

## A PARALLEL CORPUS ANALYSIS OF TRANSLATION STRATEGIES OF PROPER NOUNS IN “HARRY POTTER”

Tran Thi Kieu My✉; Hoang Thi Linh Giang

University of Foreign Languages and International Studies, Hue University

✉ ttkmy99@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.63506/jilc.0902.364>

(Received: 08/07/2025; Revised: 20/08/2025; Accepted: 29/08/2025)

**Abstract:** This article examines the strategies used for translating proper nouns in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* from English into Vietnamese. A parallel corpus of the English source text and its Vietnamese translation was built and analyzed using Sketch Engine to extract proper nouns. The analysis applies Fernandes’ (2006) taxonomy of translation procedures alongside Skopos theory (Reiss & Vermeer, 2014) and Venuti’s (1995) domestication–foreignization strategies to interpret translation choices. The findings show seven procedures employed when rendering proper nouns into Vietnamese: rendition, substitution, transcription, recreation, addition, copy, and conventionality. In general, copy (39.89%), rendition (42.11%), recreation (8.59%), and addition (8.31%) were the most frequently used, while substitution (0.55%), transcription (0.28%), and conventionality (0.28%) appeared rarely. The results also reveal that domestication predominated with 216 cases (59.8%), while foreignization was less frequent with 145 cases (40.2%). This indicates that the translator, Lý Lan, tends to adapt names to Vietnamese linguistic and cultural norms.

**Keywords:** Proper nouns; translation strategies; parallel corpus; *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*

### PHÂN TÍCH KHỐI NGỮ LIỆU SONG SONG VỀ CHIẾN LƯỢC DỊCH DANH TỪ RIÊNG TRONG HARRY POTTER

**Tóm tắt:** Bài viết này khám phá chiến lược dịch danh từ riêng trong tiểu thuyết *Harry Potter và Hoàng Tử Lai* từ tiếng Anh sang tiếng Việt. Khối ngữ liệu song song gồm bản gốc và bản dịch được xây dựng và phân tích bằng phần mềm Sketch Engine. Phân tích dựa trên phân loại các phương thức dịch của Fernandes (2006), kết hợp với lý thuyết Skopos (Reiss & Vermeer, 2014) và chiến lược nội địa hóa (domestication) – ngoại hóa (foreignization) của Venuti (1995) nhằm giải thích cho các lựa chọn dịch thuật. Kết quả cho thấy có bảy phương thức dịch được áp dụng, trong đó, giữ nguyên (copy) (39.89%), dịch nghĩa (rendition) (42.11%), tái sáng tạo (recreation) (8.59%) và bổ sung (addition) (8.31%) xuất hiện thường xuyên, trong khi thay thế (substitution) (0.55%), phiên âm (transcription) (0.28%), và chuẩn hóa theo quy ước (conventionality) (0.28%), ít gặp. Nhìn chung, chiến lược Nội địa hóa chiếm ưu thế với 216 trường hợp (59.8%), so với 145 trường hợp Ngoại hóa (40.2%). Điều này cho thấy dịch giả Lý Lan có xu hướng điều chỉnh tên riêng phù hợp với ngôn ngữ, văn hóa và độc giả trẻ Việt Nam.

**Từ khóa:** Danh từ riêng; chiến lược dịch; khối ngữ liệu song song; *Harry Potter và Hoàng Tử Lai*

## 1. Introduction

Translation plays a pivotal role in bridging linguistic and cultural gaps, especially in literature, where cultural nuances of the source text and the author's intent must be preserved. Among the various elements of literary translation, proper nouns present a particular challenge because they often carry cultural or semantic connotations that target readers may not readily understand. As Newmark (1993, p. 15) notes, "proper names are a translation difficulty in any text" because they require the translator to determine whether the name is real or invented, and whether the additional information should be provided. This challenge becomes even more pronounced in fantasy fiction, as Mujni and Marlina (2025) pointed out, translators need to ensure that proper names sound natural in the target language.

J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series provides a rich source of proper nouns. In Vietnam, the series has been widely translated and read. The sixth book, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, is particularly notable for its abundance of proper nouns, many of which play a central role in plot development and serve as hallmarks of the series. This makes it a valuable case for examining translation strategies and their cultural implications.

Nonetheless, in translation studies, traditional analysis of large amounts of textual data has often been a time-consuming process. Munday (2016) highlights the value of creating "an electronic corpus that could then be processed and analyzed with software to investigate the use and patterns of the word-forms it contained" (p. 291). Parallel corpora, in particular, "serve as a source of representative examples of the real usage of a specific term from a huge body of text, as well as data on collocation frequency and quantification" (Nguyen & Phan, 2022, p. 7).

This research has both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it investigates how proper nouns are treated in the translation of a culturally rich fantasy novel. Practically, the findings can benefit translators, teachers, and students of translation studies. The study focuses on answering two questions:

- (1) What procedures are employed in translating proper nouns from English into Vietnamese in the *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* book?
- (2) What are the plausible theoretical considerations when choosing the strategies to deal with the translation of proper nouns in the *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* book?

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Proper nouns

Proper nouns (proper names) identify unique persons, places, or entities and are typically capitalized. While some scholars, such as Strawson (1950) and Jaleniauskiene (2009), regard proper nouns as simple referential labels without inherent meaning, others argue that they can provide clues about the referent's gender, age, geographical origin, or social background (Juzelieniene et al., 2016; Nord, 2003).

### 2.2 Translation procedures for proper nouns

In literary works, proper nouns often carry cultural, historical, or contextual significance, making their translation particularly challenging. As Nyangeri and Wangari (2019, p. 347) observe, "proper names in a work of literature raise problems in translation from one language to

another, in that a name may have a meaning in one culture but become meaningless in another". For example, in the *Harry Potter* series, names such as "Hogwarts", "Quidditch", or "Diagon Alley" are rich with cultural and narrative meanings. To address such challenges, Fernandes (2006) proposed a taxonomy of ten translation procedures for proper nouns in children's fantasy literature. These include:

- (a) Rendition: translating a proper noun based on its meaning, often used when it is semantically motivated and can be rendered naturally in the target language.
- (b) Copy: reproducing proper names exactly as they appear in the source text, without any spelling changes.
- (c) Transcription: adapting proper names to the phonological, morphological, or orthographic system of the target language.
- (d) Substitution: replacing a name with a completely different one in the target language, without retaining the original meaning or phonetic similarity.
- (e) Recreation: creating a new name in the target language that does not exist in either the source or target language.
- (f) Deletion: omitting a proper noun in translation when it is considered unnecessary or redundant.
- (g) Addition: providing additional information about the original proper name to make it more understandable or appealing to the target audience.
- (h) Transposition: changing the word class of a name while maintaining its original meaning to create a more natural and acceptable structure in the target language.
- (i) Phonological replacement: replacing a source text name with a target text name that shares a similar phonological structure.
- (j) Conventionality: using a name that is already translated and widely accepted in the target language, commonly applied to historical/literary figures and geographical locations.

### **2.3 Theoretical framework for the study**

#### **2.3.1 Skopos theory (Reiss & Vermeer, 2014)**

Unlike Nida's (1964) and Newmark's (1981) translation theories, which emphasize equivalence between source and target texts, Skopos theory is a functionalist approach to translation that prioritizes the purpose (skopos) of the target text. As Reiss and Vermeer (2014, p. 85) observe, "a translational action is governed by its purpose". Although they acknowledge that translation can serve many different purposes, Reiss and Vermeer (2014) argue that translation choices should primarily fulfill the communicative function of the translated text in the target culture.

In this view, preserving the original text's purpose is not a universal principle of translation but rather depends on the cultural context. In many cases, particularly literary translation, this may not be feasible due to historical and cultural differences between the source and target readership. Therefore, the purpose of the translation may be adjusted to align with the cultural norms and reading comprehension of the target readers. A successful translation thus

fulfills its function in the target context rather than merely reproducing the structure or meaning of the source text. In other words, “translational action is a cultural and linguistic transfer”, in which meanings inevitably shift as elements move between systems (Reiss & Vermeer, 2014, p. 93).

### 2.3.2 Domestication vs. foreignization (Venuti, 1995)

The concepts of domestication and foreignization, introduced by Venuti (1995), describe two opposing strategies in cultural translation. As Yang (2010, p. 77) explains, “domestication designates the type of translation in which a transparent, fluent style is adopted to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text for target language readers”, whereas “foreignization means a target text which deliberately breaks target conventions by retaining something of the foreignness of the original is produced”.

Buc’s (2022) study of proper names in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, comparing the Polish and German translations, highlights that when translating geographical names, translators often applied Domestication to make the names more comprehensible to the target readers. On the other hand, when translating proper names of human characters, both translators usually kept the source text lexemes unchanged, which illustrates a foreignizing approach. This demonstrates that cultural and functional aspects of proper names may influence translation decisions.

Building on this, Oittinen (2000) mentions that “situation and purpose are an intrinsic part of all translation” (p. 3) and “every act of translating for children, too, has a purpose, skopos, and all translations should be domesticated according to this skopos” (p. 76). Accordingly, Fernandes’ (2006) ten translation procedures can be grouped as follows:

**Table 1**

*Fernandes’ (2006) Translation Procedures Are Categorized under Domestication and Foreignization Strategies*

<b>Domestication</b>	<b>Foreignization</b>
Rendition	Copy
Deletion	Transcription
Addition	Phonological Replacement
Recreation	
Substitution	
Transposition	
Conventionality	

Transposition is placed under domestication because the function of this strategy is to adapt the source structure to the natural grammar of the target language, thereby ensuring fluency for the target readers. It can be seen that the main impact of transposition is directed towards the reader. Therefore, it is categorized under domestication.

From this perspective, the choice between domestication and foreignization depends on the skopos of the translation:

- If the purpose of the translation is to make the text more accessible and engaging for the target audience, domestication may be preferred, as it ensures that names and cultural references are easily understood.

- If the aim is to preserve the authenticity of the source text and expose readers to a foreign culture, then foreignization would be the more suitable strategy.

## 2.4 Parallel corpus in translation studies

A parallel corpus consists of source texts in the original language and their translations, aligned segment by segment (e.g., at the sentence or word level). This alignment allows researchers to explore how linguistic units are transferred across languages, making it an essential tool in comparative linguistics and translation studies.

Nowadays, there are a number of tools and platforms available that support the construction of parallel corpora. AntConc, for instance, allows users to examine word usage patterns in texts through features such as frequency lists and concordances, N-grams, collocations, and keyword distribution charts. On the other hand, Sketch Engine offers more advanced functions such as POS tagging, lemmatization, keyword analysis, and parallel concordances.

A recent study also highlights the potential of corpus-based approaches in literary translation. Xu and Han (2024) demonstrate that a corpus-based method serves as a methodological tool to explore regularity that may reflect translation strategies, styles, and purposes.

## 2.5 Previous studies

Hermans (1988) highlighted the broader role of proper names in literary texts, arguing that their translation is not merely a linguistic transfer but also a cultural decision. Building on this, Nord (1997) examined the translation of proper nouns from a functionalist perspective, emphasizing that the translator must consider the skopos of the target text and showing how names are often adapted to target culture norms. Fernandes (2006), in his study on children's literature, proposed a taxonomy of ten procedures (see Section 2.2), which demonstrates that the choice of procedure depends on linguistic, cultural, phonological, and morphological factors. Likewise, Jaleniauskiene and Čičelytė (2009) stressed that strategies differ in adult and children's literature because children require familiar cultural items. Coillie and Verschueren (2014), meanwhile, observed that translations do not fully favour either the domestication or foreignization. Nevertheless, translators often aim to remain close to the source texts while still exposing the target child audience to the experience of the foreign text.

Trieu's (2018) study of character names in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* reinforces these points. She found that the translator largely relied on the "preservation" strategy for both conventional and loaded names in order to retain the foreignness of the original text. However, she also pointed out that "while the strategy of preservation advantageously remains the foreignness of the original in the target text, there would be partially functional loss via the mere preservation" (p. 48). To address this problem, she suggested using the addition strategy to provide readers with additional cultural and semantic information. This way, translators can both preserve the foreignness of the original and make these names more accessible to young Vietnamese readers. This emphasizes that cultural adaptation in Vietnamese children's literature requires a balance between maintaining the originality of the original text and ensuring readability and comprehension for young readers.

Overall, these studies demonstrate that translating proper nouns is not a straightforward process but rather a context-dependent task. The choice of translation strategies is influenced by factors such as text genre and target audience, which shape both the purpose of the translation and the cultural significance of the names.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Research approach

This study adopts a mixed-method design, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection and analysis. The quantitative component focuses on identifying and categorizing the translation strategies applied to proper names, while the qualitative component examines the factors that influence the choice of strategies.

#### 3.2 Data collection

This study constructed a parallel corpus of English proper nouns and their Vietnamese translations using Sketch Engine (accessed in 2025), based on *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* and its Vietnamese version by Lý Lan. This book was chosen because it contains a large number of invented and culturally significant proper nouns, which are highly suitable and valuable for the study of translation strategies. Furthermore, Lý Lan’s Vietnamese translation is widely circulated among readers; thus, the availability of both the original and the translated versions allows for a detailed comparison of the translation strategies applied to proper names.

The English and Vietnamese texts were pre-processed, aligned using the YouAlign tool, and uploaded to Sketch Engine for POS tagging and filtering. The analysis employed the default POS tagsets provided by Sketch Engine. For Vietnamese, the tag “Np” denotes proper nouns. For English, the TreeTagger POS tagset uses the tags “NP” (singular proper noun) and “NPS” (plural proper noun). For Vietnamese, no additional customization of tagging rules was applied. Alignments were then manually verified, and each proper noun was classified to ensure accuracy.

**Figure 1**

*Automatic POS tagging in Sketch Engine*



### 3.3 Data analysis

The dataset of 361 proper nouns was classified into seven categories according to Fernandes’ (2006) taxonomy. To ensure consistency in coding, clear criteria were set to distinguish between categories. For instance, rendition was employed when Vietnamese names kept the semantic meaning of English names (e.g., “History of Magic” → “Lịch sử Pháp thuật”). In contrast, recreation was used when the translator created a completely new name in Vietnamese to create a similar effect for the reader (e.g., “Death Eaters” → “Tù thần Thực tử”). The results were then interpreted with reference to Reiss and Vermeer’s (2014) Skopos theory and Venuti’s (1995) Domestication – Foreignization framework.

The examples in Table 2 illustrate how Fernandes’ taxonomy was applied in coding the dataset. Full discussions of these procedures, along with more examples, are provided in the Findings and Discussion section.

**Table 2**

*Examples of Coded Proper Nouns Based on Fernandes’ (2006) Taxonomy*

Category	English	Vietnamese	Procedure applied
Charms and Curses	Intruder Charm	Bùa Đột Nhập	Rendition
Organizations & Groups	Weird Sisters	Ban nhạc Quái Tỷ Muội	Addition
Objects	Gurdyroot	Rễ Canh	Recreation

### 3.4 Reliability

To ensure reliability, the researcher manually reviewed and checked all English-Vietnamese proper noun pairs to avoid bias and confirm consistency in classification. For ambiguous cases (e.g., words that could be common nouns or proper nouns), the researcher resolved them by cross-checking with context in the source text as well as definitions of proper nouns from several studies.

To further reinforce reliability, a coding scheme was developed based on Fernandes’ (2006) taxonomy, with clear definitions and examples for each translation procedure. The second coder was trained using this coding scheme before analyzing the data to ensure consistency. The second coder then independently analyzed approximately 20% of the dataset (73 pairs). The agreement between the researcher and the second coder was 90.41%, exceeding the 80% threshold recommended by Creswell (2018). Any disagreements were resolved through collaborative discussion.

## 4. Findings and discussion

### 4.1 The English–Vietnamese parallel corpus of proper nouns

From the initial extraction using Sketch Engine, approximately 1,126 English–Vietnamese proper noun pairs were identified. Nevertheless, the automatic tagging process was not entirely accurate, as several items were misclassified and required manual correction. After verification, a total of 361 valid pairs were retained and categorized into six groups: character and magical creature names (169 pairs), objects (75 pairs), subjects (14 pairs), place names (49 pairs), charms and curses (33 pairs), and organizations and group names (21 pairs).

**Figure 2**

*Initial Extraction of Proper Nouns from the English Text Using Sketch Engine*

	Word	Frequency	Per million tokens		
1	Harry	2,586	12,043.70		...
2	Dumbledore	876	4,079.77		...
3	Ron	786	3,660.62		...
4	Hermione	654	3,045.86		...
5	Snape	340	1,583.47		...
6	Slughorn	336	1,564.84		...
7	Malfoy	323	1,504.30		...
8	Professor	249	1,159.66		...
9	Ginny	199	926.80		...
10	Weasley	197	917.48		...

Rows per page: 10 1-10 of 1,126

## 4.2 Detailed analysis of proper nouns in “Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince”

### 4.2.1 Characters and magical creatures

Out of 169 names in this category, four procedures were identified: copy, rendition, recreation, and addition.

#### a. Copy

Copy dominated, with 135 cases (approximately 80%). For example, the character names “Hermione” and “Ron” were kept intact to preserve identity and maintain consistency with the global image of these characters.

#### b. Rendition

Rendition, which occurred in 27 cases, maintained simplicity and humor while ensuring semantic appropriateness in the target culture. For instance, “Fat Lady” is translated into “Bà Béó”, with “Bà” indicating age and formality, and “Béó” (Fat) retaining the original description of the Fat Lady’s appearance.

#### c. Recreation

Recreation was employed in 5 cases, typically for neologisms. To illustrate, “Wrackspurt” becomes “Xi Tọt” in Vietnamese, a seemingly playful name that evokes images of something small and quirky.

#### d. Addition

Only two cases involved Addition. To demonstrate, “Nagini” was rendered into “con rắn Nagini”, where “con rắn” (the snake) was added in order to clarify the creature’s identity for Vietnamese readers who may not immediately recognize the creature when reading its name.



#### 4.2.2 Objects

A total of 75 proper nouns were classified under this group, with five procedures identified: rendition, recreation, addition, transcription, and conventionality.

##### a. Rendition

Rendition was the most frequently used procedure (58 cases). For example, “Polyjuice Potion” → “Thuốc Đa Dịch”, in which “Thuốc” (potion), “Đa” (many), and “Dịch” (transform). The word “Đa Dịch” evokes the sense of transformation, aligning with the original meaning.

##### b. Recreation

Recreation was applied in 8 cases. For instance, the translation of “Horcrux” into “Trường Sinh Linh Giá”, which combines “Trường Sinh” (immortality), “Linh” (soul), and “Giá” (container) to reflect its magical function as a container for the soul in order to achieve immortality.

##### c. Addition

Seven cases used Addition. For example, the rendering of “Quibbler” into “Tập chí Kê Lý Sự”, where “Kê Lý Sự” is the equivalent of “Quibbler” and “Tập chí” (magazine) was added to indicate the type of object.

##### d. Transcription

This procedure appeared only once: “Acid Pops” → “Kẹo A-xít”, with “A-xít” being a phonetic transcription of the English word “Acid” into Vietnamese. The possible reason was to maintain the foreignness and make it easier for Vietnamese readers to pronounce and recognize the word.

##### e. Conventionality

Conventionality was employed in a single case: “Valerian” → “cây Nữ Lang”, the scientific name for the medicinal herb in Vietnamese. Here, the translator probably aimed for clarity and accessibility for target readers by using existing Vietnamese terminology.

#### 4.2.3 Subjects

This category comprises 14 proper nouns referring to fictional or magical subjects at Hogwarts. Rendition was the most common procedure (12 cases), followed by Recreation and Substitution, each of which occurred once.

##### a. Rendition

Rendition was applied in 12 cases, preserving the meaning through direct equivalents. For instance, “Transfiguration” is translated as “Biến hình”, a straightforward rendering that captures the magical focus of the subject, which is the study of transforming one form into another.

### **b. Recreation**

Recreation appeared in one case, “Occlumency” → “Bế Quan Bí Thuật”. Because this word has no real-world equivalent, the translator recreated it by using Sino-Vietnamese elements:

- “Bế Quan”: a state of mental isolation, avoiding interaction or communication with others or the outside world.
- “Bí Thuật”: as a secret method or form of magic.

### **c. Substitution**

Substitution was also found once. For example, “Apparition” is rendered as “Độn Thổ” (to go underground to disappear). Although the two terms are not semantically equivalent, “Độn Thổ” is a culturally familiar phrase in Vietnamese folklore, making the concept more accessible and vivid for readers.

#### **4.2.4 Places**

##### **a. Rendition**

Rendition was the most frequently applied procedure, with 26 cases. For instance, “Chamber of Secrets” → “Phòng chứa Bí mật”. In this case, the word “Chamber” is rendered as “Phòng chứa”, evoking a closed space, while “Secrets” is translated as “Bí mật”, suggesting mystery and concealment. Thus, the Vietnamese version mirrors both the meaning and structure of the original name, effectively reflecting the secretive and mysterious nature of this place.

##### **b. Addition**

Addition was used in 13 out of 49 proper nouns. For example, “Borgin and Burke” is translated as “Tiệm Borgin và Burkes”. The translator adds the word “tiệm” (shop/ store) before the name “Borgin và Burkes” to clarify its commercial function for Vietnamese readers.

##### **c. Copy**

Eight proper nouns were transferred without modification, such as “Grimmauld Place”. In these cases, no phonological, orthographic, or syntactic changes were made when rendering them from English into Vietnamese. The translator may have chosen this strategy to retain the foreign flavor.

##### **d. Recreation**

Recreation was rare, occurring in only two cases. A notable example is “Spinner’s End” → “Đường Bàn Xoay”. Although this phrase does not exist in reality, it retains the sense of confusion, rotation, and mystery conveyed by the original.

#### 4.2.5 Charms and Curses

##### a. Rendition

Rendition was the most common procedure with 19 cases. For example, “Freezing Charm” → “Bùa Đông Cứng”. In this case, the word “Charm” is translated as “Bùa”, while “Freezing” is rendered as “Đông Cứng”. When combined, the translation clearly conveys the original meaning: a spell/charm that makes an object or person frozen or immobile.

##### b. Recreation

Recreation was identified in 11 out of 33 items in this category. For instance, “Backfiring Jinx” → “Bùa Phản Thùng”. Instead of translating it literally as “Bùa Phản Tác Dụng”, the translator created “Bùa Phản Thùng”, an inventive name that did not exist previously in Vietnamese. This creative choice may have been made to maintain the playful and imaginative tone of Rowling’s original neologism, while ensuring the term sounds appealing to Vietnamese readers.

##### c. Addition

Addition occurred in two cases where the translator added elements for clarity. For example, “Avada Kedavra” became “Bùa Avada Kedavra”, with the word “Bùa” (spell/charm) added to help readers recognize it as part of the magical spell system.

##### d. Substitution

Substitution appeared once. In the case of “Side-Along Apparition”, this item was translated as “Bùa Độn Thổ Kèm Người”. Here, “Apparition” was replaced with the culturally familiar term “Độn Thổ” (to disappear underground), while the phrase “Side-Along” is not literally translated, but adapted as “Kèm Người” (with someone) to enhance comprehensibility for Vietnamese readers.

#### 4.2.6 Organizations and groups

Four main translation procedures were observed in this category: rendition, recreation, copy, and addition.

##### a. Rendition

Rendition was the most frequent, occurring in 10 out of 21 cases. For example, “Order of the Phoenix” → “Hội Phượng Hoàng”. Here, the word “Order” is rendered as “Hội”, while “Phoenix” is translated as “Phượng Hoàng”. The Vietnamese version mirrors both meaning and form without significant alteration.

##### b. Recreation

Recreation was applied in 4 cases, often for invented names. For instance, “Death Eaters” was translated as “Tử Thần Thực Tử”. Literally, “Death Eaters” can be rendered as “Những Kẻ Ăn Cái Chết” (those who eat death). However, the translator opted for a more evocative rendering.

“Tử Thần” evokes the image of the Grim Reaper, while “Thực Tử” is a wordplay for “devouring life or souls”; effectively capturing the sinister identity of the group of evil wizards in the story.

**c. Addition**

Addition was used in 6 cases. For example, the term “Slytherin” was translated as “Nhà Slytherin” or “Đội Slytherin” depending on the context, whether referring to a Hogwarts house, a Quidditch team, or the students belonging to it. The added classifiers “nhà”, “đội”, or “bọn” help clarify meaning and make the text more accessible to Vietnamese readers.

**d. Copy**

Copy was applied in the case of “Muggle”. Rather than translating it as “người phàm” or “người thường”, translator Lý Lan retained the English term to preserve its uniqueness and novelty within Rowling’s wizarding world.

Table 3 below shows a summary of the translation procedures for different categories of proper nouns:

**Table 3**

*Translation Procedures Applied to Proper Noun Categories in Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*

Procedures	Category					
	Characters	Objects	Subjects	Places	Charms and Curses	Organizations and Groups
Rendition	27 (16%)	58 (78%)	12 (86%)	26 (53%)	19 (58%)	10 (48%)
Copy	135 (80%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (16%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)
Recreation	5 (3%)	8 (11%)	1 (7%)	2 (4%)	11 (33%)	4 (19%)
Addition	2 (1%)	7 (9%)	0 (0%)	13 (27%)	2 (6%)	6 (28%)
Substitution	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)
Transcription	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Conventionality	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total Items	169 (100%)	75 (100%)	14 (100%)	49 (100%)	33 (100%)	21 (100%)

Ultimately, character names are predominantly translated using the Copy procedure (80%), as changing them may cause the loss of the identity of the series and reduce recognition among readers who are already familiar with the *Harry Potter* characters. In contrast, other categories such as places or objects require more adjustment, which explains the higher use of procedures such as rendition or recreation rather than copy.

**4.3 Theoretical interpretations of translation strategies**

**4.3.1 Skopos theory in translating proper nouns in Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince**

The Skopos theory (Reiss & Vermeer, 2014) emphasizes that translation is not merely a linguistic transfer but a purposeful communicative act. A successful translation does not necessarily reproduce the source form, but rather fulfills its intended function within the target culture. According to Thanh Niên newspaper titled “Harry Potter and Vietnamese Readers” (Quang, 2005), a report from FAHASA, one of the largest bookstore chains in Vietnam, confirmed that “80% of customers are students”. Therefore, it can be seen that the Vietnamese translation is primarily aimed at young readers. With this readership in mind, it is plausible that

the translator’s choices were influenced by the need to ensure comprehensibility, accessibility, and appeal to young readers. Procedures such as addition, recreation, and rendition may have been employed to enhance clarity and cultural accessibility, while Copy may have been used to maintain the iconic value of certain proper nouns.

### 4.3.2 Domestication vs. foreignization

#### 4.3.2.1 Domestication

In the Vietnamese version, domestication is the dominant strategy, primarily realized through procedures such as rendition, recreation, and addition. Typical examples include:

- Horcrux → “Trường Sinh Linh Giá”: Sino-Vietnamese elements convey clear meaning, reducing unfamiliarity.
- Zonko’s Joke Shop → “Tiệm Giỡn Zonko”: adapts tone and style to fit the Vietnamese context.
- Quibbler → “Tạp chí Kể Lý Sự”: adds “Tạp chí” for clarity.

This strategy aligns with the Skopos of the translation by making the text more accessible, engaging, and comprehensible for young Vietnamese readers.

#### 4.3.2.2 Foreignization

Foreignization occurs mainly through copying and transcription. For instance, proper nouns such as “Hermione”, “Muggle”, “Malfoy”, and “Grimmauld Place” are preserved to maintain the cultural identity of the source text and reinforce the foreign atmosphere of the wizarding world.

**Table 4**

*Comparison of Domestication and Foreignization Strategies in Translating Proper Nouns*

	<b>Domestication</b>	<b>Foreignization</b>
<b>General approach</b>	Adapts proper nouns to Vietnamese cultural and linguistic norms	Retains the original form or foreign elements
<b>Purpose</b>	Enhances clarity and accessibility	Preserves originality and cultural uniqueness
<b>Example</b>	Apparition → Độn Thổ Sorting Hat → Nón Phân Loại	Acid Pops → Kẹo A-xít Ron Weasley → Ron Weasley

#### 4.3.2.3 Integration with Fernandes’ procedures

In the Vietnamese version of *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, seven of Fernandes’ (2006) procedures are employed: rendition, substitution, transcription, recreation, addition, copy, and conventionality. These micro-level strategies illustrate how proper nouns are rendered in practice. To account for the rationale behind the choice, the analysis draws on Skopos theory (Reiss & Vermeer, 2014) and Venuti’s (1995) concepts of domestication and foreignization.

**Table 5**

*Integration of Fernandes' Procedures with Domestication and Foreignization Strategies in Translating Proper Nouns*

Classification	Fernandes' Procedure	Frequency	Translation Purpose (Skopos)
Domestication	Rendition	152	Use target language equivalence to clarify cultural or descriptive meaning and help young readers understand.
	Recreation	31	Create a new proper noun to convey a similar effect in Vietnamese.
	Substitution	2	Replace it with an equivalent term that is familiar to Vietnamese culture.
	Addition	30	Add more information to clarify cultural or contextual references, supporting young readers' comprehension.
	Conventionality	1	Use the term that is widely accepted in Vietnamese culture.
Subtotal Domestication		216	
Foreignization	Transcription	1	Keep the source phonology, preserving its foreign sound.
	Copy	144	Preserve original names for original iconic or symbolic value.
Subtotal Foreignization		145	
Total		361	

As shown in the table, the majority of procedures in the Vietnamese version fall under the category of Domestication, with 216 cases (59.8%). This indicates that the translator frequently adapts proper nouns to enhance clarity and ensure comprehensibility for Vietnamese readers. By contrast, Foreignization is less commonly used, with 145 cases (40.2%). It is mainly applied to important proper nouns in the magical world of *Harry Potter*, particularly character names. These are either retained in their original form or rendered in a way that preserves the original sound. Although this study encompasses a broader range of proper nouns than previous works that focused primarily on character names, the overall tendency is similar: translators have a tendency to balance both strategies, with the Domestication strategy slightly dominant to increase comprehensibility for target readers.

**5. Conclusion**

**5.1 Summary**

This study explored how proper nouns in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* are translated into Vietnamese through a parallel corpus constructed with Sketch Engine. Drawing on Fernandes' (2006) taxonomy, the analysis identified seven translation procedures employed when translating proper nouns in this novel: rendition (152 cases), substitution (2 cases), transcription (1 case), recreation (31 cases), addition (30 cases), copy (144 cases), and conventionality (1 case). To interpret these choices, Reiss and Vermeer's (2014) Skopos theory as well as Venuti's (1995) concepts of domestication and foreignization were applied. The findings show that Domestication predominated with a total of 216 cases, indicating that translator Lý Lan prioritized adapting proper nouns to Vietnamese cultural norms and the

comprehension needs of young Vietnamese readers, while still preserving the core meanings of the original proper nouns.

The analysis also shows that translator Lý Lan employed different procedures depending on the type of proper nouns. Character and magical creature names are primarily translated with copy to preserve identity. Objects, places, and organizations and groups frequently undergo rendition and addition, reflecting that the translator clarifies unfamiliar terms or provides extra information for young Vietnamese readers. Similarly, charms and curses show a relatively high use of recreation because most of these words are neologisms created by J.K. Rowling.

## 5.2 Implications

This study contributes to translation studies by demonstrating how Fernandes' (2006) taxonomy of procedures can be applied in practice and integrated with macro-level frameworks such as Venuti's (1995) Domestication – Foreignization and Reiss and Vermeer's (2014) Skopos theory. While Fernandes' taxonomy enables the classification of micro-level procedures, Skopos theory clarifies how translation purposes shape those choices. The predominance of Domestication (216 out of 361 cases) suggests that in genres such as fantasy or children's literature, accessibility and readability are prioritized.

From a practical perspective, the findings offer useful guidelines for translators who deal with culturally specific elements. The strategies identified in this study may be extended to other genres such as science fiction, historical fiction, mythology, or fables, thereby providing a broader view of how translation choices interact with cultural and contextual elements. This study also provides a foundation for further research. For example, future studies could compare different Vietnamese translations of the same work. In addition, this research highlights both the strengths and limitations of parallel corpora constructed with Sketch Engine, which may encourage further improvements in translation analysis tools.

Pedagogically, the Vietnamese translation of *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* by Lý Lan offers a practical case study for translation classes. It illustrates how cultural and linguistic factors directly influence the translator's decisions. Furthermore, these findings could further inform translator training programs. They provide practical examples that demonstrate how translation theories can be applied in practice. Educators can design exercises that simulate real-life translation situations (e.g., translating names of characters and items in stories), and encourage students to choose and justify their strategies using theoretical frameworks. Such exercises not only make students more aware of cultural issues in translation but also train them to make translation decisions, an essential skill for professional translators.

Finally, in the current era, artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly assisting translation work. The findings of this study can serve as a reference for professionals involved in editing and post-editing, especially for literary works. Although AI can provide drafts, human translators still play an essential role in ensuring cultural nuances, creativity, and preserving the original atmosphere.

### 5.3 Limitations

Despite its contributions, this article has certain limitations. First, the scope of the analysis focuses on a single book in the *Harry Potter* series (*Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*). Although this allows for a more detailed study of a single book, it may not fully capture the diversity of translation strategies used across the series or in other literary works. Second, although the parallel corpus was built using Sketch Engine to collect data systematically, the automatic extraction and tagging of proper nouns may contain some inaccuracies, which require manual revision.

### References

- Buc, B. (2022). Domesticating vs. foreignizing positions in the translation of proper names from English into Polish and German. *Cadernos De Tradução*, 42(01), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.5007/2175-7968.2022.e86083>
- Coillie, J. V., & Verschuere, W. P. (Eds.) (2014). *Children's literature in translation: Challenges and strategies* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315759845>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Fernandes, L. (2006). Translation of names in children's fantasy literature: Bringing the young reader into play. *New Voices in Translation Studies*, 2(1), 44–57. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14456/nvts.2006.5>
- Hermans, T. (1988). On translating proper names, with reference to De Witte and Max Havelaar. In M. J. Wintle (Ed.), *Modern Dutch studies: Essays in honour of Professor Peter King on the occasion of his retirement* (pp. 11–24). Bloomsbury Academic. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781474284912.ch002>
- Jaleniauskiene, E., & Čičelytė, V. (2009). The strategies for translating proper names in children's literature. *Studies About Languages*, 15, 31–42.
- Juzelėnienė, S., Petronienė, S., & Kopylova, K. (2016). The translation of proper names from English to Lithuanian in “Steve Jobs” by W. Isaacson. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 232, 800–805. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.10.108>
- Mujni, M., & Marlina, L. (2025). Translation techniques of proper names in the novel *Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea* by Axie Oh (2022). *English Language and Literature*, 14(1), 31-41. <https://doi.org/10.24036/ell.v14i1.132891>
- Munday, J. (2016). *Introducing translation studies: Theories and applications* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315691862>
- Newmark, P. (1981). *Approaches to translation (Language teaching methodology series)*. Pergamon Press.
- Newmark, P. (1993). *Paragraphs on translation*. Multilingual Matters. <https://www.multilingual-matters.com/page/detail/Paragraphs-on-Translation/?k=9781853591914>
- Nguyen, T. M. N., & Phan, T. T. T. (2022). Building an English-Vietnamese parallel corpus of contemporary art terms. *Journal of Science, Hue University of Education*, 4(64), 5-13. <https://vjol.info.vn/index.php/TCKH-DHH/article/view/81824/69722>
- Nida, E. A. (1964). *Toward a science of translating*. E. J. Brill.
- Nord, C. (1997). *Translating as a purposeful activity: Functionalist approaches explained*. Routledge.
- Nord, C. (2003). Proper names in translations for children: Alice in Wonderland as a case in point. *Meta*, 48(1-2), 182–196. <https://doi.org/10.7202/006966ar>
- Nyangeri, N. A., & Wangari, R. (2019). Proper names in translation: Should they be translated or not? *Eastern African Literary and Cultural Studies*, 5(3–4), 347–365. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23277408.2019.1680914>



- Oittinen, R. (2000). *Translating for children*. Routledge. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9780203902004/translating-children-ritta-oittinen>
- Quang, T. (2005, July 19). *Harry Potter và độc giả Việt Nam*. Thanh Niên. <https://thanhnien.vn/harry-potter-va-doc-gia-viet-nam-185172414.htm>
- Reiss, K., & Vermeer, H. J. (2014). *Towards a general theory of translational action: Skopos theory explained* (C. Nord, Trans.; 1<sup>st</sup> ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315759715>
- Strawson, P. F. (1950). On referring. *Mind*, 59(235), 320–344. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2251176>
- Trieu, T. H. (2018). Translating proper names in a literary text: A case of Harry Potter novel in Vietnam. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies*, 34(2). <https://doi.org/10.25073/2525-2445/vnufs.4245>
- Venuti, L. (1995). *The translator's invisibility: A history of translation*. Routledge.
- Xu, S., & Xu, H. (2024). Advances in corpus applications in literary and translation studies. *The International Journal of Translation and Interpreting Research*, 16(1), 166–168. <https://doi.org/10.12807/ti.116201.2024.r01>
- Yang, W. (2010). Brief study on domestication and foreignization in translation. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 1(1), 77-80. <https://doi.org/10.4304/jltr.1.1.77-80>