

# Transfer phenomena and intercultural movements of texts

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## Abstract

The complexity of contemporary international communication requires an analysis of the transfer phenomena occurring within it. This paper addresses the subject from the perspective of cultural approaches to translation by adopting the concept *modes of discursive transfer*, which refers to any form of text processing that can be produced within and/or across cultures and media (translation, summary, adaptation for children, comic strip or film, etc.). To illustrate the transformations that textual material can undergo, I draw on the well-known example of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and its discursive multiplication within the book industry. Focusing more specifically on cover illustrations and plot summary, I adopt a cross-cultural perspective and present a comparison and contrast of the English, US, and Spanish editions.

**Keywords:** Translation studies, transfer theory, multimodal analysis, publishing strategies, intercultural narrative.

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## Introduction

This paper explores the role played by different types of transfer operations in the discursive multiplication of the same textual material, within and across cultures and media. The study begins by providing an overview of some of the research carried out by translation scholars in this subject, and then considers other approaches and their contribution to our understanding of transfer operations –namely media studies, multimodal communication and intercultural narrative.

Within translation studies, the idea that translation should be viewed as one specific instance of the more general phenomenon of inter-systemic transfer was developed by the 'polysystem' paradigm (Even Zohar 1978a, 1978b; Toury 1980, 1986), which sought a general model to understand, analyse and describe the functioning and evolution of literary systems. Basically, this theory provided a new insight into translation, focusing on the translated text as an entity that exists within the target polysystem in its own right. Within this conception, the work of Russian formalists and deconstructionists played indeed a key role; thus translation started to be considered in terms of *metatext* and *intertextuality* (Hermans 1999, Baker (ed.) 1998).

These ideas evolved over time and encouraged researchers to ask what translation does in specific cultural settings. Hermans (1985) in particular made an important contribution with the notion of translation as the *manipulation* of literature, and established connections with

another cultural trend that emerged in the 1980s through the works of Lefevere and Bassnett. These scholars centred their interest on the manipulation processes of literature and observed how translation "can introduce new concepts, genres, and devices"; but "it can also repress innovation, distort and contain" (Bassnett and Lefevere 1992: vii).

Moreover, Lefevere (1992) conceived translation in terms of 'rewriting', and although in his work the frame of reference is again primarily literary, broader applications can be derived from it. Thus taking into account that "a great deal of cultural transmission, and hence much of our cultural knowledge, is based not on direct contact with the 'originals' but on the various rewritings in circulation", Lefevere (1992: 7) observed the need to study translation in conjunction with other forms of text processing that derive from and even claim to represent the same text, since all of them "partake in the packaging, remodelling, manipulation, construction and transmission of cultural goods". Examples of this would be plot summaries in literary histories or reference books; reviews in newspapers, magazines, or journals; critical articles; or performances on stage, screen, etc.

The same conception is shared by Hermans (1996), who approaches the study of transfer phenomena by extending the boundaries of the term 'rewriting':

Translation may be regarded as a particular mode of discursive transfer between cultural circuits and systems. It constitutes one among a number of possible modes of the intercultural movements of texts. Other modes include, for example, importing or exporting a text in untranslated form (...) Summary, paraphrase, gloss, critical commentary and other forms of what André Lefevere broadly calls 'rewriting' (e.g. in Lefevere 1992) constitute a further set of alternative modes, as do transformations into other semiotic media, and so on (Hermans 1996: 26).

For Hermans (1999: 128), the cultural and social relevance of these modes is obvious, given their volume and significance in the media. Yet, in spite of the evolution of these contemporary descriptive and cultural approaches to all fields of communication, and the expansion of their research into several of these modes of transfer, a general theory of global transfer phenomena has not yet been fully developed.

### **Analysing transfer phenomena from a multidisciplinary perspective**

According to what has been said, if we want to search for a perspective from which the immense variety of transfer operations can be related, we can observe the ways they can be produced, and approach the study of the modes of discursive transfer from a *(cross)-cultural* and/or a *(cross)-media* perspective. Moreover, the development of a global transfer theory should also be addressed by researchers in other fields of communication studies, among other things because:

- It could greatly contribute to a better understanding of the exportation and importation processes of texts. We must take into account that in their need to provide the media with contents all producers perform these forms of transfer in their everyday practices, in order to generate hundreds of messages from the same textual material. Thus more than the creation of new texts, media industries look for profitability in their messages by recycling them and causing them to circulate in a constant, interdiscursive transferring process. In fact, the evolution of all media cannot be understood without these transferences, which can provide

explanations about the ways each new medium has explored its narrative possibilities by transferring textual material from other media.

- It could also provide valuable insights for the study of the 'canonisation' of texts by the media, of the cross-cultural ideological phenomena implied in the process, and ultimately, explanations of how global and local forces intermingle.

Framing this study within a broader, multidisciplinary approach can contribute on the other hand, to expand certain limitations in translation studies. Mainly because in spite of adopting a semiotic perspective when analysing transfer operations such as comic strip or screen adaptations, researchers in this field tend to emphasize on verbal language, which must always be present. These are in fact multimodal texts, "whose meanings are realized through more than one semiotic code" (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 183), and all modes must be given an equal relevance and status. Thus in order to gain a better understanding of this subject, the more comprehensive approach of multimodal discourse analysis will be valuable (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 2001), and its exploration of communicative modes such as language, image, music, sound, and gesture. In this context, 'modes' are conceived as "semiotic resources which allow the simultaneous realisation of discourses and types of (inter)action". Thus designs for instance "use these resources, combining semiotic modes, and selecting from the options they make available according to the interest of a particular communication situation." (Kress and van Leeuwen 2001: 20-22).

However, the integration of these fields entails certain difficulties, being one of them the common polysemous uses of the word 'mode', which applies to different objects of study. Thus in order to avoid confusion, from now I will refer to the various 'modes of discursive transfer' in terms of 'discursive transferences', 'transfer operations/phenomena' or 'forms of text processing'.

### **The discursive multiplication of a printed text**

In order to analyse some of these transfer phenomena, how they operate, and their socio-cultural and ideological implications, I have chosen a specific text, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, since this is a most illustrative example of the transformations that textual material can undergo.

In fact, this text can be considered to be "the "progenitor" of a global phenomenon of the distributed trans-media *franchise*" (Lemke 2004: 3): While trying to prove how "many of the dominant ideological discourses of globalising commercial culture today are distributed across multiple media", Lemke has observed that this is specifically the case for particular thematic formations which can be protected by copyright as "intellectual property" and then "franchised" or distributed under the logo of a corporate "brand". Such is clearly the case of "Harry Potter":

The Harry Potter franchise is a new kind of cross-media or meta-media object. The complete experience of its "discourse" involves participation with all these media: not just reading the books, but also seeing the films (which differ significantly from the books) and the DVDs (which include material not in the commercially-distributed theatrical-release films), playing the videogames, wearing the clothing, buying the toys, visiting the websites which are linked to the books, films, and videogames, and even perhaps eating the candy. The

websites often include vast networks of online discussions among "fans" about the commercial works, with speculations about future products, and even the production by fans of imitative fictions that further elaborate the alternative reality of the Harry Potter universe (Lemke 2004: 3).

In the quotation above, implicit reference is made to various transfer phenomena –film and video adaptations, readers' reviews, translations– which have made it possible to multiply and export the Harry Potter messages throughout the world. But if *cultural globalisation* is achieved through these forms of text processing, so is *localisation*. This is the perspective I am going to adopt here, by centring on the printed novel of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, and examining the position of target consumers and their appropriation of the text on three superimposed levels: 1) the specific socio-cultural context, 2) the intermediate level represented by media producers within the specific communicative context of the publishing industry, and 3) readers' response to the book.

I focus on this specific medium –although other media such as internet or the film industry will also be mentioned– because my interest in this occasion lies in cultural transmission. More specifically, it is my intention to shed some more light on the symbiotic working together of different kinds of discursive transfers "within the acculturation process between cultures, and the ways in which different 'images' of the same text coexist with and even contradict each other" (Bassnett and Lefevere 1998: 10). Thus in order to explore the differences and similarities of various forms of text processing that have been produced on the basis of the fictional text, I have selected three editions of the novel: British, US, and Spanish.

### **Publishing strategies and rhetorical operations**

The forms of text processing that will be analysed here operate as *publishing strategies*. With regard to readers' orientation towards the literary product, I will look more precisely at the most immediate representations to be perceived by consumers: *front and back cover designs*, and *summary plot*, although *translation*, and some other forms present in published editions (*acclaims*, *author's biography*) will also be addressed.

Their status however, is not the same. Basically, translation is the only one that is designed to replicate the original, which it claims to present; thus it attempts to produce an effect of equivalence, although it cannot avoid to be determined by various factors of the target system, as demonstrated by the investigations carried out in this field. In contrast, the rest appear in the covers and combine several semiotic modes. Moreover, they are all synthetic forms of text processing; and that includes the title (Lefevere 1996: 138), whose typography can be especially appealing in the case of children's literature. As for the images that appear on back covers, one of their functions is to connect the summary plot and the acclaims. But the former clearly "refers to the text it rewrites" (Lefevere 1996: 138), as it contrives to be an 'objective' reformulation. The latter, the acclaim/s for the novel, are evaluative practices transferred from the press that provide responses to the original published literary work and/or to the translated versions.

Together with this, certain product details and book information such as the publisher, number and type of edition, place and year of publication, and also the names of translators or cover illustrators –in terms of gender and nationality– can provide significant data for the analysis. For example, while the UK released an adult edition with more mature cover artwork, this strategy was not adopted by other publishing houses. Even more significant is

the time scale of when the books were published: there is a difference of one year between publication in the UK (1997) and the US (1998) and two years (1999) in the case of the translated Spanish edition. In contrast, this time period was notably shorter for the subsequent novels, as the cultural repercussion of the phenomenon had then been evaluated. As a result, while in the UK the second novel came out one year after the first only six months separated the publication of the first and second books in Spain.

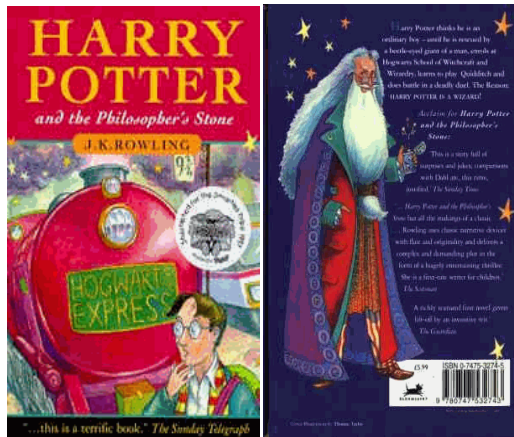
Moreover, what the mentioned book strategies have in common is the fact that they are used by publishing houses to persuade the public to buy and read the text. Rhetoric is then crucial to understand the effectiveness of these transferences which use the same textual material but transforming it in multiple forms. Thus we must first look at the original fictional text and then observe *how* the narrative has been rhetorically shaped in the different forms of text processing, and how these forms combine in each of the selected editions. In other words, by making use of the categories of classic rhetoric –*addition, suppression, substitution, permutation, and repetition*– we will be able to analyse what has been omitted, added and selected in relation to the characters, background, and events, and the linkages implied among them in terms of coherence. Moreover, the adoption of a cross-cultural perspective links this analysis to another field of study, which is interested in the processes of articulation between *intercultural narratives* and their social contexts, and raises questions of identity, and genre.

### ***HARRY POTTER AND THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE***

Basically, this book follows a familiar theme in English children's literature, that of adventures at boarding school. Moreover, the media have classified it as a fantastical and family thriller, genres that demand action, fantasy, mystery, and heroes-villains (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996). Of the various ways it can be approached, we will see it here as a coming-of-age novel, with its most important discourses being those of *family* and *education*. The novel, which was primarily aimed at older children, has in fact "all the typical features of the *bildungsroman* –Harry is orphaned, leaves home, becomes educated, goes through many tests of character, and finds his true self in a series of quests" (Burn 2004). In terms of the two main elements of narrative (character and action), the story is told –with a few exceptions– from Harry's point of view, and all action happens around him or to him. The story chronicles one year in his life, and revolves around the different phases of his learning process. It is at the school of wizards that Harry develops his innate capacities, by acquiring the intellectual, physical and moral skills that will enable him to recognise and confront the good and evil forces operating in the world, and to transcend reality. But although most of the action takes place in the realms of magic, the verisimilitude of its background indicates that this dimension cannot be separated from the real world. And this real world is decidedly British; the story is set in this specific cultural environment, and consequently reflects certain British social and cultural values of the family and education. Yet these two discourses –family and education– are not only part of the novel; they must also be interpreted within the specific communicative context of the book industry, observing the ways publishing houses present the genre of children's literature to their readers in specific socio-cultural contexts.

#### **1. The British edition of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone***

Figure 1



The cover design of the British edition (created by a man) captures a specific moment in the narrative: Hogwarts school can only be reached by travelling on the Hogwarts Express, a magical train which leaves from Platform 9 ¾ at London's King Cross Station. The drawing thus corresponds to chapter six (of a total of 17): "The Journey from platform Nine and Three-Quarters", and refers to the symbolic transfer of Harry, and to his hesitating moment of initiation. It is a scene of adventure and excitement (as the dominant colour red may connote), based on a real setting (the railway station) with a magic touch (stars in the smoke). This first visual representation of Harry, positioned here nearer to us than the train, depicts him as a recognisable type of British school teenager; this provokes the viewer to identify with the character while at the same time the high angle from which he/she observes Harry indicates a power over him (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 157).

If we turn the book over, another image is clearly identifiable as Dumbledore. This image establishes an association with Harry in terms of pupil-professor; furthermore, the stars in the blue background and the colour red connect both cover designs. As reflected in his eclectic style (shoes, pyjama, glasses, beard and hairstyle), Dumbledore combines reality and magic: on the one hand he is pictured as a man of the present day, with an intellectual demeanour, and a touch of humour and eternal youth; while on the other, he personifies the wise wizard (as marked by the runes and moons that appear as decorations on his cape or by the colour purple). Moreover, he is establishing eye contact with future possible readers, and the Put-Outer he is holding highlights the summary while his right hand points at the acclaims:

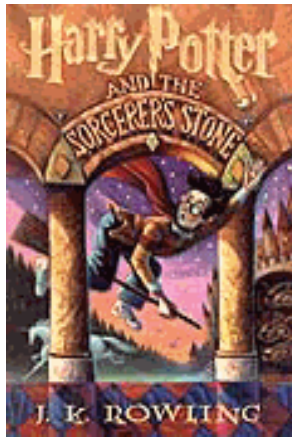
Harry Potter thinks he is an ordinary boy -until he is rescued by a beetle-eyed giant of a man, enrolls at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, learns to play Quidditch and does battle in a deadly duel. The Reason: HARRY POTTER IS A WIZARD!

This summary moves from the character's state of mind (Harry "thinks") to action. It is important to observe that Harry's family is not mentioned, and the selected list of events follows a chronological order which lead to a surprising conclusion ("Harry Potter is a wizard!"). The gaps given in the information are a convention of the genre and can only be completed when reading the novel; thus reading is also seen in terms of adventure and discovery. It might also be observed that in contrast with the unknown giant's name, the name of "Hogwarts", which "invokes nostalgia for old-fashioned educational establishments" (Moore 2000: 176) appears again, thus emphasising the importance of the school.

Finally, the acclaims by *The Sunday Times*, *The Scotsman* and *The Guardian* classify and evaluate the novel in terms of genre and narrative ("inventive, classic narrative, complex and demanding plot, hugely entertaining thriller, richly textured first novel, inventive wit, a writer for children, story full of surprises").

## 2. The US edition: *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*

Figure 2



The US and the UK editions differ in several aspects. Firstly, the US version was titled *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. The publishers were apparently concerned that the term "philosopher's stone" would not be sufficiently familiar to most Americans and thus the British title would not convey the 'appropriate' message. Yet this renaming for international distribution, common practice in the US, did not produce any effect on the sales figures. Nonetheless, this and other changes produced great controversy, and as a consequence many "rewritings" were generated on the basis of the novel. For instance, internet forums ([www.cosforums.com/archive/index.php/t-4363.html](http://www.cosforums.com/archive/index.php/t-4363.html)) speculated about the possible ignorance of editors and the cultural differences in education, with debates on whether Americans would read a text with the original title, because "Philosopher" has "overtones of deep thinking, and evokes issues that one would not expect in children's literature."

It is also important to observe here already the creative typography of the title with the P that reflects the lightning bolt-shaped scar on Harry's forehead, since this is the design that would later be used in the film adaptation and in many published editions throughout the world.

The front cover picture (created by a man and a woman) was also changed, and it refers to a much later scene in chapter 11, "Quidditch". The character has already overcome the difficult phase of initiation in his learning process, and is now a student wizard mastering this odd sport. At dusk, and against a brown background, Hogwarts appears as a mysterious castle with pointed towers. In the centre of the picture we see Harry wearing a striped Muggle shirt, jeans, and trainers and with a simple cape to indicate robes. He is about to catch the Snitch, and the columns through which he is flying resemble the mouth of a goal. The elements present in the picture thus emphasise action, and the physical aspects of education; even the unicorn that gallops by and the broom that Harry is mounting are associated with riding sports, and have lost part of their magical connotations (this emphasis on action may be considered a convention genre to be found in other American cultural products, specially in films).

The same idea is present in the plot summary, considerably longer than the UK version:

HARRY POTTER has never been the star of a Quidditch team, scoring points while riding a broom far above the ground. He knows no spells, has never helped to hatch a dragon, and has never worn a cloak of invisibility.

All he knows is a miserable life with the Dursleys, his horrible aunt and uncle, and their abominable son Dudley, a great big swollen spoiled bully. Harry's room is a tiny closet at the foot of the stairs, and he hasn't had a birthday party in eleven years.

But all that is about to change when a mysterious letter arrives by owl messenger: a letter with an invitation to an incredible place that Harry, and anyone who reads about him, will find unforgettable.

For it's there that he finds not only friends, aerial sports, and magic in everything from classes to meals, but a great destiny that's been waiting for him... if Harry can survive the encounter.

Harry is introduced as a potential action and sports hero, and intellectual aspects of his education are almost absent. His unbearable and neglectful family situation is described in the second paragraph in evaluative terms ("miserable", "horrible", "abominable", "spoiled"), and the name of the school has been substituted by 'an incredible place'. In fact, only the term "magic" appears, while 'witchcraft' and 'wizardry' are not mentioned at all. In this respect, it is of interest to point out that some Christian groups in the US accused the books of promoting witchcraft and Satanism, and there were attempts to burn this and the following volumes of the series.

It must also be mentioned that this edition bears no figure on its back cover, but the back flap includes a starred review by *Publishers Weekly*, and a biography of the author, which dramatically describes J.K. Rowling as "a struggling single mother" who wrote the beginnings of the novel "on scraps of paper at a local café".

Also significant are the changes introduced in the US version of the novel at the lexical level. Here again editors assumed that US young readers may have difficulty understanding the British English of the book, and up to 80 words and terms were changed. Examples of the list are: car park/parking lot, lot/bunch, shan't/won't, sherbet lemon /lemon drop, dustbin/trashcan, cooker/stove, hamburger bars/hamburger restaurants, queuing/lining up, crumpets/ English muffins, etc.

### **3. The Spanish edition: *Harry Potter y la piedra filosofal***

Figure 3





The Spanish front and back covers present a combination of elements borrowed from the UK and US editions. On the one hand, the translated title has followed the original British novel. On the other, the visual composition of the front cover (created by a woman) is a variation of the US design, but the modal articulation (colour, setting, character, magic objects) conveys different connotations. Here blue and white dominate the scene, and all magic and fantastical elements (night, moon, water, unicorn, broom) evoke a feminine, timeless, and oneiric world. The contact with reality is lost, and Harry's image is more childlike and casual. He appears immersed in the background, and seems to have no control over the action because his hands are grasping the broom tightly while he is plummeting through the air.

The back cover also depicts a figure set against a blue and purple background. But it is a far cry from the representation of the humorous and eclectic professor Dumbledore. Here the real level is lost, and the changes introduced in the illustration (for instance, the pyjama and the runes in his cape have disappeared) anchor the meaning in a different tradition. The connotations are not the same, as this figure does not correspond to any 'real' character. This serious and austere magician represents the archetype, and we get the impression that he himself has come out of the universal book of fantasy to tell the story of a young child. The pupil-professor link is not established, because he does not symbolise Harry's future projection, and the protagonist has no access to the knowledge held by the magician. This idea is emphasised by the fact that the figure does not establish eye contact with real readers. He stands for the authoritative, omniscient storyteller, who highlights the summary by exercising control over its meaning. It is also significant that this edition has no acclaims, because the evaluation and comments have to a certain extent been included in the summary (translations into English are my own).

Harry Potter is orphaned and lives in the house of his abominable uncle and aunt, and of his unbearable cousin Dudley. Harry feels very sad and lonely, until one fine day when he receives a letter that will change his life forever. There, he is informed that he has been accepted as a student at Hogwarts boarding School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. From that moment on, Harry's luck will change dramatically. In this exceptional school he will learn spells, and fabulous tricks and tactics of defence against the forces of evil. He will become the school champion of Quidditch, a kind of air soccer played on broomsticks, and he will make some good friends... although some terrible enemies as well. But above all, he will discover the secrets that will enable him to fulfil his destiny. Although it might not seem like it at first sight, Harry is no ordinary boy. He is a real wizard!

This summary shares certain verbal expressions and terms with the UK edition ("Harry is a real wizard!") and the US edition ("abominable"). But here the information about Harry's family is described at the very beginning (he "is orphaned"), and in very dramatic terms, so the reader may get the impression that the novel is founded on a different English literary tradition (i.e., Harry can be seen as a David Copperfield of modern times). Moreover, a great deal of information, some of it redundant, has been added in all paragraphs. For instance, "Quidditch" is described in 'dictionary' terms and related only to football (Spanish national sport *par excellence*), and the abundant use of qualifying adjectives orients the reader's sense of meaning towards good/evil. This response to questions (what, where, when, why, how) can be regarded as a rhetorical convention of Spanish summaries, and may also respond to the fact that this is a novel of a foreign origin. Nonetheless, the result is that a convention of the adventure genre has been broken.

Underlying this discursive transfer also hides the presence of a strong authoritative control over the narrative. As mentioned above there is little omniscience in the novel, but with two exceptions: 1) Half of chapter one is written from the point of view of Harry's uncle and the other half from an objective point of view; 2) the matches in the Quidditch chapter are written from an independent point of view, depicting events which Harry would not be able to see while playing the game. Curiously, these are the two chapters selected for the beginning of the plot summary and the cover design (following the US edition).

As for the translation of the written narrative, it must first be mentioned that the Spanish publishing house launched two other editions in South America (Colombia, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile) and North America (Mexico, US), with the intention of making the text more readable for the various Spanish-language reading publics (the translation of the book into two different dialects of the same language can also be found in Brazil and Portugal). In general, the English-Spanish translation poses many questions that cannot be approached in depth here. In fact, translators (Moore 2000: 176) have recognised that the translation of this first Harry Potter novel, as well as the other volumes of the series, was a difficult task, because the novel contains a considerable number of references to English literature, a high degree of humour, invented words (magic terms, spells, etc.), and double meanings. Moreover, the language reveals much about the characters; many words and names have special connotations for a British audience, as they conjure up images of different social classes, and various expressions and forms of speech are regional. All of this requires careful and creative translating.

In general, domesticating strategies –translation of proper names, subtraction of language elements in order to ignore cultural differences, etc.– have not been used on this occasion. Nevertheless, a lack of homogeneous criteria can be observed throughout the whole translated text at different levels (as well as in further numbers of the series, which have been carried out by different translators). For instance, following the current trend in translation studies, most proper names of people, animals and places have been transferred in their original form, but there are no translators' annotations about cultural nuances unfamiliar to Spanish readers, which could have provided insightful observations. Hence, we can read on the same page: "Los muggles, la quaffle, los bludgers, la snitch". But together with this, certain names ("Norberto"), treatments ("la señora Potter"), and songs ("*Tiptoe through the Tulips*"-"*De puntillas entre los tulipanes*") have been translated, while others adapted; for instance "*Oh Come, All Ye Faithful*" has been substituted by the well-known Latin version of "*Adeste Fidele*".

As observed by González and Veiga (2003: 107), in failing to translate many verbal elements meaningfully, or to maintain devices such as accents, alliteration and word plays, the Spanish translation has lost part of the humour and depth of the original, and the social and cultural differences of the various characters, their ambiguity and associations (good-evil), their individualisation, psychological depth and degree of maturity.

Moreover, the translated text might shock potential readers and it is not coherent with the external forms of text processing of the book. When approaching the novel, Spanish readers find themselves with a text aimed at older children that cannot avoid representing another specific cultural identity. For instance, the fact that many names are left unchanged forces readers to face certain difficulties as they must recognise, pronounce, and memorise many terms of foreign origin, whose presence ultimately, epitomises the Englishness of the text.

### **Some conclusions**

As reflected in the above exploration, the three published editions do not communicate exactly the same message, since each one presents the information about the novel in a different way:

1. In the UK edition, cover designs, and plot summary have followed the narrative of the novel and replaced the absence of true family values by emphasising education. The exclusivity and prestige of the institution is most relevant here and school is experienced by the main character as an exciting adventure; so is the fact of reading a novel about it.
2. In the US edition the name of the school is not mentioned. Harry has suffered some transformation in order to become a recognisable type of US teenager, and physical action prevails over intellectual activity.
3. The Spanish edition for its part emphasises family values and features Harry as an unprotected child immersed in a fantastic tale; consequently, the way characters, and events are presented appears to ascribe the novel to a different generic tradition. Moreover, children's education is associated here with a strong authoritative presence.

Each edition to a greater or lesser extent, has interpreted the discourses about family and education according to domestic and recognisable values in order to make them familiar to the readers. Hence, their expectations and associations are different, and the book does not work for most Americans and Spanish in the same way as it does for the British public. In this respect, the observations made by Venuti (1995) about the role played by translation in the formation of cultural identities, could also apply to other discursive transfers:

Translation is thus an inevitable domestication, wherein the foreign text is inscribed with linguistic and cultural values that are intelligible to specific domestic constituencies. This process of inscription operates at every stage in the production, circulation, and reception of translation. It is initiated by the very choice of a foreign text to translate, always an exclusion of other foreign texts and literatures, which answers to particular domestic interests. It continues most forcefully in the development of a translation strategy that rewrites the foreign text in domestic dialects and discourses, always a choice of certain domestic values to the exclusion of others. And it is further complicated by the various forms in which the translation is published,

reviewed, read and taught, producing cultural and political effects that vary with different institutional contexts and social positions (Venuti 1995: 2).

Consequently, the examined transfer operations must be read in the context of prevailing rhetorical conventions, which are determined by cultural and historical factors.

Moreover, it has also been observed that a lack of coordination among the different text producers can give rise to the coexistence of various interpretations of the novel within the same published edition. The result is a book which is not "readable as a coherent sequence" (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 25), since the various forms of text processing may carry different and even contradictory meanings.

In general, publishing teams –editors, designers, translators, etc. –, can become cultural gatekeepers and even censors, who remodel the narrative, make selections, or add what is felt to be missing. This is especially true in the case of children's literature, where they do not only orient but also decide *how* young readers' must approach the text. In fact, the strategies used in children's literature have been the object of many investigations by translation scholars. They have criticised the changes introduced by translators who do not give children access to the 'original', thus underestimating their intellectual and imaginative capacities to learn and to gain insights into other worlds:

Apart from its entertainment value, children's literature is nowadays considered to fulfill an important role in the acquisition of reading maturity. In addition to the underlying aim of broadening young readers' vocabulary and training their ability to deal with more complex syntactic structures than they meet in everyday conversation, it often represents a source of moral and didactic principles. Studies on the translation of children's literature tend to focus on the fact that the young reader may not yet be able to cope with different cultures and environments. An extreme form of domestication or rather *naturalization* seems to be the order of the day, so any potentially puzzling detail is filtered out and the norms of the target culture rather than of the source culture are adopted (Malkmjaer 2000: 252-4).

Nevertheless, the use of such domesticating strategies cannot wholly erase the foreign origin of the text, and together with this, the transmission and filtering of certain values. The effect of such values can build up and potentially originate tensions of any kind (generational, gender, nationality) when confronted with traditional local values. This is particularly true when one cultural system greatly influences another, through a massive importation of texts originated in the first.

### **Further research**

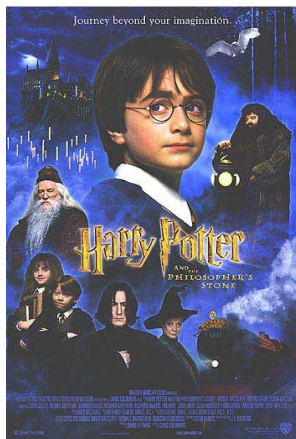
In this respect, what has been detected in the Spanish edition is a clear influence of the U.S. version. This is an important verification, which could lead us to extend the study and observe the shaping power of the U.S. culture in other language editions. If we look for instance at an internet cover gallery (<http://www.harrypottercat.com/fixes/lilibres/primer/portades1.php>) of a total list of 32 available front covers, only 5 feature the UK design: Catalan (first edition), Latin, Welsh, Irish Gaelic, Greek (Ancient and Modern); 11 publishing houses have created their own design: Spanish, Catalan, French, German, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, Italian, Japanese, Slovenian, Swedish; and up to 16 feature the US design: Albanian, Chinese, Czech,

Faroese, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Icelandic, Latvian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Serbian, Turkish, Urdu.

Going a step further, we can see a progressive appropriation of the British novel by US culture with the subsequent film adaptation, another huge transfer operation of the entire text, which was released under the same name and reactivated book sales of the first and second volumes. In contrast with the publishing industry, which seems to be more locally oriented, here we find only one film cover (although also subject to certain variations) with the universally known Harry Potter in the flesh. He is British, that is true, but it would be interesting to analyse to what extent does the Britishness of characters and settings in the film correspond to the image that the US has created of this culture, as shown in the particular types of representations made in this and other media industries.

To illustrate this, let's consider that the way Harry angles himself while looking from a distance in the film cover is also a U.S. convention ([http://eu.movieposter.com/poster/MPW-11166/Harry\\_Potter\\_And\\_The\\_Philosophers\\_Stone.html](http://eu.movieposter.com/poster/MPW-11166/Harry_Potter_And_The_Philosophers_Stone.html)):

Figure 4



Similar images of young heroes can be observed in many movie posters and promotional materials, as well as in certain films of a foreign origin. Such is the case of *Mar Adentro/The Sea Inside* (2005), the Spanish Oscar winner film based on the real-life story of a 55-year-old man who fought a 30 year campaign in favour of euthanasia and his own right to die. Hence, while the American version presents the leading character (movie star Javier Bardem) using the same visual stereotype for commercial purposes, the Spanish original poster depicts him as a sick man lying in bed. Moreover, the fact that he is facing us can indicate an affiliative relationship; thus body orientation, facial expression and eye contact are communicating different messages and cultural meanings (<http://www.imdb.com/media/rm2107153664/tt0369702>).

Furthermore, this kind of transfer operation can also be observed in relation to a more complex form of text processing within the same acculturation process: the making again of successful foreign movies, common practice in the American film industry where a number of remakes omit the title of the original version (Segovia 1998).

This way, the US is expanding its image of other cultures in an ongoing process of interdiscursive practices which consists of remaking imported cultural goods, exporting them

in a practically simultaneous process throughout the world and promoting them through marketing and also through all kinds of forms of text processing (<http://www.harrypotter.com>):. Such a constant importation of US consumer cultural items implies a growing familiarity in the rest of the world not only with this specific cultural reality, but also with its view of other cultures, and this is also part of the global process of gradual acceptability of American values.

But here again, the film adaptation –and this can also apply to other products–, was translated (dubbed and/or subtitled) into many language versions. And together with this, hundreds of rewritings –critics, opinion articles, reviews, etc. – in all the languages were produced. Thus the foregoing analysis has to be considered only as part of a more general frame of text reformulation and reinvention, whose study can be approached from the perspective of localisation, of globalisation, or the combination of both forces in the process.

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### **About the Author**

Raquel Segovia is a full-time staff member at the University Jaume I of Castellón, Spain where she teaches Media Translation, and English for the Media. She holds a B.A in Spanish Language and Literature (University Autónoma, Madrid), and M.A and PhD degrees in Languages and Film Studies (University of Pittsburgh, P.A., U.S.A). For several years, she worked at the private TV channel Canal+ Spain and was first, the chief linguistic supervisor of foreign programme translations; then, she became a documentalist, translator and writer of film and documentary files. Her research interests include intercultural studies, transfer theory, media critical discourse analysis, and multimodal communication. She has given lectures and published several book chapters and articles both at home and abroad.

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