenced to be executed in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*) → **KLJUNOSLAV**; that who has a beak, or **LETIMIR**; that who can fly, *Death eater* → **SMRTONOŠA**; *lit.* that who brings death, etc.

## 5. Closing remarks

In summary, we should like to underline once again that working across several languages involves the transposition of thoughts expressed in L1 into the appropriate expression of L2. It also entails a painstaking process of cultural decoding, recoding and encoding, and translating proper names, which is a rather serious endeavor in any text (Newmark, 1993: 15). Surely enough, *Harry Potter* names are not rigid designations. Instead, Rowling uses the names to create the character, that is, to reveal part of these characters' nature (their special characteristics, qualities, merits, and/or cultural background).

Maintaining the precise meaning of *Harry Potter* names proves to be a challenge, as both expressive language and cultural references pose barriers to a quality TL output. In the Serbian version of *Harry Potter*, character names generally do not have their translation equivalents. As it seems, the translators engaged themselves in translating the plot of the novel, but for whatever reason, they restrained from carrying out research behind the names – etymology, references, etc. Nevertheless, “a name cannot be successfully translated unless one is fully familiar with the character's traits, typical gestures and utterances” (Đurić-Paunović/Halupka-Rešetar, 2006: 204). Such an attitude can be somewhat justified by the fact that the Serbian “translation principles” do not favour over-translated names, foreign jargon, etc. Instead, the name is often retained in its original form or only adapted phonologically, and nowadays such an attitude seems to be a general principle (cf. Ballard 1993: 194).<sup>22</sup>

The paper provides some, yet not all and most certainly not definite solutions to possibly fulfill the task more efficiently by demonstrating why heavily relying on the Integrated Translation Approach is essential if translation equivalents of query terms containing proper names are to be found. Underlying the process, two major translation tactics have been employed: (1) a concept in the SL is replaced with a different one in the TL to make the name work, e.g. *Weasley* : LIŠIČIĆ; fox, and (2) alliteration, anagrams, rhyme, etc., in the SL are replaced employing similar form-content means in the TL, e.g. *Severus Snape* : LJUTOMIR LJUTIĆ or GVOZDEN GRIZIĆ, *Tom Marvolo Riddle* > *Lord Voldemort* : ARISTARD ŠMRKULIĆ > STRAŠIMIR DRAKULIĆ, *Reeta Skeeter* : LIJA KRVUPIJA.

The validity and reliability of the newly translated names were tested among a group of 39 university students, aged 19–21, and attending the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad, Serbia. The examinees were told to circle the correct answer – the answers given below are translated from Serbian into English – indicating whether they agree or disagree with each of the following statements: (1) Did you read *Harry Potter* books/watch *Harry Potter* film series? (YES or NO); (2) How many *Harry Potter* books and/or movies did you read and/or watch? (ONLY 1 or 2–5 OR ALL THE BOOKS); (3) Judging by what you know about *Harry Potter* characters, which of the following

22 As for Teresa Espinal (1989: 84), proper names which are transparent enough as regards their linguistic and intended meaning should be translated into the TL, trying to safeguard as much as possible their conceptual content and even trying to keep their formal features.

names do you think is more suitable (better describes) the character? (OLD NAME OR A NEW NAME).

According to the questionnaire results, all students (100%) have either read *Harry Potter* books or watched *Harry Potter* films, or both. The majority of them – namely 87%, read all the books/saw all the movies, and 13% read 2–5 books and/or watched 2–5 *Harry Potter* films. As expected, the majority of students (72%) selected the new designations as truly successful translations. The only exception to the rule was the name of Harry Potter himself. Still, this attitude is understandable, bearing in mind that with the passing of time the name has become the brand. Even so, 9% of the students believe that KOSANKO LONČAR(IĆ), or ŠIŠKO ČABRIĆ, or ČUPKO ČAROBNJAKOVIĆ, or BORIS/BORKO SILOVITI, are purposeful Serbian translations. The results illustrate that ensuring linguistic equivalence really means achieving not only semantic but also formal and cultural equivalence.

On the basis of the examples mentioned above, this paper sheds light on the methodological procedures which could have been applied in order to ensure the meaning component of the given *Harry Potter* names is preserved in the Serbian language. Still, this does not mean the suggested TL translation equivalents can indeed be employed commercially. After all, *Harry Potter* names in English have become so popular worldwide in the meantime that larger audience may as well expect them to be left intact (especially if they had seen the films first, and read the novels afterwards). In this sense, the analysis of the selected names in *Harry Potter* suffices only to explain their etymology and to portray what was lost in the TL when the translators (willingly or unwillingly) chose not to deal with the names' origins and derivation.

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### Sažetak

## PREVOĐENJE SA ENGLSKOG JEZIKA NA SRPSKI JEZIK IMENA LIKOVA U ROMANIMA O HARIJU POTERU: IZGUBLJENI U PREVODU

U radu se govori o problematici prevođenja sa engleskog jezika na srpski jezik imena likova koji se pojavljuju u seriji romana o Hariju Poteru (knjige 1–6). Data imena u srpskoj verziji teksta, gde prevode svih šest tomova potpisuju Vesna i Draško Roganović, uglavnom su samo fonetski transkribovana, i to prilično često neadekvatno. Uprkos tome, Džoana Rouling, spisateljica romana, u intervjuima je više puta isticala kako je za svoje junake pažljivo odabirala imena nastojeći da na taj način osvetli njihove određene karakterne ili fizičke osobine, aspekte ponašanja i dr. U tom svetlu, imena likova u romanima o Hariju Poteru nikako ne treba uzimati zdravo za gotovo. To je i inače imperativ u dečjim štivima (Cvijetić, 2005: 21). U najkraćem, imena junaka u romanima o Hariju Poteru odlikuju se jakom semantičkom nabijenošću (Hirsch, 2008), budući da odslikavaju metaforičko-metonimijske prenose značenja, oličavaju aliteracije, anagrame, rime i dr. Upravo kao posledica nepronalaženja adekvatnog srpskog prevodnog ekvivalenta, implicitno data značenja imena likova u romanu ostaju skrivena za čitaoca. Kako je to u radu objašnjeno, postupak prevođenja imena zapravo podrazumeva sledeće: (1) sprovođenje istraživanja motivisanosti raspoloživih imena, dakle rasvetljavanje manje-više skrivenih ideja i poruka koje se čitaocu imenima šalju, i (2) odabiranje adekvatnog prevodnog ekvivalenta, budući da engleski jezik i srpski jezik ne stoje jedan prema drugom u odnosu 1:1. To dalje podrazumeva da je potrebno izvršiti odgovarajuće semantičke i kulturološke adaptacije. Primera radi, prezime *Weasley*, dosl. Lasica + -ić > Lasičić, u srpskom prevodu postaje *Lisičić*, budući da u srpskom jeziku leksema *lasica* (a ne *lasica*) u svest priziva mentalnu sliku riđeg krzna/dlake, pri čemu su svi članovi porodice *Weasley* prirodno crvenokosi (to je njihova najupečatljivija fizička karakteristika).

### Ključne reči:

romani o Hariju Poteru, imena likova, engleski jezik, srpski jezik, prevođenje