THE PROBLEM OF THE TRANSLATION OF PROPER NAMES IN *HARRY POTTER AND THE LORD OF THE RINGS*[1]

Marta Mª Gutiérrez Rodríguez
University of Valladolid

The translation of proper names is one of the most difficult problems that can be found when translating a literary text. This is due to two reasons. First of all, the philosophy of language does not agree on whether proper names are meaningful or not. Second, there is a lack of consistency in the translation theories proposed. In this article we will analyse the importance of the translations of proper names in *Hary Potter and thePhilosopher's Stone* and *The Lord of th*e *Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*. We have chosen these two literary works because they will show the importance of the meaning of a proper name in literature and because they are both media phenomena.

1. INTRODUCTION

The translation of proper names shows itself as one of the most complex issues as regards literary translation. This complexity stems from two problems: the lack of a specific theory relative to the translation of names and the trends currently in force. The uncertainty about what to do is based on the different opinions on the meaning of proper names.

It may seem that we are not facing an important problem; however, it widens when the names in a literary work have a relevant meaning within that work. In this situation, the translator has many options and in some cases it is nearly impossible to choose one among them.

In the following article we are going to deal with this problem: the translation of proper names. First of all, we need to limit the study and thus, we have chosen the proper names in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* as our corpus under study. There are two main reasons for our choice. Firstly, in both novels most proper names imply a "symbolic" meaning. Secondly, both novels have been literary phenomena in the last ten years. Thus, their translation is crucial for the spreading of the language.

The translation of proper names in literature is immersed in a great doubt. This is the reason why we are going to unite the current trends to delimit which one is

---

more adequate for the translation of our corpus of examples. The aim is to show the need for a consistent theory in the translation of proper names.

To reach the aim above we need, first of all, to draw a theoretical framework that allows us to know all the different trends about the translation of proper names. This theoretical framework has two key points: the first one deals with the meaning of proper names and the second one with the delimitation of the different options of translation. Once the theoretical framework is established, we need to work with a group of proper names.

Proper names are usually divided into four main groups attending to the literary universe they can create: names of people, places, things and animals. We are going to focus on the names of people and we are going to analyse how a different literary universe is created, depending on the invention of certain names that contribute to make that universe more real.

Once we have seen the scope of this phenomenon, we want to emphasize that translators have to face a marketing problem when translating this kind of literary works. The publishing companies will probably ask them not to change the names of places and characters to make its commercialization easier. Nevertheless, we think this is not the case of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* because we have found that some of the names we are going to analyse have been translated into other languages, such as French[2]. In any case, we think that marketing is not such a great problem if we take into account the success reached by *The Lord of the Rings*, in which most proper names have been translated.

All the aforementioned leads us to wonder what makes a translator transfer a proper name in its SL[3] in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, and to translate it into the TL in *The Lord of the Rings*. One possible answer for the first question lays in the combination of both a wish of keeping the ethnicity and exoticism that adventures abroad have for us and the current translation trends that advocate that proper names should not be translated. On the other hand, the second question shows a wish of approaching the reader of the target language.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The problem of the translation of proper names has its origin in the philosophy of language because we need to elucidate whether proper names have a meaning. Notwithstanding, we need to know, first of all, what is a proper name and what distinguishes it from a common name. We refer now to the ideas stated by Ballard (1993: 195). He believes that a common name identifies an object designated by

---

[2]   To know the French translation of the proper names in Harry Potter, check Ernould 2003.

[3]   SL stands for "source language" and TL stands for "target language". ST will stand for "source text" and TT for "target text".

means of the definition of a kind of objects. On the other hand, a proper name refers to an extralinguistic, specific and unique object which is differentiated from other objects belonging to the same kind by means of its name. Taking this definition as a starting point, we may wonder what distinguishes a proper name (or the object identified by it) from another proper name (or object). We cannot answer this question without looking at the philosophy of language, since it would help us to know whether the proper name has a meaning or not.

Estébanez (2002: 92-3) identifies two main schools. The first one, stated by Mills, advocates for proper names being denotative, that is, they have a reference value which denotes a singular entity whose individuality is delimited by them (cf. Estébanez 2002: 92). Thus, we can say that, according to Mills, the meaning of a proper name is only and solely to mark or to point at something or someone.

The second school, led by Frege and Russell, states that proper names are connotative, i.e., they can be used as synonyms of their defined descriptions (cf. Estébanez 2002: 93). Hence, we can establish that proper names do not only point at the designated object, but they also refer to what is denominated.

Taking into account the aforementioned theories about the meaning of proper names, the first part of the analysis presented in this article will involve the application of those theories to the names which appear on the chosen literary works. That is, we will try to elucidate whether the names appearing in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* have a meaning. According to Moya, this is a key issue for literary translators, since they need to know whether the proper names in the literary work entail information about the objects they denominate or identify, whether they are meaningless labels or, far from it, they include some meaning (cf. Moya 2000: 30-1).

Having decided on the meaning of proper names, we will try to establish the possible translation techniques which could be applied to proper names. There are several studies about this problem, but most of them defend three main processes: transfer, naturalization and literal translation. We will rely on Moya (2000), Newmark (1988) and Ballard (1993) to establish the most adequate translation processes. We have chosen these three authors because we believe that they are the ones who focus on the problem of the translation of proper names.

Before explaining the aforementioned translation processes, we would like to highlight that translation is a technique in which the linguistic and cultural reality of the temporal context are very important. This can be easily observed if we look at the development undergone by the different translation trends. Not long ago, the most popular process was naturalizing the proper name, whereas nowadays there seems to be a general principle according to which proper names should not be translated[4] (cf. Ballard 1993: 194).

---

[4]   We would like to highlight now that all the processes can be included under the broad category of "translation". Nevertheless, we will use the term "translation" to refer to literal translation, which would be explained afterwards.

When translating proper names, Moya (2002) defends two translation techniques: naturalization and transfer. We shall understand by naturalization the translating process based on transferring proper names and which consists in adapting a word in the SL to the pronunciation and morphology characteristic of the TL (cf. Moya 2000: 13-3). This technique aims at the SL name fulfilling the expectations of the readers of the TL text.

The transfer technique is a translation process which consists on passing the SL word on to the TL text (cf. Moya 2000: 13). The original word does not undergo any change. We have already mentioned that transfer is the most popular technique among translators nowadays. The transfer technique is believed to have several advantages. First, the TT is meant to be closer to the ST, since it is more precise and exact. Moreover, the TT preserves the original culture and it is more easily located. Nevertheless, we believe that the transfer technique also has some disadvantages. On the one hand, if the proper name entails some meaning, this meaning will be lost by the TL reader. Besides, it will be difficult for some social groups to read the proper names in the SL.

Taking into account the disadvantages of the transfer process and the similarities between the transfer and naturalization techniques, we intend to suggest the need of having the possibility of translating proper names in a literary text. If we look at the translation techniques proposed by Newmark (1988: 81-91), we believe that two of them could be easily adapted and used in a literary text. On the one hand, we can translate the original name literally, that is, we can change from one language to the other, turning one word into another word, one sentence into another sentence, one clause into another clause or one collocation into another collocation (cf. Newmark 1988: 68). It is important to highlight the need for the translated term to be natural in the TL. On the other hand, we could create a "cultural equivalent", i.e., we can use a culturally neutral word and we may add a specific term. This process neutralizes or generalizes the word in the SL, although occasionally some detail may be added (Newmark 1988: 83). In any case, we need to emphasize that choosing a "functional synonym" or cultural equivalent may result in losing some meaning which could be compensated by any other means.

We have referred several times to the loss of meaning. To avoid such a loss, translation theorists usually suggest two solutions. First, we may be translating an important book. If that is the case, and under the publishing company guidance, we could write a preface in which, among other things, we may explain the translation problems derived from the proper names in the text. Furthermore, we could also think about including the necessary additional information through "appendixes and notes". Newmark (1988: 91) stresses that the usage of this kind of additional information depends on the readers of the text and he proposes their use in order to compensate cultural, technical or even linguistic problems. When analysing proper names, we will be facing a mixture of cultural and linguistic problems, and thus, annotations could be helpful. However, we should always include the additional or

necessary information within the text, if possible, so that the readers' attention is not interrupted.

We consider that the translation techniques above mentioned are those which could be more easily used in the kind of books we are going to analyse. Nevertheless, we would like to recall that there are very different views regarding the translation of proper names. Hence, we are only going to look at the transfer and literal translation processes, since we think that they are the most feasible ones.

3. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*

The translation of proper names in *The Lord of the Rings* arises itself as a special case. The reason is that its author, J.R.R. Tolkien, was very interested in the translations of this work into other languages that were made when he was still alive. Furthermore, he focussed his attention on the translation of the nomenclature. This special interest is due to Tolkien's ideas about words: for him, words are the starting point for the story, and languages for the human races. In other words, first, it was the word "hobbit" and then he created the Hobbits (Day 1999: 10). For this reason, Tolkien thought that any alteration in the nomenclature of his mythology would modify the plot or story in itself.

Behind this great fantastic epic work, there is a linguistic universe constituted by a network of invented languages that makes its translation a challenge similar to the one the characters in the story have to overcome. If this network is not understood, it is nearly impossible to produce a good translation. The book is obviously written in English, but it is not its original language. Each race in the book has its own language. How is it, then, that the inhabitants of the Middle Earth can understand each other? There is a Common Speech, the language of the Hobbits, that, according to Tolkien, is represented in the book by the English language. Other invented languages offer significant similarities with Scandinavian languages such as Finish and Swedish, and with Old English and Welsh (Shippey 1999: 140).

After all the abovementioned, the translator's outlook when translating this novel into another language is not very encouraging. Tolkien was aware of this complexity and he tried to help them by writing several papers related to the invented languages and the translation of proper names. Appendix E and F to the third book of the saga pay special attention to Hobbits' surnames, focusing on their origin and the reason for their choice. He also refers to the translation of proper names in the letters he wrote to his son Christopher throughout his life.

In 1975, Tolkien wrote the "Guide to the Names in *The Lord of the Rings*"[5]. After the publication of the Swedish and Dutch editions, Tolkien was not satisfied at all with the treatment translators gave to proper names. To prevent subsequent "bad" translations into other languages, he wrote a guide in which he gave his own instructions to translators as regards nomenclature. The "Guide to the Names in *The Lord of the Rings*" is an alphabetically-ordered glossary divided in three groups: names of people, animals and things.

Tolkien's intention when writing all these papers was good; however, the result was not so good. A further study of these papers reveals contradictions that make the translator take even more decisions when trying to decide what to do with proper names. One of the most significant examples is the following: "I object as strongly as is possible to the "translation" of the nomenclature at all (even by a competent person)" (Carpenter 2000: 249); "All names not in the following list should be left entirely unchanged" (Tolkien 1975: 155).

The first statement agrees with the current trend of transferring names from one language to another. But, what happens with the second statement? What criteria has Tolkien followed to include some names in his list of translatable proper names and some not? Tolkien does not justify at all the reason why he only includes some of the names in the list.

Due to the huge number of names of people in *The Lord of the Rings*, we need to limit our corpus of examples to a small but representative group of proper names. Our choice is the names of the Hobbit families. There are several reasons for this choice: first of all, they belong to the Common Speech and then, they are translatable; second, as we are going to see during the analysis, they have "transparent" meaning; and third, we can see the different solutions translators have given to their translation.

Let's see now what translators have done. Have they followed Tolkien, the current trend or their own criteria? To reach a conclusion we need to analyse our corpus of examples.

BOFFIN (not translated) is a Hobbit surname, it does not appear in the "Guide to the Names in *The Lord of the Rings*" and it has not been translated. Thus, in this case, translators have followed Tolkien's instructions and the current trend when transferring proper names without any change.

BROCKHOUSE (TEJONERA) shows the same tendency to follow Tolkien's guidelines. It is included in the "Guide to the Names in *The Lord of the Rings*" and he gives clear instructions about its translation: "Brock is and old word for the badger still current in country speech up to the end of nineteenth century and appearing in literature, and hence in good dictionaries, including bilinguals" (Tolkien 1975: 161). Both words "brock" and "badger" are translated into Spanish

---

5   Tolkien, J.R.R. "Guide to the Names in *The Lord of the Rings*". *A Tolkien Compass*. Ed. Jared Lodbell. Illinois: Open Court, 1975.

as "tejón" (Collins Diccionario Inglés, 1997: 927). Thus, "brockhouse" is the brock or badger's house that, according to the DRAE (2001: 2146) is called "tejonera".

The analysis of these two names leads us to think that the translation criterion is going to follow this way. Nevertheless, the next example is going to show a different tendency.

BURROW (MADRIGUERA) is not included in the "Guide to the Names in *The Lord of the Rings*" and thus, it should not be translated. Nevertheless, it has been translated. Why, in this case, have translators not followed Tolkien's instructions? It is clear that this surname has a "transparent" meaning that allows its straightforward translation. The word "burrow" refers to "a hole or tunnel dug in the ground by a rabbit, fox or other small animal, for habitation or shelter" (Collins English Dictionary 2001: 216). The most common translation into Spanish is the one chosen by the translators.

But this does not justify the translator's choice to follow Tolkien depending on the semantic content of the names. What do BROCKHOUSE and BURROW have that BOFFIN has not? The meaning of the latter can be also found in any dictionary: "Brit. Informal. A scientist, esp. one carrying out military research" (Collins English Dictionary 2001: 175) and this also allows its translation.

So far we have seen that translators have adopted two different views as regards the instructions given by Tolkien and they have used two of the aforementioned processes when translating proper names: transfer (BOFFIN) and literal translation (BROCKHOUSE and BURROW).

Tolkien suggests one more process in the instructions he gives to translate GAMGEE (GAMYI): phonetic adaptation or transcription[6]. "In translation it would be best to treat this name as 'meaningless', and retain it with any spelling changes that may seem necessary to fit it to the style of the language of translation" (Tolkien 1975: 166). Translators have followed these instructions, replacing "ee" by its corresponding sound in Spanish "i"; the same has been done with the second "g", whose sound /dz/ has its Spanish equivalent in the pronunciation of "y".

Contradictions on the matter of translation go back to Tolkien himself, because of the different treatment he gives to very similar proper names. We have seen a clear example in the translation of BROCKHOUSE and BURROW.

Nevertheless, leaving aside those contradictions, translators had a clear criterion to follow. It is true that they do not give a solution to the problem of translation, but they contribute to give uniformity to the linguistic transfer.

Contradictions are not the only problem we find in the translation of proper names. We can also find translations in which there is a loss in meaning. The translation of the name CHUBB (REDONDO) is an example of this loss. "A genuine English surname, chosen because its immediate association in English with the adjective 'chubby' round and fat in bodily shape (said to be derived from chub, the

---

[6]   This process is what Newmark calls "naturalization"

name of a river fish)" (Tolkien 1975: 162). We find two problems in the translation. First, REDONDO is not used to refer to the physical constitution of people. And second, it loses the colloquial language connotations of "chubby" and of its translations "regordete" and "gordinflón".

3.2. Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone

The Harry Potter phenomenon has spread worldwide. One of the most important characteristics of this literary universe is to be anchored in a deeply British culture, which becomes apparent both in the places in which the action is set and in the characters' customs. Moreover, we could also say that J.K. Rowling tries to build up a parallel society to that in the real world.

Nevertheless, one of the most difficult problems, apart from cultural references, which could be encountered by the translator are the characters' proper names. We could say that every proper name or every name used to designate unreal objects has been carefully chosen. They may not be transparently meaningful – i.e. they may not have a direct translation – but they usually carry a semantic load produced by their role in the story. Moreover, translators also have the difficulty of the lack of a guide which could help them to know the meaning of proper names in the text. The only clues the translator may find are those given by J.K. Rowling in interviews, in which she explains the meaning of proper names. However, those interviews are usually available after the novels are published.

Proper names are very important to create a cohesive literary text. We can say that the names in *Harry Potter* can be divided in four categories. First, we can find proper names pointing at nonexistent objects in the real world. Second, we can encounter names of animals. Third, we can come across names of places. Finally, we can identify names of people. In the last category, the meaning can be found either in the first name, in the surname, or in both the first name and surname.

Before we analyse some of the names in *Harry Potter* we have to elucidate whether these names are meaningful, that is, we need to know under which of the philosophical schools this article could be included. We have already mentioned that all the names in *Harry Potter* have been carefully chosen. Hence, if we read the novel attentively we can foresee some of the features of the characters, just by looking at those traits referred to by the names. It is true that not all the names are equally transparent for every reader, since the origin of several names is Old English, or even other languages, such as Latin and French[7].

When we first read the Spanish translation of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, we may think that there seems to be translation coherence,

---

[7]   We would like to point out that we can find a curious usage of Latin and French in *Harry Potter*. Names with a Latin root are usually associated to the good duality, whereas those names with a French etymology are included under the dark or evil duality. We can often see this choice of languages for charms, as well.

since translators have decided to transfer all proper names, that is, the SL names appear in the TT. Nevertheless, if we look at the translated text, we can observe that this is not always like that. In several passages, references to wizards or old heroes are made. In such cases, translators have usually opted for using the established translation of the name. Nonetheless, there are some cases where the SL name is transformed into another one which could be easily recognized by the TL reader. Hence, we can say they have made cultural translations of the names. That is the case of ALBERIC GRUNNION - a name which relates to two saints from the Middle Ages - which has been translated as EL REY SALOMÓN[8]. Moreover, HENGIST OF WOODCROFT, whose name denotes the County of Kent's first king, has been translated as RAMÓN LLULL[9]. We can say that sometimes this kind of translations can surprise the reader.

The greatest problem in translating *Harry Potter'*s proper names lies in them being used to define some of the traits of the characters. The most easily identifiable example can be found in the name of teachers and professors, whose surnames are related to the subject they teach. Thus, we can point at PROFESSOR SPROUT, teacher of "Herbology". "Sprout" can be defined as "a newly grown shoot or bud" or "Brussels sprout" (Collins English Dictionary 2001:1488). In this case, the Spanish reader is losing some meaning, since the name has been transferred as PROFESSOR SPROUT. Another example could be the name MADAM PINCE, the librarian, whose surname refers to the old "pencil form", which was "pincel" (Murray et al. 1970: 634). Moreover, "pince" could also denote a kind of glasses with a nose-clip instead of earpieces which are called "pince-nez". Once again, the translators have transferred the SL name into Spanish, MADAM PINCE.

Next, we will show some examples in which the person's names have been transferred into Spanish causing the reader's loss of some meaning.

LORD VOLDEMORT's (LORD VOLDEMORT) name refers to Evil. He is the most powerful evil force and there are several interpretations for his name, although all of them point to death.

One of the possible explanations of the name is that it comes from the association of the French words "vol"+"de"+"mort" (Spencer 2000). "Vol" has two possible meanings in French. On the one hand it means "action de voler, ensemble des mouvements coordonnés faits par les animaux capables de se maintenir en l'air pour s'y mouvoir[10]" (Robert 1993: 2800). This French meaning may be connected to the Old English word "vol" which denotes "two wings displayed and joined at the base" (Murray et al. 1970: 291), and which, once again, directs the attention to the verb "to fly", which may be a metaphor which connotes "the flight of the

---

[8]   King Solomon.

[9]   Ramón Llull is a medieval Majorcan writer and philosopher.

[10]   Action of flying; set of coordinate movements made to move by those animals able to keep themselves in the air.

death". On the other hand, "vol" may also mean in French "theft", defined as "action qui consiste à soustraire fraudulesement le bien d'autrie[11]" (Robert 1993: 2800). The second meaning would also match with the role of the character who tries to steal or appropriate other characters' life, since it is the only way he has to be kept alive.

The French preposition "de" may indicate either possession or origin.

The word "mort" seems to allude to the death both in French, in which it is still under usage, and in Old English, in which it was used until the 16th century (Murray et al.1970: 673)

Another possible interpretation of the word "vol" may come from the Latin noun "volo", meaning "wish" (Spencer 2000). This would refer to Voldemort's desire of the world being under evil control. Evil is symbolically represented by death.

No matter which explanation of the proper name we choose, the Spanish reader would lose part of the meaning because the original name has been transferred. By maintaining the SL name, the ST unity and coherence is broken in the TT, as the actions and the name of the character are no longer linked.

ALBUS DUMBLEDORE (ALBUS DUMBLEDORE) is opposed to Voldemort in the good and evil duality. As we have mentioned above, we would like to emphasize the usage of Latin names, or those with a Latin root, for those characters included within the good duality. In this character, the Latin word can be found in his first name, "albus", which is the Latin word for the "dawn" or "daybreak" (Vander Ark 2003). Hence, it refers to daylight, which is the time of the vital cycle in which the good can be found. Moreover, it also represents the victory of the day over the night. This metaphor is continuously repeated in the novel, and we could even say that it is its main topic, since almost all the characters can be located in either extreme of the duality. Thus, the name would explain Voldemort's fear of Albus Dumbledore.

On the other hand, the surname "Dumbledore" is an English word used as a synonym of "humble-bee" or "dumble-bee", that is, "any large loud humming bee" (Murray et al. 1970: 712-3). J.K. Rowling explains the choice of the name because one of the Hogwarts headmaster's great passions is music, and she used to imagine him singing while he was walking (cf. Spencer 2000). Thus, she tried to establish a parallelism between Dumbledore's and a humble-bee's actions.

This proper name has also been transferred into Spanish. We could argue that in this case the Spanish reader is not losing the meaning implied in the first name because the Latin root could be easily understood by an average Spanish reader. However, Spanish readers would lose the meaning connoted by the surname, since they cannot establish the parallelism between Dumbledore and a humble-bee.

---

[11]   Action consisting in taking away someone else's goods by fraudulent means.

VINCENT CRABBE and GREGORY GOYLE are Harry Potter's antagonist's best friends. Once again, these names have been transferred into Spanish. We will analyse both names together because their meaning could be joined, although there are two possible interpretations.

On the one hand, we have J.K. Rowling's explanation of the names (cf. Vander Ark 2003). Thus, "Crabbe" seems to be derived from "crab", which indicates "an irritable person", when functioning as a noun; and "to find fault; grumble" and "to spoil" when working as a verb (Collins English Dictionary 2001:366). This seems to be Crabbe's attitude all throughout the novel, as he is always trying to bother and trouble his schoolmates.

Phonetically, the pronunciation of "Greg Goyle" seems to recall "gargoyle", that is "a grotesque carved human or animal face or figure projecting from the gutter of – especially a Gothic – building usually as a spout to carry water clear of a wall" (Murray et al. 1970: 57). In this case, the function of the character, who seems to be Draco Malfoy's bodyguard, metaphorically resembles that of a gargoyle.

On the other hand, there appears to be another interpretation of these two proper names. Spencer (2000), which seems to be one of the most important sources to understand the etymology of Harry Potter's proper names, believes that these names may be derived from "grab" and "coyle", which are the result of exchanging the first letter of both surnames. Both students belong to the Slytherin house at Hogwarts, whose symbol is a snake. Thus, when joining both names we would obtain the image of snake, as we will show in the following analysis. "Grab" means to "to arrest; catch" (Collins English Dictionary 2001:666); and "to grasp or seize suddenly and eagerly; hence to appropriate to oneself in a rapacious or unscrupulous manner" (Murray et al. 1970: 324). "Coyle" is the obsolete form of "coil". Among the meanings of this word we can find "to beat, thrash", or to "lay up (a cable, rope, etc.) in concentric rings; the rings may be disposed above each other, or one ring within another, or over cleats" (Murray et al. 1970: 601). If we add up the connotations implied by both verbs, we realize that both of them are the actions done by a snake, which is the symbol of the house they belong to. Moreover, this is what both characters would make to their preys – i.e. other students – when they get them.

All the names we have analysed in this section and the rest of those appearing in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* have a meaning. The Spanish translators of the novel have decided to apply the most popular technique nowadays, that is the transfer one, so that they remain as they were in the SL text. We can neither deny that this translation process will allow the British ethnicity and customs to be kept in the TT. Nor can we neglect the loss of meaning if we avoid the translation of these proper names into Spanish. This meaning is not supplied by any other technique and leaves J.K. Rowling's literary universe unfinished.

4. CONCLUSION

The main objective of this article is to show the inconsistency which persists even nowadays in the translation of proper names. We have followed two main steps to try to prove this hypothesis. First, we tried to know whether proper names are meaningful. Then, we analysed the different translation procedures we can use to solve the problem of the translation of proper names. We would like to highlight as well that since we are looking at literary texts, the usage of proper names is slightly special because names may be used as symbols and metaphors.

As most of the names in both literary works are meaningful, either directly or indirectly, we can set this article within Frege's philosophy of language, which states that proper names are connotative and that they refer to the designated entity. According to this, if proper names are not translated, the target audience will lose some of the meaning.

If we link the philosophy of language to the translation concept, we can assert that both in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and in *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* we are facing the third group of transparent proper names specified by Teresa Espinal[12]. In this group, she included those proper names which are transparent enough as regards their linguistic and intended meaning (cf. Espinal 1989: 84). When we find this kind of lexical units we should translate these names into the TL, trying to safeguard as much as possible their conceptual content and even trying to keep their formal features (cf. Espinal 1989: 84).

In the Spanish translation of *The Lord of the Rings,* there is not uniformity as regards the translation of proper names, due to Tolkien's "inconsistency" when trying to help translators**.** If all his instructions had been written in one single paper, contradictions would probably have disappeared. Thus, in this text we can find the three translation processes mentioned: transfer, naturalization and literal translation. On the other hand, in the Spanish translation of *Harry Potter*, almost all proper names have been transferred[13]. According to the analysis made above, we believe that by avoiding a translation, the Spanish reader is losing some part of the content of the novel. We think it is already proved that the choice of the proper names is based on the function of the characters in the text. In any case, we will defend that proper names should be translated by using the following quotation:

> Evidentemente, en el proceso de traducción son los nombres propios con un claro contenido intencional aquellos que tendrán más probabilidades de ser traducidos, mientras que los que tienen una referencia casual más directa no se traducirán. En el uso de este tipo de nombres propios es más importante la

---

[12]   For more information about the other kinds of proper names, check Espinal 1989: 84.

[13]   We could compare the Spanish translation of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* to the French one, in which only the names of the most important characters have been transferred. However, proper names of secondary characters, places and objects have been translated.

evocación de propiedades que el autor-hablante atribuye al objeto referente que la designación de un determinado objeto. (Espinal 1989: 85)[14]

We can then conclude by saying that there is a lack of coherence about the translation of proper names. Although some time has passed and the situation as regard proper names seems to be more stable, we can still find some inconsistencies in those translations, such as those found in the analysed works. We know that there are no perfect theories about the translation of proper names because the loss of part of the meaning is unavoidable, but we do not need those theories to be consistent. We just have to choose one criterion, which should be picked by taking into account the readers' characteristics and what they expect from the novel, as well as the meaning of the proper names. Once we have decided, we should keep our choice all along the translation. The choice may not be the best, but we could at least say that there will be some kind of uniformity which will avoid contradictions and manipulations in the change from one language to the other.

REFERENCES

Ballard, Michel. "Le Nom Propre En Traduction." *Babel* 39.4 (1993): 194-213.

Carpenter, Humphrey, ed. *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*. Boston: Houghton Miffin Co., 2000.

Collins Diccionario Inglés. Barcelona: Grijalbo Mondadori S.A., 5th edition, 1997.

Collins English Dictionary. Glasgow: HarperCollins Publishers. 21th Century Edition, 2001.

Day, D. *Enciclopedia Tolkien Ilustrada*. Barcelona: Timún Mas. 1999.

Ernould, F. *Harrydico*. 8 July 2003. <http://www.harrydico.net> 2003.

Espinal, M.Teresa. "Sobre la traducción de los nombres propios." *Cuadernos de Traducción e Interpretación* 11-12 (1989-1991): 73-93.

Estébanez Estébanez, Cayetano. "Interpretación Pragmática De Los Nombres Propios." *Estudios De Metodología II*. Eds. J.M. Ruiz, Patrick Sheerin, Cayetano Estébanez, Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 2002.

Filardo, Laura & Marta Mª Gutiérrez. "La traducción de los nombres propios: *The Lord of the Rings* y *Harry Potter*". Unpublished lecture given at the *XI Curso Superior de Traducción Inglés / Español*, Valladolid, 2003.

Moya, Virgilio. *La traducción de los nombres propios*. Madrid: Cátedra, 2000.

Murray, James A.H. et al. eds.*The Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1970.

Newmark, Peter. *A Text Book of Translation*. Exeter: Prentice Hall, 1988.

Real Academia Española. *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*. 22nd ed. Madrid: Espasa Calpe, S.A. 2003 [DRAE].

---

[14]   It is obvious that in the translation process, those proper names with a clear intentional content are more probably translated, whereas those with a chance reference will not be translated. When using this kind of proper names, the connotation of features the author-speaker is attributing to the object is more important than the actual designation of such object.

Robert, P. *Le Nouveau Pétit Robert 1. Dictionnaire Alphabétique et Analogique de la Langue Française*. Paris: Le Robert, 1993.

Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. London: Bloomsbury, 1997.

—— *Harry Potter y la piedra filosofal*. Trans. Alicia Dellepiane. Barcelona: Salamandra S.A., 1999.

Shippey, T.A. *El Camino a la Tierra Media*. Barcelona: Minotauro, 1999.

Spencer, P. *What's in a Name?* 28 June 2003. <http://www.theninemuses.net/hp/list.html> 2000.

Tolkien, J.R.R. "Guide to the names in The Lord of the Rings". *A Tolkien Compass*. Ed. Jared. Lobdell. Illinois: Open Court.152-201. 1975.

—— *El Señor de los Anillos*. Volumen I. Trans. Luis Domènech. Barcelona: Minotauro, 1998.

—— *The Lord of the Rings*. London: HarperCollins Publishers. 1995

Vander Ark, S. *The Harry Potter Lexicon*. 22 June 2003 <http://www.hp-lexicon.org/index-2.html> 2003.