

## Translation Procedures of Onomatopoeic Words from English into German found in the Novel *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*

Swe Nwe Hmwe<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

Translating from the source language to the target language is not an easy task to do. There are many challenges for translators. In this paper, the onomatopoeic word translation found in the novel *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* is analyzed by using Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958) theory. Onomatopoeia is one of the most significant features in this novel. This study aims to classify the word classes of onomatopoeia of English and German. The researcher investigated the translation process of onomatopoeic words from both languages, to make it easier to understand the sound words for German language students. Based on the analysis, 103 onomatopoeic words are found, 6 out them are omitted to translate. It was found that 97 data belong to noun, verb, adjective, adverb, and interjection word class respectively. Most of them are the verbs. The five procedures out of seven were applied in the translated text. Further study should be conducted on translating Myanmar onomatopoeic words from comics or other sources.

Keywords: translation procedures, Vinay and Darbelnet theory, onomatopoeic words, novel, German, Myanmar.

### Introduction

A language is a tool used for human communication to express ideas, thoughts, and feelings. Regarding the origin of languages which is related to imitation of natural sound sources, the words are formed by imitating the sounds of the things concerned. Thus, the sound word acts as the first step of linguistic expression.

Many sounds imitate the sound of an object in our daily life such as the sound of horn “ဝို..ဝို”, and the sound of water drop “အိမ်..အိမ်”. Besides, there is also the sound of animals such as dog barking “ဝို..ဝို”, and the sound of made by human such as sneezing “[ ယို..ယို]”. Such sounds can be arbitrarily represented by words imitating the sound of an object, an animal or an action. These words are known as onomatopoeia. The Oxford Learner's online dictionary defines that onomatopoeic words are the use of words in a piece of writing that contain sounds to describe similar noises, for example, *hiss*. The sound words are found in daily conversation as well as in the literature. Onomatopoeic word is a kind of literary device, mostly used in the novel, poems, and comics. Hence, the scenes are visualized by creating a multi-sensory experience with these words.

The term “novel” has been known in the eighteenth century, which becomes a famous genre of literary work today. The novel *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* was first published in the United Kingdom in 1997 by Bloomsbury. The book reached the top of the New York Times list of best-selling fictions in 1999. Then, this book is translated into several

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<sup>1</sup> Daw, Lecturer, Department of German, Mandalay University of Foreign Languages

languages worldwide. To keep the readers' attention, the author J. K. Rowling used many literary devices in which the onomatopoeic words are the most significant. The auditory imagery words, the onomatopoeia, drive the whole books alive and visualized.

English and German both belong to the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family. They are so closely related, they share many features. However, every language community has its uniqueness and value, thus transferring the idea and context from the source language into the target language may not an easy task. The dictionary did not list all the sound words, and it will cause challenges for the translators to translate them. Haywood (2009) defined that onomatopoeia is a direct icon or the phonic form of the word. They are gained by imitating a sound. The relationship between the word and the meaning is highly related to "cultural conventions" and the phonological system of the given language. Furthermore, the onomatopoeic word may be commonly used in informal communication but rarely used in a formal one. The different language systems and cultures between languages may launch gaps in their translating process. Therefore, translating onomatopoeic words from English into German will be analyzed in this study.

The choice of the novel *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* is intended for the German language learners at Mandalay University of Foreign Languages who are young adults. Like the famous children's literature, it influenced their childhood days, and they have already been familiar with the context. So, it will help them easier to understand the sound words of German. Additionally, the study of translation procedures will promote their translation skills, which can apply in their daily interactions and careers.

### **Aim and Objectives**

The aim of this study is to analyze the translation procedures of onomatopoeic words from English into German found in the novel *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and the following are its objectives:

- to discover the commonly found word classes of onomatopoeia of English and German
- to investigate the translation process of onomatopoeic words from English into German
- to discover the effect of using these translation procedures in translating the novel

### **Research Questions**

This study seeks to explore the following questions:

1. What are the commonly found onomatopoeic word classes in English and German?
2. Which procedures are used in translating onomatopoeic words in the novel?
3. Why these procedures are applied in translating onomatopoeic words?

### **Literature Review**

In *Language and Style* (1994), Ullman classified onomatopoeic words into two types: 1) Primary onomatopoeia and, 2) Secondary onomatopoeia. In *Characteristics of*

*Onomatopoeia*, Thomas (2004) divided the onomatopoeic words into four groups based on the source of the sound that they described, namely: 1) call of animals (2) sound of nature, (3) sound made by human, (4) other sounds. Hatim & Munday (2004) classified the Vinay & Darbelnet translation procedures into two kinds; (1) they are direct translation encloses borrowing, claque, and literal translation; (2) and oblique translation encloses transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation. They defined the unit of translation as “the smallest segment of the utterance whose signs are linked in such a way that they should not be translated individually”.

Several theories have been proposed to study onomatopoeia, some focusing on phonetics, others on types of words. Ladtschenko (n.d) investigated the German onomatopoeic locomotion verbs. He stated that these verbs are productive. They have the same quality as the onomatopoeic nouns. But in some cases, these words are omitted in the translation. Meireles (2009) compared the onomatopoeic words of Japanese, German, and Portuguese. The corpus-based study showed that the onomatopoeic words of German and Portuguese have more similarities than Japanese. A recent study by Alameer (2019) claimed that English and Arabic are tunes languages, and both can use onomatopoeia in different situations and settings such as technology and poetry. It proved that Arabic and English languages have similarities due to the category, meaning, and the same sounds of the onomatopoeic words. Although some studies have been done to identify onomatopoeias in different languages, they are less debated in the area of translation procedures from English into German.

Chang (2018) analyzed the onomatopoeic words “The adventure of Tintin and the blue lotus” comics. The Primary onomatopoeia and Secondary onomatopoeia words are presented in her study. Furthermore, Tiwiyanti (2016) examined the translation process of onomatopoeic words from English into Indonesian found in *Harry Potter and the prisoner of Azkaban* by using Vinay and Darbelnet theory. He stated that each of the procedures is applied to meet the need for equivalence. The five translation procedures which are borrowing, literal translation, transposition, equivalence, and adaptation were found in his study. Among them, equivalence was the major procedure that applied to translate Indonesian. A new approach is therefore needed for the translation process of onomatopoeia from English into German.

This research deals with onomatopoeic word and their translation procedures. Therefore, it is different from the researches mentioned above. In this study, the onomatopoeic word class of both languages is compared, and the mostly found word class is proved. After that, the translation procedures applied in the same language family are investigated. Besides, the data of present research is collected from different novel and the target language is German.

### **Data and Methods**

The design of this study is qualitative and library research. This study is limited to English and German onomatopoeic words which are derived from the novel *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* by J. K. Rowling and its translation version entitled *Harry Potter and der Stein der Weisen* translated by Klaus Fritz. Since onomatopoeia is usually performed in words or phrases, therefore, the researcher observed the words and phrases containing onomatopoeic expressions.

The data were analyzed by using the following procedures: (1) the onomatopoeic words found in the novels were selected respectively; (2) the collected data were thoroughly checked with the Oxford Online Dictionary, Pons German to English dictionary, Langenscheidt dictionary, and the website <http://onomatopoeialist.com>, to make sure whether the data found belongs to onomatopoeic words or not, (3) next, the data were categorized based on the word class, and compared; (4) the translation procedures were analyzed by using Vinay & Darbelnet theory; and (5) finally, the researcher drew conclusions based on the data analysis.

### Findings and Discussion

According to the analysis, the researcher found 103 onomatopoeic words in the source language. Among them, 6 data are missed to translate into target language.

#### The Word Class of Onomatopoeic Words

Based on the data, the researcher found that the onomatopoeic words belong to verb, noun, adjective, adverb, and interjection. The verb is the highest number of word class. As both languages are members of the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family, the number differences in word class are insignificant. The number of English onomatopoeic noun words is slightly more than German in contrast with the number of German adjective, and adverb onomatopoeic words are more than English. The following table gives an overview of the onomatopoeic word classes in both languages.

Table 1: Onomatopoeic Word Classes

Language	Word Classes				
	N	V	Adj	Adv	Inter.
English	28	58	6	1	3
German	23	58	8	4	3

#### Analysis of Translation Procedures

The translator used five translation procedure which are borrowing, transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation.

The borrowing technique applied to only one data. Borrowing is the taking of words directly from the source language to the target language without any translation. As shown in table 2, the translator chose this direct word as there is no exact equivalent for these words in the target text.

Table 2: Borrowing

No.	Page	English	German	Page	Remark
1	91	Oh... <b>bravo</b>	Aah, <b>bravo</b>	57	

The grammatical category of some words is changed in translation. In this procedure, the words are changed in word classes, nouns into verbs, or any other word categories,

sometimes word into phrase or clause into sentences. There are 31 data applied to this process. The example (1) mentioned in table 3 showed that the adverb ‘shrilly’ is changed into adjective ‘schriller’, and the gerund noun ‘sobbing’ is transformed into a verb ‘schluchzen’ in example (2). According to the data, the translator used transposition technique to make the equal meaning between the source language and target language.

Table 3: Transposition

No.	Page	English	German	Page	Remark
1	167	‘Now what am I going to do?’ she asked <b>shrilly</b> .	»Was soll ich tun jetzt?«, fragte sie mit <b>schriller</b> Stimme.	104	Adv → Adj
2	262	He could hear Neville <b>sobbing</b> into his pillow...	..., hörte er Neville in sein Kissen <b>schluchzen</b> .	159	N → V

Modulation changes the semantic value of the source text, but it has the same idea or meaning with it. The word or phrase used in the source text and target text is different. This procedure is applied to 13 data in translation. The examples in table 4 show that ‘clattering’ indicates ‘a continuous rattling sound as of hard objects falling or striking each other’. This word is modulated into ‘Geklirre und Geklapper’ which means ‘the clinking and clattering sound’, likewise, the word ‘so loud...erupted’ is translated into ‘ohrenbetäubend’, which means ‘ear-splitting’. In this case, the translator might have thought that the target language is appropriate enough, because it does not break the meaning of the source text.

Table 4: Modulation

No.	Page	English	German	Page	Remark
1	107	... there was a great <b>clattering</b> outside in the corridor...	... drang vom Gang ein lautes <b>Geklirrer und Geklapper</b> herein,	68	
2	329	..., <b>so loud</b> was the noise that <b>erupted</b> from the Gryffindor table.	..., so <b>ohrenbetäubend</b> war der Lärm, der am Tisch der Gryffindor losbrach...	200	

The equivalence translation procedure maintains the stylistic impact of the source text. It is an ideal method to deal with onomatopoeic translation procedure. The translator found 45 data which are shown in table 5. According to the data, the word ‘a howl’ is translated to ‘ein Heulen’, and ‘sobbed’ is translated into ‘schluchzte’, which have the same meaning and word classes respectively.

Table 5: Equivalence

No.	Page	English	German	Page	Remark
1	16	Then, suddenly, Hagrid let out <b>a howl</b> like a wounded dog.	Dann, plötzlich, stieg Hagrid <b>ein Heulen</b> wie ein verletzter Hund.	12	N=N
2	16	'S-s-sorry', <b>sobbed</b> Hagrid,...	»V-v-verzeihung«, <b>schluchzte</b> Hagrid...	12	V=V

In some cases, the source text cannot be translated to the target text, and the meaning of its word loses somewhere else in the translation. Adaptation is used as a solution to this problem. As the examples mentioned in table 6, the subject was omitted in the translated text, and in the second sentence, the subject was added to the translated text. The translator tried to keep the stylistic impact of the source text in the target text, as the new words convey the onomatopoeic meaning.

Table 6: Adaptation

No.	Page	English	German	Page	Remark
1	35	They heard the <b>click</b> of the letter-box.	Die Klappe des Briefschlitzes <b>quietschte</b> .	23	
2	276	There was suddenly a sound of more <b>galloping</b> from the other side of the clearing.	Plötzlich hörte Harry von der anderen Seite der Lichtung noch mehr <b>gallopiierende Hufe</b> .	168	

There are a few cases that the translator has omitted the source text onomatopoeia, as shown in the following table 7. The translator has missed 6 data in his work. In example (1), the verb 'pop' which means 'he came out suddenly with a light explosive sound' was translated into 'wachsen' which means 'he just woke up. In example (2), the sound imitated verb 'flutter' which means 'the owl flies unsteadily or hover by flapping the wings quickly and lightly' was translated into 'vorbeifliegen', 'the owl flies'. The target language has the same verb 'flattern'. But in this case, the translator didn't choose this verb.

Although some words are excluded to translate, the main information from source text is not lost. For this issue, Inose (2008) stated that 'when the omission does not result in a loss of information or when an equivalent onomatopoeia does not exist in the target language, it seems an appropriate method for dealing with onomatopoeia.' Casas-Tost (2012) explained that the translator's choice to omit the source text onomatopoeia is governed by various factors such as the translation method she/he has chosen, availability and frequency of use in each language, and semantic field. Besides, Flyxe (2002) said sometimes onomatopoeias might not be regarded as appropriate for maintaining the style of the translation. For that reason, the translator might have chosen to leave some onomatopoeic words in his work.

Table 7: No translation (omission)

No.	Page	English	German	Page	Remark
1	2	... a large tawny owl <b>flutter</b> past the window.	..... den Riesigen Waldkauz am Fenster <b>vorbeifliegen</b> .	3	
2	9	A man appeared on the corner... suddenly and silently you'd thought he'd just <b>popped</b> out of the ground.	... erschien ein Mann, so jäh und lautlos, als wäre er geradeweg aus dem Boden <b>gewachsen</b> .	7	

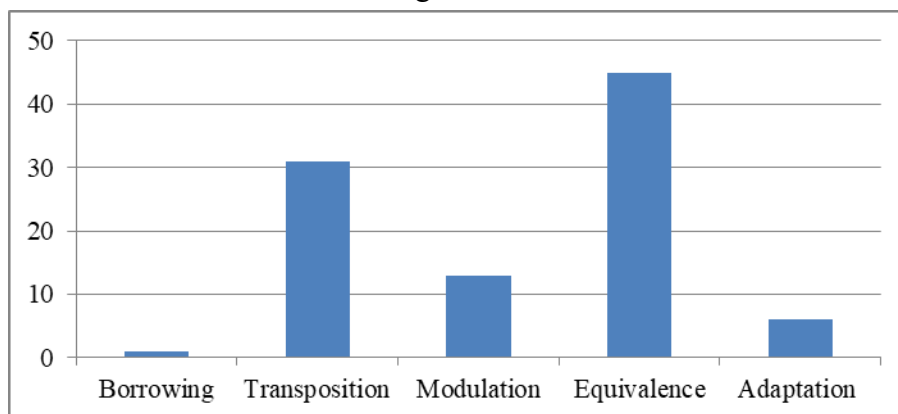
### Interpreting the Procedures applied in the target text

Racoma (2019) expressed that, the German and English languages are from the same branch, there are still variations between them. According to Ethnologue, the German language has a 60% lexical similarity with English. It can be seen that this language similarities and differences have affected translating onomatopoeic words in this novel.

The bar graph clearly shows that the equivalence procedure has the most important quantity applied in the target text. Whereas the word order and the grammatical category of the two languages are completely different, the transposition procedure is employed within the second largest one. The number of modulation data stands in third place, the adaptation at the fourth, and the borrowing at the least.

The translator failed to use calque and literal translation. A literal translation is commonly used to translate each word exactly instead of giving the general meaning more naturally, for instance, to translate more virtually as well as staying about to source language word order to preserve meaning. A calque translation is a kind of literal translation from one language to another. Hence, he did not apply these approaches to translate onomatopoeic words in his work.

Table 8: Translation Procedures found in target text



### Conclusion

The researcher concluded that: 1) Onomatopoeic words are translated into noun, verb, interjection, and adverb. There is no onomatopoeic adverb word class in the source text. The onomatopoeic verb is commonly found in both languages. 2) Based on the translation analysis, the translator applied 5 translation procedures out of 7, which are borrowing, transposition, modulation, equivalence and adaptation related to Vinay and Darbelnet theory. Five translation procedures can be applied in the translated text, as these languages belong to the same language family. 3) Calque and literal translation procedures are not applied in translating onomatopoeic words, as they are used to preserve meaning of words of source text. Then, they are not relevant for this translation.

As onomatopoeia is the making of words based on living sounds around human lives, it is the device for visualization and sensation. This study is only focused on onomatopoeic word translation from English into German. For the Myanmar Language speaker, further study should be conducted with the Myanmar translation version. And it is hoped that this study may support German language students, especially in understanding onomatopoeia and in their translation study.

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