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Exploring the Sociolinguistic and Semiotic Aspects Involved in Translating Culture-Specific Items in Foreign Language Acquisition

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Abstract: *The current paper examines the sociolinguistic and semiotic aspects involved in translating culture-specific items during foreign language acquisition. The former describes translation techniques adopted to render them connoting various aspects of human life and activity into the target language and defines their role in developing a translator's cultural competence. "Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix" by Rowling (2003b) and its translation have been chosen as the sources of the comprehensive comparative research. The primary research methods are descriptive and comparative methods and the analysis of dictionary definitions. In addition, the study provides a range of specific translation strategies employed to address the challenges of translating culture-specific items, including domestication, generalization, permutation, addition, modulation, and transcoding. By adopting them, future translators enhance their skills and produce high-quality translations. The research highlights the importance of cultural competence in the translation process, as translators need to identify and interpret cultural references in the source text to produce a culturally appropriate and accurate translation. Furthermore, it emphasizes the need for translators to approach literary texts from a socio-semiotic perspective to help better understand the unique semiotic space created by the lexical items and cultural references.*

Keywords: *translation strategies, socio-semiotic perspective, culture-specific items, foreign language acquisition, cultural competence, semiotic space.*

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Introduction

At the end of the 20th century, many everyday human life and social activity phenomena required new interpretation and rethinking. Nerubasska et al. (2020, 281) believe that "the human cannot remain unchanged, because the social environment shaping the human's behavior and life rules changes." Postmodernism, with its far-reaching impact, appeared as "a breath of fresh air" (McRobbie, 1994, 14) and altered the already existing cultural forms and shaped human social experiences that emerged so far. However, everything pertaining to it, "its scope, its provenance, its onset, its seriousness and value, its politics, its very existence" (McHale, 2015, 5), got considerable critical attention.

Postmodernism erased borders between philosophy and literature, theatre and music, history and screen, genres, and styles. Furthermore, it eradicated a complete estrangement from mainstream mass culture. As a result, contemporary culture has become "saturated by the media, entertainment, and new information systems" (Kivisto, 2014, 104), being reshaped daily. At the same time, the works people produce have a social background since they are specific to their culture and reveal their national identity.

Cultural asymmetry and variations among various linguistic communities are "necessarily reflected in the discourses of their members, with the potential opacity and unacceptability this may involve for the target cultural system" (Aixela, 1996, 54). In this regard, translation dominates "the movement of texts across linguistic and cultural boundaries" (Bassnett, 2019, 1). The translator is paid meticulous attention as a mediator between the source and target languages and cultures. Albeit representing alien culture, he/she may find the translation process challenging and "intimidating" (Alireza Shirinzadeh & Sepora, 2015, 168).

Cultural discrepancies are best noticed in literary translations. Daghoughi & Mahmood (2016, 171) believe that literary works pose more difficulties in translation than any other kind of text due to "their great number of culture-specific items, specific values, aesthetic, and expressive features." Culture-specific items, apart from terms, bear culturally meaningful information peculiar to the definite community and not known beyond its borders (Halyan, 2014). Newmark (1993) states that they are indispensable; however, the translation in their case is superfluous. As such, translators must navigate the delicate balance between fidelity to the source text and adaptation to the target culture to ensure successful communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

In this respect, cultural and intercultural competence is critical to preparing future translators. As translation involves the transfer of texts across languages and cultures, translators must deeply understand the cultures represented in the source and target texts. This understanding goes beyond mere knowledge of vocabulary and grammar and extends to cultural norms, values, and beliefs. Furthermore, translators are regarded as "a kind of bridge between two people with different cultures should know not only peculiarities of the cultures in general but communication strategies and peculiarities of interpersonal communication as well" (Mirzoyeva & Syurmen, 2016, 169).

Thus, the present study *aims* to explore the sociolinguistic and semiotic aspects involved in translating culture-specific items in foreign language acquisition by future translators.

Learning translation strategies is crucial in developing a translator's cultural competence. By developing an awareness of sociolinguistic and semiotic aspects involved in translating culture-specific items, future translators can acquire the necessary skills to navigate the complexities of cross-cultural communication and produce culturally and linguistically accurate translations. Thus, incorporating the study of translation strategies in translator training programs can facilitate cultural competence development and enhance translation effectiveness as a tool for cross-cultural communication.

"Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix" by Rowling (2003b) has been chosen as the corpus for our research. Viktor Morozov, a famous Ukrainian translator, provided its translation into Ukrainian. The novel belongs to a series of fantasy books narrating the life of young wizards at Hogwarts School. Rowling (2003b) masterfully integrates the opposing layers of identities, real and magical toposes involving the elements of a fantasy genre. Philosophical, ontological, and aesthetic ideas of postmodernism permeate her prose. The former are revealed in irrational motifs of magic, the elements of the archaic world, and pastiche. The story is transferred to virtual space, and the characters' true intentions are unknown.

The author shows that truth is not universal but somewhat subjective and relative to an individual. Finally, the imagery and the mosaic of culture-specific items exhibit relevant postmodern qualities and realia. "A foregrounding of words as fragmenting material signs" (Lewis, 2011, 171) and "a loss of distinction between logically separate levels of discourse" (Lewis, 2011, 171) relate the novel to the postmodern tradition. Therefore, exploring Rowling's literary works (2003b) enhances understanding of the "postmodern condition" (Harms & Dickens, 1996, 210) as both a cultural and artistic phenomenon.

The study employed a qualitative content analysis method to examine and categorize culture-specific items from "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix" by Rowling (2003b) and their translations into Ukrainian. The process involved several key steps. Relevant excerpts containing culture-specific lexical units were selected from the novel, focusing on categories such as household objects, magical artifacts, geographical locations, proper names, and social institutions. The identified items were categorized based on semantic criteria, leading to the development of a typology of culture-specific elements in the source text. As a result, each category was analyzed to identify the translation techniques employed by the translator, including transcoding, calque, modulation, transposition, addition, omission, and domestication. Consequently, the original text and its Ukrainian translation were compared to assess the extent to which the translations preserved the cultural and contextual meanings of the source text. Finally, the effectiveness and implications of the translation strategies were evaluated, with attention to challenges in cultural and pragmatic adaptation and their impact on intercultural competence development for translator trainees.

Thus, the feasible linguistic methods for fulfilling the set aim have been thoroughly selected. Thus, the analysis of dictionary definitions and word semantics, descriptive and comparative methods have been chosen to identify the translation strategies applied to render culture-specific items in Rowling's "Harry Potter and the Orden of Phoenix" (2003b) into Ukrainian. The former have been employed to disclose the word meanings relevant to the analysis and provide their classification. The descriptive method is utilized to reveal the distinctive linguistic features of the culture-specific items under study. Finally, the comparative and case study approaches contributed to comparing the source and target language texts, revealing the specificity of its translation into Ukrainian. Furthermore, they allow for specific examples of culture-specific items to be analyzed in depth. These methods can provide a detailed understanding of the complexities involved in translating culture-specific items and can be used to identify strategies for dealing with specific translation challenges, developing both linguistic and bicultural translator's competence.

Cultural aspects in foreign language teaching: bridging the gap between languages and cultures

English as a foreign language (hereinafter – EFL) teaching has evolved over the years, shifting the focus from linguistic competence to a more holistic approach that includes cultural competence. Language and culture are intertwined, and a lack of cultural understanding can hinder effective communication in a foreign language. In today's globalized world, where

communication and collaboration between people from different cultures and linguistic backgrounds are becoming more frequent, bridging the gap between languages and cultures is crucial. However, Chaouche (2016, 33) claims that "though language and culture are so closely interwoven into each other that one cannot be conceived without the other, language is still taught as a separate phenomenon from culture and classroom activities are bereft of any instruction of foreign cultures and this decontextualized method of teaching has plagued the field for many years."

In her seminal study, Ningsih (2019, 94) maintains that "learning language implicitly means learning a culture." The latter is an essential component of language, shaping how people communicate, express themselves, and understand others. Moreover, it can be regarded as "a 'social heredity' transmitted from one generation to another generation with the accumulation of individual experiences, or a mode of activities differentiating people of one society from another society" (Ali et al., 2015, 2). Therefore, foreign language teaching should not only focus on language rules and structures but also on the cultural context in which the language is used.

Cultural aspects such as customs, traditions, beliefs, and values affect language use. Insufficient cultural knowledge may result in misinterpretations, ineffective exchange of information, and potential affronts. For instance, using certain words or expressions considered acceptable in one culture may be inappropriate or offensive in another. Therefore, cultural competence is necessary for effective communication in a foreign language.

Onishchuk et al. (2021, 113–114) posit that cognitive strategies in foreign language education and an intercultural focus on communication are among the most effective methods for integrating innovative experiences into language learning. The scholars highlight the importance of involving students in comprehending the nuances of native speakers' mindsets and values to develop an optimal communication strategy. By adopting these strategies, learners can effectively enhance their language proficiency while developing a deep understanding of cultural diversity, ultimately leading to successful intercultural communication.

Bridging the gap between languages and cultures requires a two-pronged approach (Fig. 1). Firstly, it involves concurrently teaching language skills and cultural competence. This means that language instruction should include cultural aspects that affect language use, such as idioms, slang, and non-verbal communication. Secondly, it involves developing intercultural communicative competence, which refers to proficiency in engaging in productive and culturally suitable communication with individuals of diverse backgrounds and identities. This pertains to cultivating a complex

comprehension regarding divergences in customs, beliefs, and practices, adapting to different communication styles, avoiding stereotypes and cultural biases, and efficiently rendering messages into different languages.

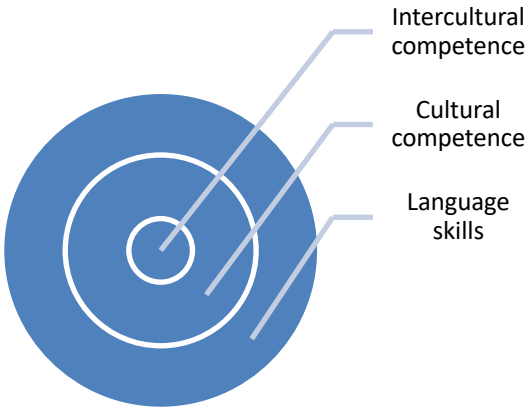


Fig. 1. Skills necessary for bridging the gap between languages and cultures
Source: authors' own conception

Teaching cultural competence in foreign language classes requires a teacher proficient in the target language and culture and able to provide students with authentic cultural experiences. The latter include exposing students to authentic materials such as movies, music, and literature, inviting guest speakers, and organizing cultural events. Instructors can also use project-based learning, where students work on projects that require them to use their language and cultural knowledge to solve real-life problems. This type of learning fosters collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking and helps students develop the skills necessary to interact effectively with people from different cultures. However, in foreign language education, authentic materials may be a source of frustration for students who lack adequate cultural and social knowledge of the target language (Dai, 2011, 1033). Hence, it is incumbent upon educators to meticulously choose appropriate materials that align with students' learning interests, thereby enhancing their motivation toward the learning process.

Cultural specificity is an essential component of language teaching, and it should be integrated into the curriculum to facilitate students' understanding of different cultures. The correlation between culture and language can be exemplified by using lexemes and idiomatic expressions commonly categorized as culture-specific items (Qays, 2022,80). By

introducing the latter, teachers can provide a more comprehensive and authentic language learning experience beyond just teaching the language. Furthermore, in cases where cultural knowledge is omitted from language teaching, culture-specific words and concepts are the most profoundly impacted aspect of the language (Bin Towairesh, 2021, 11). In this regard, using cultural-specific items can help students develop a deeper understanding of the target language and its culture, enhancing their communication skills and promoting cultural awareness.

The demand for translation services has grown exponentially in the increasingly globalized world. Translation studies and practice are closely intertwined with the cultural specificity of language teaching. It is imperative to integrate cultural elements into the language curriculum to enable students to gain a profound understanding of different cultures. Culture-specific items can provide a more authentic and comprehensive language learning experience, surpassing the mere acquisition of language skills. The introduction of these items can assist students in developing a more profound comprehension of the target language and its associated culture, leading to improved communication skills and greater cultural awareness. By emphasizing the significance of cultural specificity, translation studies and practice can facilitate the advancement of language learners toward greater intercultural competence.

EFL teaching has evolved over the years, shifting the focus from linguistic competence to a more holistic approach that includes cultural competence. The findings and discussions presented above are of international significance as they contribute to the growing body of research advocating for culturally inclusive language teaching practices. However, while these developments are promising, challenges persist. One notable concern is the lack of comprehensive teacher training in integrating culture into language instruction. Many educators are still inclined toward conventional grammar-focused lessons, potentially neglecting cultural nuances essential for effective communication. Another issue lies in selecting culturally appropriate and engaging materials. Exposure to authentic cultural experiences, such as literature and multimedia resources, is frequently limited or inadequately contextualized, leading to superficial cultural understanding.

The current research aligns with international pedagogical trends that prioritize not just linguistic proficiency but also the ability to navigate diverse cultural landscapes. The authors' contribution to the field lies in synthesizing theoretical insights with practical applications, proposing a dual-focused approach to language teaching that emphasizes both language skills and intercultural communicative competence. This dual approach is pivotal for

fostering learners' adaptability and cultural awareness, which are essential in an increasingly interconnected world. The research offers innovative educational frameworks that can be adapted in various educational contexts worldwide by exploring cognitive strategies and intercultural communication methods. Furthermore, the work contributes to the ongoing efforts to modernize EFL curricula and aligns with international calls for education systems to produce globally competent citizens.

The authors highlight the necessity for educators to carefully select culturally appropriate resources, thereby addressing challenges noted in international studies regarding student frustration with culturally dense materials. This practical guidance bridges theoretical concepts with classroom realities, providing educators with actionable strategies.

On the socio-semiotic aspects of translation

Culture received various definitions in different studies. The former is viewed as "the map of the world" or its mental image, regardless of its competing interpretations. Culture is based on "categories and signs that are necessary to communicate and it is organized into a system at the level of meaning" (Lorusso, 2015, 119). It contains the imprints of past experiences and socially-embedded practices, being both historical and structural (Morimoto, 2015, 550). The former presents the way of life peculiar to a definite community, and language serves as the instrument of its expression.

Morimoto (2015, 558) claims that "upon sudden change, a society and/or individuals go through a set of remembrances." Technological advances and changes in socio-political life strengthen the importance of translation as a means of communication across cultures. Since communication is designed to fulfill the aim, it can be reached by assessing the effect of a communicative act on the audience (Cruse, 2011, 6). Consistent with this view, the translator is impelled to reconstruct the source language message to be comprehensible and pragmatically adjustable for the target audience.

Since the last decade of the 20th century, there has been a shift to "sociocultural" approaches to translation split into two waves – "the cultural turn" (1980–1990s) and "the sociological turn" (2000s). In the seminal work, Nord (2018, 33) identifies translation with comparing cultures. Notably, an alien culture can only be explored by making a meaningful comparison with an individual's own culture. Source-culture phenomena are interpreted regarding their own culture-specific knowledge of the source language culture, depending on whether it is made from or into the translator's native language and culture (Nord, 2018, 33). The latter does not pose a considerable challenge if the source and target languages are related and devoid of substantial

structural and semantic discrepancies. However, this idea is opposed by some researchers. Braçaj (2015, 477) maintains that "if language were just a classification for a set of general or universal concepts, it would be easy to translate from a source language."

Languages and communities with profound differences are "threatened to misunderstandings, whereas due to globalization, encounters of such cultures are inevitable" (Blažytė & Liubinienė, 2016,45). Thus, cultural gaps that need to be filled in the target language require considerable cognitive efforts and linguistic competence on the translator's part. Vandepitte (2017, 166) believes that evincing a strong interest in cognition in the process of translation is "as self-evident as paying attention to the social aspects." The translations foster the reader's cognitive activity while comprehending the text and stimulating psychological processes in their minds. The translator's primary task is to eliminate complexities of meaning expression in the target language texts triggering the same effect on the target audience as on the source one.

Translating literary works is assumed to be "more an art than a craft" (Tabakowska, 2000, 83). As a mediator between compared cultures, a translator is obliged to turn to creativity and artistic capacity to exert a profound aesthetic effect. If translated texts are placed "within the centre of literary polysystem of a culture" (Kuleli, 2019, 1106), they are liable to impact nearly all facets of that culture. A text presents a semiotic landscape filled with signs to reach the targeted audience. In his longitudinal study on cultural implications of biosemiotics, Cobley (2016, 17) claims that "any collection of signs is a text, and the concept was in the vanguard of the dismantling of the imaginary dividing line between so-called 'high' and popular culture."

Cultural differences and "gaps" in cultural models draw the lively interest of scholars in the field of translation. Various definitions stand for the "gaps" in the perception of discourse. The latter are referred to as "cultural words" (Newmark, 2010, 173), "cultural terms" (Fernandez Guerra, 2012, 1), "culture-specific item" (Amenador & Wang, 2022, 1), "culture-specific concepts" (Baker, 2018, 19), "cultureme" (Nord, 2018, 32), "culture-specific references" (Antonini, 2007, 153; Davies, 2003, 65), "cultural references" (Olk, 2013, 344), or "realia" (Robinson, 2012, 175). This paper will use the term "culture-specific item" to describe this linguistic phenomenon.

There appears to be no agreement on how to categorize the suggested terms precisely. The difficulty in defining the "gaps" occurs because they are "so heavily and exclusively grounded in one culture" (Robinson, 2012, 175) that they are almost untranslatable. Therefore, there needs to be a clear line between what units can be treated as culture-specific items and what not.

Furthermore, Kuleli (2019, 1106) points out that nearly all linguistic signs are teemed with culture-specific phenomena.

From a semiotic perspective, a culture-specific item is a linguistic sign which contains several components – the signifier, the signified, and the referent (Bilá & Kačmárová, 2018, 3). The signifier represents a graphical form as a word or a combination of sounds. The meaning or content it bears is referred to as the signified. The referent means a thing or object being exemplified. Thus, culture-specific items are often expressed in a text via various objects, dimensions, measurements, or other reference points grounded in the source language culture, furnished in the definite linguistic form, and not existing in the target culture. They are conventionally represented as proper names and common expressions.

According to the definition provided by Nord (2018, 32), a culture-specific item is "a social phenomenon of a culture X that is regarded as relevant by the members of this culture and, when compared with a corresponding social phenomenon in a culture Y, is found to be specific to culture X." Consequently, communication is achievable by associating entities or ideas with linguistic signs standing for culturally established concepts (Merrell, 2017, 187). Signs interpret physical objects and are not always behaviours and pure conceptualizations existing in human minds. Regarding these characteristics of signs, Lorusso (2015, 123) suggests that "the cultural units, in fact, are the things with which we have to deal empirically."

A translator who couples a cultural approach with the semiotic recognizes that each language possesses signs rederived from culture. In this regard, the text presents the fabric of inextricably linked signs anchored in a specific culture. However, text perception and reproduction conventions drastically differ in each culture. This fact gives ground to think of translation as "a process which occurs between cultures rather than simply between languages" (Zare-Behtash & Firoozkoohi, 2010, 8), a communicatively mediated act (Onyshchak et al., 2021, 227). In other words, a culture-specific item in translation results from cultural diversity, the conflict arising from cultural discrepancies in verbalizing the referent.

In translation studies, the insights provided in this research regarding the socio-semiotic aspects of translation and the handling of culture-specific items will also hold international relevance. It contributes to a nuanced understanding that is crucial for effective intercultural communication by framing translation as a process that occurs between cultures rather than merely between languages. The research extends existing literature by highlighting the translator's role in mediating cultural differences and ensuring that texts resonate equally across diverse audiences.

The conducted study provides valuable insights into the translation of culture-specific items in literary works, using "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix" (2003) as a case study, with translations into Ukrainian. This analysis holds significant international relevance for both translation studies and intercultural education by addressing challenges encountered in preserving cultural and linguistic nuances when translating fantasy literature.

The findings contribute to the broader discourse on translation strategies applicable to linguistically and culturally unique literary texts. The exploration of translation methods, such as transcoding, calque, modulation, and domestication, offers practical guidance for translators across different languages and cultures. The research underscores the importance of preserving narrative authenticity while making literary works accessible to international audiences by examining how culture-specific items are adapted. The detailed analysis of translation solutions highlights both successful techniques and limitations in conveying culture-specific items, providing valuable insights for practitioners and scholars alike. Furthermore, the study bridges the gap between linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding, offering pedagogical recommendations for improving translation education.

Typology of culture-specific items in "Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix" by Rowling (2003b) and their translation into Ukrainian

The typology of culture-specific items in literary works is of paramount importance to the process of translation trainees' preparation and developing their intercultural competence, as these items often represent a significant challenge for them in conveying the intended meaning and cultural nuances of the source text. Translating these items into Ukrainian requires careful consideration of their cultural significance, and the translator must possess a deep understanding of both cultures to ensure that the meaning of the source text is accurately conveyed to the target audience. Failure to translate culture-specific items appropriately can result in a loss of meaning or cultural context, potentially undermining the effectiveness of the translation. Thus, the typology of culture-specific items in literary works is essential in ensuring that translations are culturally appropriate and effectively convey the intended meaning of the source text to readers from different cultural backgrounds.

The issues of defining culture-specific items and their typology arise in "Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix" by Rowling (2003b) due to the portrayal of a fictional magical world with its peculiar expressiveness. The author coined many novel notions for magical things and creatures, potions, educational establishments, and unique posts. Having read the source

language text, we managed to classify the culture-specific items into several groups based on the semantic criterion (Fig. 2).

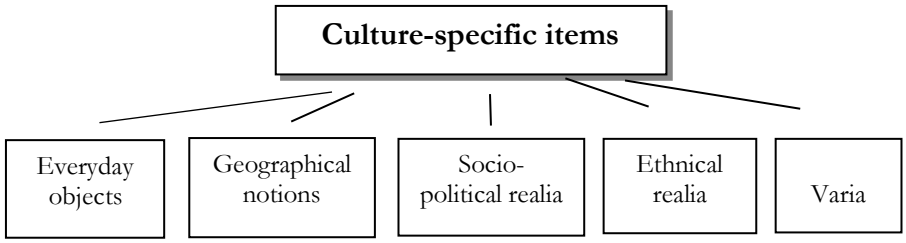


Fig. 2. Typology of culture-specific items in Rowling's "Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix" (2003b)
Source: authors' own conception

The first group contains the lexical units denoting household items and objects of everyday life. The former includes the words indicating food and drinks (*Cauldron Cakes*), clothes (*Quidditch robes*, *an Invisibility Cloak*), money (*gold*), transport (*Floo powder, the Floo Network, Brooms*), professions and positions (*Senior Undersecretary*, *High Inquisitor of Hogwarts*, *the Head of House*, *the keeper of the Hall of Prophecy*) and specific artifacts (*Time-Turners, a wand, the Portkey, the Broom Compass, Slytherins' badges*). Geographical culture-specific items constitute the second group and designate imaginary places, magic locations, and streets: *Wisteria Walk*, *Grimmauld Place*, *the Forbidden Forest*, *Hogwarts Castle*, *Hogsmeade*, *the Leaky Cauldron*, *Diagon Alley*.

The third group comprises words denoting bodies of power and social institutions (*the Ministry of Magic*, *the Department of Magical Transport*, *the Floo Network Authority*, *Broom Regulatory Control*, *Portkey Office*, *Apparation Test Center*) and educational establishments (*Durmstrang*, *Hogwarts*). The items bearing ethnical identity are mainly represented by proper names and constitute a separate group: *Professor Tofty*, *Seamus*, *Snape*, *Nearly Headless Nick*, *Malfoy*, *McGonagall*, *and Dumbledore*. The last group of culture-specific items includes various units related to arts and spiritual culture: *the Quibbler*, *the Daily Prophet*, *the Fat Lady*, *a Howler*, *a centaur*, and *mountain trolls*.

The translation of literary work is considered adequate when it adequately renders both connotative and denotative components. To attain this goal, the translator must gear the feasible translation strategies and keep within the genre. Having analyzed the corpora taken from "Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix" by Rowling (2003b), we may state that the proper names used as culture-specific items take a conspicuous place in the novel.

Vermes (2003, 89) claims that they "behave in a largely predictable way in translation." The prevailing majority of proper names are rendered into Ukrainian through transcoding. For instance, *Dursley – Dursli*, *Dudley – Dadli*, *Snape – Sneip*, *Malfoy – Melfoi*, *McGonagall – Makgonegel*, *Dumbledore – Dambldor*, *Professor Tofty – Profesor Tofti*, *Professor Moody – Profesor Mudi*, *Azkaban – Azkaban*, *Hogsmeade – Hogsmid*.

However, calque or the literal translation of a phrase is employed to render the nicknames: "***Nearly Headless Nick*** *hesitated, then said, "Not everyone can come back as a ghost"*" (Rowling, 2003b, 860). – "***Maizhe-Bezgholovyi Nik*** *povahavsia, a todi skazav: Ne vsi mozhut povertatysia pryvydamy*" (Rowling, 2003a, 805). It can be seen from the above examples that the phrase in translation preserves morphological composition and signification yet does not reproduce the original sound form.

The same translation strategy is applied to render the culture-specific items in the following sentences: "***Senior Undersecretary to the Minister of Magic*** *and Headmistress and* ***High Inquisitor of Hogwarts****"* (Rowling, 2003b, 754). – "***Pershyi zastupnyk ministra mahii****, a takozh dyrektor i* ***Verkhovnyi inkvizytor Hogvortsu****"* (Rowling, 2003a,705). "*Harry leaned forward to try and see whether there were any lights on in Hagrid's cabin by* ***the Forbidden Forest****, but the grounds were in complete darkness*" (Rowling, 2003b, 201). – "*Harri stav prydyvliatysia, chy svitytsia v Hegridovii khatyni bilia* ***Zaboronenoho lisu****, ale tam use bulo opovyte sutsilnoiu temriavoiu*" (Rowling, 2003a, 191).

Adapting foreign language culture-specific items in translation may pose a serious challenge. For example, the phrases in bold below have no Ukrainian equivalent to reconstruct their grammatical structure and preserve semantic content: "*The baby-headed* ***Death Eater*** *was screaming and banging into things, toppling grandfather clocks and overturning desks, bawling and confused, while the glass cabinet that Harry now suspected had contained* ***Time-Turners*** *continued to fall, shatter, and repair itself on the wall behind them*" (Rowling, 2003b, 794).

The example below demonstrates the case of calque and transposition integration to reach the desired effect on the target audience: ""*Ready to show us all up, Ickle Prefect?" said Fred, emerging tousle-haired from the neck of his* ***Quidditch robes****, a slightly malicious grin on his face* (Rowling, 2003b, 290). *Hotovyi sebe pokazaty u vsii krasi, maniunii stalosta? - kaposno vsmikhnuvsia Fred, natiahuiuchy cherez rozkuiovdzhenu holovu* ***kvidychnu mantiiu***" (Rowling, 2003a, 275). *Quidditch* is a fictional sport event specially created by Rowling (2003b) and thus has no full or functional equivalent in Ukrainian.

The translator often chooses to adapt the items semantically and pragmatically by applying domestication: "*Harri zazyrnuv u dveri y uvazhno prydyvyvsia.* ***Smertezher*** *z dytiachoiu holivkoiu lementuvav, natykavsia na rizni*

predmety, toptav starovynni hodynnyky y perekydav stoly, a zasklena shafka, v yakii, – podumav Harri, – mabut, zberihalysia ***chasovoroty***" (Rowling, 2003a, 743). In this case, using a genuinely Ukrainian equivalent is justifiable since it precisely depicts the phrase's meaning in the authentic text and is easily comprehended by the target readers.

Domestication helps "reduce the impact of foreignness in the target text due to ethnocentric trends that stimulate the translator to elevate his own cultural references and keep them intact from other alien one" (Mariam, 2014, 26). The former is applied to render the names of wizarding newspapers: "*But* ***the Daily Prophet****'s version of the Azkaban breakout had some gaping holes in it*" (Rowling, 2003b, 568). – "*Ale u versii vtechi z Azkabanu, opryliudnenii* ***"Shchodennym vishchunom****", ne skhodiatsia kintsi z kintsiamy*" (Rowling, 2003a, 532). "*You think people will take him seriously if he's published in* ***The Quibbler****?*" (Rowling, 2003b, 568). – "*Vy vvazhaiete, shcho liudy seriozno spryimut yoho interviu, yakshcho yoho opublikuie "****Bazikalo****"?*" (Rowling, 2003a, 532).

The translator has chosen the words "*vishchun*" and "*bazikalo*" to substitute the source language units (Rowling, 2003a, 744). To our mind, the choice of equivalents is rational. In *the Dictionary of the Ukrainian Language in 11 volumes*, edited by Bilodid (1970–1980), the word "*vishchun*" is marked as archaic and is defined as *toi, khto vishchuie, prorokuie shcho-nebud*. It creates the anticipation of something unforeseen and unpredictable, perfectly aligning with the magic context. The Ukrainian lexeme "*bazikalo*" is marked as pejorative and denotes someone who likes to talk a lot (*toi, khto liubyt bahato hovoryty, bazikaty*). It explicitly underlines the quality of a wizarding tabloid and the matter published in it.

There are cases when modifications in the target language text are unavoidable. For instance, translating the sentence *I'm supposed to do it* ***for free*** (Rowling, 2003b, 569), the translator picked up the colloquial expression to create a convivial atmosphere in the target language text: "*Ya maiu tse zrobyty* ***na durniak***" (Rowling, 2003a, 532). However, the semantics of the original phrase is not preserved since *na durniak* in Ukrainian does not mean *free of charge* but at somebody's expense (*za chyi-nebud rakhunok*).

Rowling (2003b) created the culture-specific item *Bring-and-Fly Sale* to depict a sale of second-hand magical items hidden from Muggles' eyes: "*Twenty-five Ways to Mingle with Muggle's and the dates of the next* ***Bring-and-Fly Sale****?*" (2003b, 568). Unfortunately, the unit caused a serious challenge in translation and thus underwent generalization, being referred to as a charity sale: "*Dvadtsiat piat sposobiv, yak nepomitno zmishatysia z mahlamy i dni nastupnykh* ***dobrochynnykh rozprodazhiv****?*" (Rowling, 2003a, 531).

The permutation is the translation technique often applied to render culture-specific items indicating magical artifacts. It lies in translating the words in the phrase in the reverted order: "*Lupin says you've got **an Invisibility Cloak**, but it won't stay on while we're flying; this'll disguise you better*" (Rowling, 2003b, 54). – "*Liupyn kazav, shcho v tebe ye **plashch-nevydymka**, ale pid chas polotu vin na tobi ne vtrymaietsia*" (Rowling, 2003a, 56). "*Harry dashed over to the fireplace, seized the pot of **Floo powder**, and threw a pinch into the grate, causing emerald flames to burst into life there*" (Rowling, 2003b, 740). – "*Harri metnuvsia do kamina, skhopyv horshchyk z **poroshkom flu** i kynuv dribku v kamin - spalakhnuv smarahdovyi vohon*" (Rowling, 2003a, 692). In the last example, permutation was coupled with transcription to render the phrase "*Floo powder*" into Ukrainian.

Interestingly, to translate the culture-specific item "*the Floo network*", the translator combined permutation with addition: "*"Brooms," said Lupin. "Only way. You're too young to Apparate, they'll be watching **the Floo Network**, and it's more than our life's worth to set up an unauthorized Portkey'*" (Rowling, 2003b, 51). – "*Ty shche zamolodyi, shchob yavliatysia; za **merezheiu poroshku flu** budut stezhyty; a nedozvolene vstanovlennia letykliucha mozhe koshtuvaty nam zhyttia*" (Rowling, 2003a, 53). This device aimed to specify the essence of the cultural term for the target language reader to build an associative picture in his/her mind.

The translator uses modulation to derive the meaning of the lexical unit "*gold*" in translation: "*She'll want to know what they've been up to, to get their hands on that sort of **gold***" (Rowling, 2003b, 680). – "*Vona zakhoche znaty, yak vony rozdobuly stilky **hroshei***" (Rowling, 2003a, 637). In the original, it refers to pieces of shiny metal similar to money in value. Thus, the Ukrainian equivalent is pragmatically adjusted to the context.

Rowling (2003b) used a culture-specific item "*Cauldron Cake*" to refer to a variation of wizarding cakes: "*Harry thanked the others and accompanied Ron back to their compartment, where he bought a large pile of **Cauldron Cakes** and Pumpkin Pasties*" (2003b, 865). However, the pragmatic inference of the item was irreversibly lost in Morozov's translation: "*Harri podiakuvav usim i povernuvsia z Ronom u svoie kupe, de kupyv tsilu kupu **tistechok** ta harbuzovykh pyrizhkiv*" (Rowling, 2003a, 808). The applied omission neutralized the semantics of the unit and made the text "plain" for perception.

The advantages of analyzing corpora of culture-specific items for developing the linguistic and cultural competence of future translator trainees are manifold. The study provides a comprehensive understanding of the lexical units that denote household items, professions, institutions, educational establishments, and specific artifacts. The analysis also encompasses imaginary places, magic locations, streets, bodies of power, social institutions, and cultural units related to arts and spiritual culture.

Proper names, a type of culture-specific item, play a significant role in literary works and behave predictably in translation. Transcoding, calque, or transposition integration are the translation strategies used to render culture-specific items in the target language. Although the translation solutions analyzed so far seem viable in translating culture-specific items in the fantasy genre, they cannot eliminate the issues of cultural and pragmatic adaptation in literary translation. However, adapting foreign language culture-specific items in translation may pose a serious challenge. A translator must gear feasible translation strategies to preserve the original text's connotative and denotative components. Therefore, this analysis is crucial in developing future translator trainees' linguistic and cultural competence.

Conclusions

The current paper examined the translation strategies of culture-specific items in Rowling's "Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix" (2003b) regarding its cultural and semiotic aspects during foreign language acquisition. The typology of translation choices has proved that a word is a bilateral linguistic sign with its signifier and signified. The translation of culture-specific items in the fantasy genre presupposes two interconnected phases. Firstly, the meaning of the unit undergoes cultural transfer and, thus, becomes a meaningful cognitive and semiotic sign. Secondly, the constructed cognitive message is deciphered in the target language and adjusted to comply with its norms. As a result, the translation turns into a cognitively and communicatively mediated act between the author of the literary text and the target reader.

Therefore, cultural aspects are essential to foreign language teaching, and cultural competence is necessary for effective communication in a foreign language. Bridging the gap between languages and cultures requires a two-pronged approach that involves concurrently teaching language skills and cultural competence and developing intercultural communicative competence. Teachers can achieve this by providing students with authentic cultural experiences, project-based learning, and exposure to authentic materials. Ultimately, students proficient in a foreign language and culturally competent are better equipped to navigate the globalized world and interact effectively with people from different cultures. The research findings emphasize the importance of approaching literary texts from a socio-semiotic perspective to understand better the unique semiotic space created by lexical items and cultural references.

The results of the proposed study indicate that the translator employed both source language and target language-oriented translation strategies in the Ukrainian translation of Rowling's "Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix" (2003b). Specifically, the source language-oriented

strategies (transcoding, domestication, calque, and addition) were the most recurrent techniques applied in the translated text. Transcoding was utilized to render proper names and nicknames. Domestication and calque served to retain the specificity of the culture-specific items referring to magical items, clothes, and specific posts. The former minimized the risk of non-compliance with the norms of the target language. Finally, addition was used to specify the notions non-existent in the Ukrainian language world picture and expand the scope of culture-specific information.

The target language-oriented strategies are presented by generalization, modulation, and omission. Generalization avoids ambiguity in rendering specific events in the imaginary magical world. Modulation served as an indispensable tool in translating the dimension of monetary units. Admittedly, permutation is often used since the original phrase cannot reoccur in the same syntactic pattern in the target language message. However, the results demonstrate that culture-specific items are not always justly rendered into Ukrainian. Indeed, it affects the quality of translation and decreases the value of the source language text.

Since the study of culture-specific items in the translation of the literary text is not ample, further research should be initiated to address these issues.

Limitations of the study

The study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, it focuses exclusively on the translation of culture-specific items in Rowling's "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix" (2003b) and its Ukrainian version, which may limit the applicability of the findings to other literary works or genres. Secondly, the research is geographically confined to translations between English and Ukrainian, reflecting a specific cultural and linguistic context that may not fully represent translation practices involving other languages or cultural settings. Nevertheless, these constraints do not diminish the value of the research but underscore the need for further research encompassing a broader range of texts, diverse cultural contexts, and emerging translation approaches.

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