

## Which Hollow is Witches' Hollow? An Empirical Study on Translating Toponyms

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### ABSTRACT

Proper names—especially the telling ones—can play a vital role in portraying characters and settings in works of fiction. Their capacity to carry both literal and connotational meanings makes them excellent devices for both designing readers' emotions and cueing them. Nevertheless, there is no consensus on their treatment of choice in translation, which informed a more detailed and in-depth approach aiming to empirically identify the differences resulting from various approaches to translating proper names. The paper explores the differences between two types of translation—domestication vs. foreignization—of a toponym from Lovecraftian horror fiction. The data were collected from native speakers of Polish ( $N_{PL}=514$ ) and English ( $N_{EN}=81$ ) by means of the *Binary Dimensions Matrix*—a custom-made inventory devised to capture differences in connotational meaning. The analyses found significant connotational divergence between the foreignized and domesticated translations on 12 out of 41 dimensions and confirmed the occurrence of the divergence on 9 out of 9 hypothesized horror-related dimensions. The comparison of the results with the data from the English-speaking group revealed that although the significant differences yielded by foreignization (as compared to domestication) were fewer in number, they were also greater in strength. The results show that—at least for horror fiction and English–Polish translation—foreignization may enhance the 'horrific' experience even beyond that of the source-language audience, suggesting that 'translation loss' is a two-fold phenomenon that is to be considered on qualitative and quantitative levels alike. However, further research is required to refine translation strategies for emotionally evocative literature across different genres and languacultures.

**Keywords:** proper names; translation; reception; horror fiction; foreignization and domestication

### INTRODUCTION

*If the translator simply transposes a name from a source text without facing the problems of adapting either phonology or orthography (...) is the resulting name in translation still the same name?*  
(Tymoczko, 2014, p. 226)

It seems that there is a common belief among translation studies scholars that many people, including inexperienced translators, share the notion that proper names should not be translated (Tymoczko, 2014, p. 223; Parianou, 2007; Nord, 2003). Praxis, however, shows that *nomina propria* enjoy a wide variety of translative pampering during their transcultural tournee (e.g., Atikah Zabir & Haslina Haroon, 2018; Mazi-Leskovar, 2017; Nord, 2003), which should come as no surprise for the following two reasons. First, they are loaded with information (Rachut,

2017; Tymoczko, 2014, p. 223), whose availability in the target text is contingent on a translation's skopos (Vermeer, 2000, pp. 221–223) and the resulting translative treatments such names undergo. Second, depending on the information they carry, proper names play a number of textual roles which ultimately force the hand of the translator.

Although the transference of semiotic loads in translation—especially when telling/meaningful names are considered—depends on the adopted strategy, it ultimately boils down to translators' individual decisions and techniques used. Based on the review by Fernandes (2006), the following modes of transfer for proper names can be distinguished: deletion (absence from translation), substitution (lack of formal or semantic relevance), recreation (re-invention of an invented source text item), addition (inserting extra information for the sake of comprehensibility or appeal), conventionality (conventional counterpart), phonological replacement (re-creation of the sound image of the original by substituting it with a name that is graphically and phonetically similar), transcription (adapting the name to target writing system and grammar), copy (retaining the name in its original form), and rendition (translating the words comprising the name). In the case of deletion, substitution, recreation, and addition there is no transfer of meaning whatsoever. Phonological replacement seems to partially fall into that category as well and partially into the next; as there is hardly any 'objective' semiotic link other than that which is supplied by sound symbolism (Kohlheim, 2018). Furthermore, sound symbolism is also one of two factors that transcription and copy are contingent on (cf. Parianou, 2007; Fernandes, 2006); the other being the cultural distance (Galewska, 2019) between the target languaculture (TLC) and the source languaculture (SLC).<sup>1</sup> Although it may be tentatively assumed that sound symbolism works universally on the most fundamental level (just like the bouba/kiki effect), the combination and quality of sounds coded in the graphic layer may trigger varying associations/connotations, as they introduce to the TLC a foreign SLC element (cf. Tymoczko, 2014, p. 224). The understanding of meaningful proper names translated this way, however, would still rely mostly on the shortness of the cultural distance allowing the readers to grasp the culture-specific aspects of such names (Galewska, 2019; Mazi-Leskovar, 2017)—with the translator being a notable example of such a reader (cf. Rachut, 2017). At the same time, rendition would work on the same cline, but in the opposite direction, dressing the foreignness in domestic robes. As the two approaches mirror Venuti's (1995) foreignization and domestication, it stands to reason that should a general disposition towards either of them exist, it would have serious ramifications for translation. But what would they be? In terms of designing readers' emotions, which of the two techniques works better? Or do both recreate the SLC's connotations equally well?

Apart from the skopos, the choice of particular techniques for meaningful proper names depends on their textual functions (Pettini, 2021, p. 99; cf. Fernández Costales, 2014; Lungu-Badea, 2013, p. 446). Proper names identify single unique objects, they are not, however, single-purpose (Nord, 2003, pp. 183–184). By the means of their graphic and phonetic forms or semantic load they can shed light on their extensions' qualities, reveal their socio-cultural or ethnic affiliations (Lungu-Badea, 2013, p. 444), strike some affective chords (Parianou, 2007), or connote certain notions with word-play or intertextuality (Pettini, 2021, p. 100). Although proper names

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<sup>1</sup> Originally coined by Paul Friedrich as 'languaculture,' the term was borrowed and modified by an American ethnographer, Michael Agar (2008) to emphasize that learning—and making sense of—a second language is as much about vocabulary and syntax, as it is about culture—a map to finding the meanings buried in the linguistic code. The term 'languaculture' is used throughout this paper as a reminder that meanings, symbols, and dispositions to experience linguistic phenomena in a particular way are acquired via enculturation rather than studying dictionaries as "language is part of a culture" (Vermeer, 2000, p. 222). What is meant by 'cultural distance' is the (lack of) languacultural familiarity and intelligibility, much like in Nida (2000, p. 130; not in the Hofstedeian sense).

can also invoke history, geography, or social values (Tymoczko, 2014, p. 245), their true potential becomes evident when they are construed as micronarratives (Filar, 2015)—particularly potent devices for story- and worldbuilding in fiction, devices capable of delivering a tremendous narrative payload with just a few words. Proper names can also be seen as carriers for the ‘objective correlative’ or—as Eliot (1920, p. 92) would describe it—a formula for a particular emotion, be it an event, object, or a situation. Or an image. Or connotations. Given that an important part in establishing a fictional space rests with designing readers’ emotions and setting the mood (Fernández Costales, 2014), proper names should prove particularly suitable for creating atmosphere in horror/gothic/weird fiction. Unsurprisingly, they are (Kohlheim, 2018; Joshi, 2013, p. 1399), and they seem to be able to delineate and activate a literary story-world even when the readers have no prior familiarity with them (Ameel & Ainiala, 2018). Which is why their utility and importance for the world depicted begs a question about the best way to approach their translation.

Although Newmark generally advised against it, he noticed that since literary proper names may carry connotations, they could be translated—rendered, not copied or reproduced—but only in special cases and provided that the connotation is of paramount importance (Newmark, 1986, p. 71). Lungu-Badea (2013, p. 453), on the other hand, postulates that the author–original reader relation should be similar to the translator–target reader relation, which seems to speak strongly in favor of rendition. Even the translative practice fails to uncover a clear-cut general preference. Nord (2003, p. 194) found reproduction to be most commonly used while Mazi-Leskovar (2017, p. 149) showed that it was the foreignization that prevailed (at least in the case of toponyms). Other reviews revealed that translators’ choices depended on the genre and on whether the names were fictional or real—with domestication being more prevalent for fictional names, as well as names in children’s literature and fairy tales (Zlatnar Moe & Žigon, 2020, pp. 137–138; Ainiala et al., 2016, p. 263). However, other scholars report that even within the scope of children’s literature, there is no consensus about the appropriate course of treatment for proper names in translation (Borodo, 2020, pp. 179–182). Amenta (2020, pp. 18–19) suggested that the preference may be culture-bound, as Italian publishers strongly favor domestication in general; the notion is also at least partially consistent with Fernández Costales (2014) who reports different preferences for Spanish (foreignization) and Mexican (domestication) translations, and in line with conclusions by Ellefsen and Bernal-Merino (2018), and Mangiron (2018, p. 292). The great variance in translative practice suggests that it is the matter of the translation’s skopos, TLC, and textual functions rather than of a universal treatment of choice.

Because a certain level of SLC competence is essential to being a translator, most translators are not formally trained in the TLC and draw on their native competence (assuming that translations are rendered mostly by members of the TLC). It stands to reason, therefore, that with regard to designing readers’ emotions, translators’ work is largely intuitive (cf. Suojanen, Koskinen, & Tuominen, 2015, p. 116)—that is to say, grounded in their individual experience with their native LC. This probably also holds true for the majority of analytical translation case-studies, as most often they are based on intuitions from researchers (i.e., individuals who do not need the translation) and not on the insights from the translations’ target readers, a notion that gave rise to Reception Studies and the concept of User-Centered Translation by Suojanen et al. (2015). However, as follows from their review (Suojanen et al., 2015, pp. 111–122), proper names have yet to elbow their way into mainstream in the field. The need for more empirical quantitative research is also emphasized by Mangiron (2018, p. 285) as it would prove beneficial not only for the industry but also to academia and translator training. Although Mangiron’s statement pertained

to game localization, it also holds true for literary texts as the two increasingly often become mutual paratexts or result from intersemiotic translation. The paucity of User-Centered research on translating proper names in the context of Polish LC has recently been highlighted by Chrobak (2024, p. 87), who emphasized their usefulness and importance for the community of translators in meeting readers' needs and expectations (Chrobak, 2024, pp. 90, 195). The demand becomes even more pronounced when one takes stock of available empirical research in translation studies, as it shows that the vast majority of such studies focus on translators not on the readers (Hvelplund, 2024). And even when empirical studies are conducted, they often suffer from small sample sizes and varying study designs that make intercultural comparisons disputable if not impossible (Tuominen, 2018, p. 85). Although Tuominen's diagnosis addressed primarily audiovisual translations, her observations hold true for other fields of translative activities, as they are indicative of a broader demand for quantitative, inexpensive, cross-cultural, User-Centered inquiries.

How can one know how to best tackle the translation of meaningful proper names? Does a translator's choice to copy or render a meaningful proper name influence the name's connotations and, if so, how? Do domestication and foreignization recreate the SLC's connotations equally well? Based on the above-mentioned considerations, it seems logical to adopt a new approach to answer these questions. Because participants' judgements and self-reported preferences seem to be not very reliable, as they may be grounded in varying—from person to person—criteria for assessment, thus not saying anything in particular about the translative procedure's effect, or be subject to social desirability bias (cf. Fernández Costales, 2016, pp. 191–192), it would be prudent to delve directly into the differences generated by various translative approaches instead of relying on participants' opinions. Although questionnaires are rarely used in Translation Studies (Fernández Costales, 2016, p. 190), they seem well-suited for use with large samples. This is why, to tackle the problem of translating proper names from a different perspective, a new questionnaire measure and an empirical procedure were devised, wherein the domestication approach was operationalized as translation by rendition while foreignization—as translation by copying (cf. Fernandes, 2006). It was also decided that the research should focus on a horror/weird fiction<sup>2</sup> toponym due to the genre's heavy reliance on evoking emotions—most notably, “a certain atmosphere of breathless and unexplainable dread” (VanderMeer & VanderMeer, 2012, p. xv)—and the fact that toponyms seem to be under-researched (Kohlheim, 2018).

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<sup>2</sup>Although some consider *weird fiction* a term that loosely refers to fantasy, supernatural fiction, and horror tales that abound in such motifs as the uncanny or occultism (Clute, 1999b 1999, p. 1000) with the “purest” examples being the supernatural stories with a horror “feel” (Clute, 1999a p. 478), others see it rather as a mode of writing that—being more subtle and profound than murders and spooky spirits—does not qualify as a typical Gothic or ghost tale, but can manifest in different genres (VanderMeer & VanderMeer, 2012, p. xv); it seems only befitting that a Lovecraftian tale is as undefinable as the dread it delivers. Apart from H. P. Lovecraft, weird fiction is associated with the works of S. King, T. Ligotti, A. Blackwood, R. Bloch, and S. Grabiński, among others.

## HYPOTHESES

Based on the questions above, it is hypothesized that:

- H<sub>1.1</sub>: Translations by copying and rendering have different connotations for a weird fiction toponym in the TLC.
- H<sub>1.2</sub>: Compared to rendering, copying is more potent at evoking the feeling of horror—stronger connotations of the (AC)CURSED, the ALIEN, ANXIETY, CHAOS, DANGER, DARKNESS, DEATH, the EVIL, and IMPURITY.
- H<sub>2</sub>: Compared to the SLC's reception, in the TLC's reception, translation by copying is related to fewer instances of connotational divergence than translation by rendering.

## METHOD

### INSTRUMENTS

Being a part of a larger research project on translation of meaningful proper names in fiction, this study makes use of the Polish and English versions of the Binary Dimensions Matrix (BDSM), a custom-made inventory designed especially for the purpose of the project. Inspired by the semantic differential (Osgood et al., 1967) technique—a quantitative measure of attitudes and associations towards a single stimulus or sign, or subjective meaning thereof—the BDSM consists of 41 pairs of binary oppositions, such as DRY—WET, GOOD—EVIL, DARKNESS—LIGHT, etc. The words in each pair mark the extremes of a continuum, whereon the participants are asked to mark down their associations with the sign—here, a meaningful literary toponym. Once the name is presented, the instruction encourages the participants to picture the place, ponder what it is like and how it makes them feel. Then they are asked to assess the place with regard to each pair of oppositions or—in other words—to locate the place on the continuum between them. The answers are given on a 7-point labelled scale ranging from “1—only the first (←left) word of the pair” through “4—both words equally” to “7—only the second (right→) word of the pair”. For the full list of items, see the complete questionnaire in Appendix or the visualization of the results in Figure 1.

Unlike the original semantic differential procedure, here the categories were stipulated in advance (i.e., not proposed by the participants but pre-determined by the experimenter). Limiting the array of possible categories was necessary to ensure comparability of the results in particular dimensions. Although the categories are not necessarily universal and may carry different symbolic readings across cultures, they were informed by the original psychological studies (Osgood et al., 1967), as well as linguistic and anthropological thought, and may be considered as reflecting at least some of the most fundamental categories of human cognition.

Moreover, contrary to the original technique, the words comprising the oppositions are not limited to adjectives—some are nouns. The primary function of adjectives is to describe qualities of objects, while nouns are more capable of bringing abstract ideas to mind. Take the dichotomies: dark–light (adjectives) versus darkness–light (nouns)—the former would seem to highlight the fact that a place is ‘painted’ in light or dark colors, while the latter would seem to refer to whether the place is permeated or essentially imbued with darkness or light. Another example is one of Osgood’s dichotomies, active—passive. Being an inanimate object, a place cannot be active. It can, however, be associated with stagnancy or action. Furthermore, because Polish nouns and

adjectives have a grammatical gender—which has been shown to carry considerable connotational load (Phillips & Boroditsky, 2003)—it was decided that to prevent it from contaminating the participants' associations, all the adjectives in the Polish version were given in the neuter.

Traditionally, when the technique of semantic differential is used in ethnolinguistic research, the favorable qualities are grouped on the left side of the questionnaire, while their pejorative oppositions—on the right side. The semantic ontology created this way may impose the notions of goodness and badness on other items—especially ones that do not fall into either category by nature or depend on the context, like FEMININE—MASCULINE or SMALL—GREAT, respectively. To remedy that, the order of words within pairs—where applicable—reflected the location of numbers on the mental number line (MNL; Qiangqiang Wang et al., 2018). The MNL effect states that if numbers that grow in magnitude are mentally ordered in a line, they will grow from left to right in left-to-right writing systems and in the opposite direction in right-to-left writing systems. Since both Polish and English are written left-to-right, the small numbers/amounts in the questionnaire are associated with the left hand side (e.g., SMALL—GREAT, not GREAT—SMALL). Even in the case of LIFE—DEATH, which technically is hardly gradable, it remains intuitive as humans—in our experience—tend to move from being alive to being dead, much less in the opposite direction. Additionally, changing the order of words within pairs so that the terms that are conceptually familiar are not positioned on the same side of the questionnaire can prevent the participants from providing superficial, random responses (Tucholska et al., 2024).

To mitigate the influence an item may have on another item that it directly precedes, it was decided that the list of all the binary oppositions should be presented to each participant in a random order. For instance, the CALMNESS—RAGE opposition may semantically prime the participants and bias their next association towards negative emotions. The necessity to counteract such consistent bias against one item by randomizing the order of all items in each questionnaire was the primary reason to turn towards digital humanities and crowdsourcing, which has been recognized as a valid approach in Reception Studies (Suojanen et al., 2015, p. 108). The remaining ones being the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the study's design assuming the participation of English speakers (based in countries other than the experimenter's). The questionnaire was created in Google Forms on a secure account dedicated exclusively to the study.

Despite being originally designed and developed in Polish, the BDSM was intended to have a parallel version in English from the outset, and the works on its translation/adaptation started immediately after the completion of its initial version. Although the BDSM is not intended as a psychometric test, the process was partially based on the procedure of adapting psychological measures and included the steps of translation, review, and adjudication as outlined by Harkness et al. (2010). Its translation into English was commissioned to three professional Polish-English translators whose first and dominant language was English. All items rendered by the translators identically were automatically accepted. In the few cases of one translator differing from the other two, the item in question was adjudicated by another translator and settled with a discussion. To verify the quality of the adaptation and refine it, three separate back-translations were also commissioned with the resulting doubts being settled with the help of both another translator's adjudication and a majority vote by a panel of 7 competent judges. Because the primary role of the judges was to help choose the most natural-sounding (or intuitively understood) of the provided translations, it was decided that the group should cover varying levels of linguistic competence and intuition. The panel consisted of readers of various literary genres, six of whom were the NSEN (two holding a degree in English or literary studies, two holding a degree unrelated to literary studies or linguistics, and two without an academic degree), as well as one non-native

speaker of English who held an academic degree in English philology and had been living in an English-speaking country for more than a decade.

For the purpose of randomly assigning experimental conditions to Polish-speaking participants, Fergusson's (2016) random redirect tool was used.

### MATERIAL

It was decided that the proper name for the study should be Witches' Hollow—a toponym from a short story that was first published in a collection of weird fiction tales, *The Watchers Out of Time*, by August Derleth. The eponymous Witches' Hollow was chosen for the following reasons.

First, the proper name is not 'artificial', it has not been fabricated for the purpose of the study, but comes from an actual literary work and its translation(s). Using an authentic, real-life linguistic material adds to the study's ecological validity.

Second, it is a meaningful name. Apart from referring to a place, its constituents do carry their own meanings both literal and connotational.

Third, referring to a place set in Lovecraftian universe, the toponym comes from a work that, in a way, epitomizes weird and horror fiction genres. At the same time, the story is Lovecraftian only in the sense that it takes place in the cult world of Cthulhu Mythos, inspired by Lovecraft's works and notes he left, and stylized as Lovecraftian, but not authored by Lovecraft (Joshi & Schultz, 2001). Having been written solely by Derleth, the story is not canonical par excellence and it does not seem to enjoy as much zest for pop-cultural retellings (e.g., in role-playing games, film, or other fiction) that could affect—if not superimpose new readings on—the way its landscapes are experienced.

Fourth, the story offers practically no description of Witches' Hollow. It does provide scant information on the area in general, and some generic facts about parts of the valley, but no palpable, distinctive details that would make it in any way unique. Given that naming is considered the simplest form of characterization (Kohlheim, 2018), either because it is a micronarrative (Filar, 2015) or evokes emotional connotations through objective correlative (Eliot, 1920, p. 92), it stands to reason that, in this case, the name fully realizes its semantic potential and becomes the entity (Kohlheim, 2018)—it is therefore not the description (due to the absence thereof) that gives the place the vibe, but rather the place (i.e., the toponym) that lends its vibe to the story's mood; or, at least, is one of the cues that hint the atmosphere. This would be consistent with both Ameel and Ainiala's findings (2018) and the fact that Lovecraft and other Mythos writers reused certain names for coloration or to set atmosphere, and that Derleth, who pretended to have collaborated on *Witches' Hollow* with Lovecraft, was well aware of the fact (Joshi, 2013, p. 1399; Joshi & Schultz, 2001, p. 50).

Fifth, there are at least three renditions of Witches' Hollow used in Polish: *Wiedźmi Jar* (IPA: /vjɛdźmʲi jar/) in a published translation by Robert P. Lipski, *Wiedźmia Kotlina* (IPA: /vjɛdźmʲa kotlʲina/) in the Polish Wikipedia entry on Lovecraft Country, and *Dolina Wiedźm* (IPA: /dolina vjɛdźm/) an improvised translation sometimes used in casual speech. The existence of three Polish renditions offers a unique opportunity to contrast the original form of the name not against the quirks of one unique rendition, but against a number of separate Polish renditions capturing the 'Polishness' of these translations in general rather than a translator's use of artistic license. It seems logical to expect that aggregating Polish renditions would contribute to cancelling out their idiosyncrasies and amplifying what the three renditions have in common (i.e., the general effect of domestication).

## STUDY STRUCTURE

This study consisted of three separate sub-studies. The first employed an early version of the Binary Dimensions Matrix consisting of 31 items (BDSM-31-PL) and aimed to verify the  $H_{1.1}$  and  $H_{1.2}$ . The second one was conducted as a follow-up to the first one—its goal was to gather additional data by the means of additional ten items (BDSM-10-PL) that were added to the original inventory in the meantime. Both of these procedures involved self-identified native speakers of Polish (NSPL) and were conducted with the use of the Polish version of the questionnaire. The third study, involving self-identified native speakers of English (NSEN), employed the English adaptation of the 41-item version of the Binary Dimensions Matrix (BDSM-41-EN) and aimed to verify the  $H_2$ .

## RECRUITMENT AND DATA COLLECTION

In the case of all three sub-studies, convenience sampling was used—the invitations to participate were extended to either the NSPL or NSEN interested in horror, gothic, or weird fiction literature. The invitations were distributed among the fan groups via the following Facebook groups and their mailing lists (by their administrators or with their permission), for the NSPL: *Grozownia; Odcienie Grozy; Horror Weird Fiction; Badacze Tajemnic - Zew Cthulhu x Delta Green RPG; Horror w literaturze; Fani Grozy; LOVECRAFT H.P. Gry planszowe, karciane i inne; Panie i Panowie, zagrajmy w RPG; Fantastyczna Karczma (Fantasy, Horror, Sci-Fi); Kult Chaosu (Krakowski Zew Cthulhu); Fantastyka i mit*; and for the NSEN: *H.P. Lovecraft Historical Society; First United Church of Cthulhu; August Derleth and Arkham House Publishers; Call of Cthulhu Role-Playing Game & Players; H.P. Lovecraft; Crazy for Cthulhu; Mythos Fiction; Weird Fiction Fanatics; Arkham Literary Society; Cthulhu Mythos RPGs and Games; CTHULHU'S DEEP CHILDREN; Horror Nation; Hello Cthulhu, put on your wings and rise from R'lyeh, it's an emergency.; Cthulhu Wars Cultists; Cthulhu Mythos Roundtable; Weird Fiction Discussion Group; Horror Nerds; Get Writing Horror* (all names are given with their original spelling). The dissemination of the invitations among other fans of the genres by word of mouth was also encouraged. The inclusion criteria were language proficiency (NSEN or NSPL, respective to each sub-study), an interest in horror/gothic/weird fiction, and a minimum age of 17 years with parental consent if younger than 18 years.

The BDSM-31-PL sub-study was launched online in April 2021 and the data were collected over the course of the next seven months. The invitations for the follow-up study (BDSM-10-PL) were issued in May 2022, and the form remained open until November 2022. The survey for English-speaking audiences (BDSM-41-EN) was made available in June 2022, and the data were collected through November 2022.

## PROCEDURE

In the case of both studies on Polish-speaking samples, upon clicking the link in the invitation, the prospective participants were randomly assigned to one of four groups and redirected to the appropriate survey version—each being one of the possible translations of *Witches' Hollow* into Polish: (1) *Witches' Hollow* (copying), (2) *Wiedźmi Jar*, (3) *Wiedźmia Kotlina*, and (4) *Dolina Wiedźm* (three renditions). The groups were roughly equal in size, amounting to 52–54 participants for the BDSM-31-PL sub-study and 73–77 for the BDSM-10-PL. The invitation for the



NSEN linked directly to the English version of the questionnaire, as there was only one group (one English proper name) in the study.

The initial page of the questionnaire provided a clear description of the study (it did not involve any form of deception or misinformation) and estimated completion time. It also informed the participants about the study's quantitative nature (i.e., that the data would be used for pooled analyses) and their assured anonymity, explaining that no data would be recorded by the experimenter before submitting a completed survey and that because no data allowing identification would be collected, a submitted questionnaire would be impossible to be linked with the submitting person and, as a result, to be removed from the data pool. The participants were also provided with the experimenter's identity, affiliation, and contact information and were informed that once they start the survey, they are under no obligation to complete or submit it and can withdraw from the study any time prior to submitting the results. Before starting the survey, consent was obtained from the participants.

Subsequently, the persons who agreed to take part in the study were asked to provide the following demographic information about themselves: age (in full years), gender (not obligatory), proficiency in English and—in the case of the NSEN—the name of the country wherein they had spent the most time and that best described their linguistic/cultural background. The levels of English proficiency had been predefined and the participants chose from a 7-item list covering the NATIVE option, as well as the six CEFR levels ranging from A1 to C2 together with the names of the most popular certificates and the Polish national education system's equivalents.

Once that part was complete, the participants were provided with the toponym they were assigned, an instruction, and the list of binary oppositions to mark down their associations with the given place. Irrespective of the assigned group, at the end of the first sub-study (BDSM-31-PL), each participant was presented with four instances of the same excerpt from the story—each differing only in the toponym's translation—and was asked to indicate how appealing each of them was on a scale from “1—the worst” to “5—the best”.

In the case of the follow-up study (BDSM-10-PL), once the participants completed the 10-item inventory, they were asked whether they had taken part in the previous part of the study. A positive reply would end the survey, while the negative one would display a request to provide a few more insights. No participant declared having taken part in the previous sub-study and all agreed to continue. The request was intended as a means of increasing the sample size of the previous stage of the study. The individuals who agreed to continue were randomly assigned a set of additional 4 out of 31 items from the BDSM-31-PL part. In this case, however, the randomization failed and all the participants were given the same set of items COLD—HOT, FRAGRANCE—STENCH, SHALLOW—DEEP, and SILENCE—NOISE. Since no grounds for exclusion of the data was found, the results were included in the analyses.

## PARTICIPANTS

There were 212 participants in the first (BDSM-31-PL) sub-study and 302 participants in the follow-up (BDSM-10-PL) sub-study. Because both can be seen as two parts of the same inquiry and their results are not compared against each other, the entire Polish-speaking sample is presented in one demographic profile. Out of 514 individuals, 235 (45.7%) were women, 277 (53.9%) were men, and 2 (0.4%) chose not to provide this information. The participants' age spanned between 18 and 63 years ( $M = 28.57$ ;  $SD = 8.175$ ). In terms of English proficiency of the

Polish-speaking group, 12 (2.3%) participants declared they were at A1 level, 13 (2.5%) A2, 76 (14.8%) B1, 215 (41.8%) B2, 149 (29.0%) C1, and 49 (9.5%) C2.

In the case of the third study, 100 individuals consented to participate and completed the BDSM-41-EN questionnaire. However, the results from one of the participants were removed from the pool due to a failed quality check (i.e., the same answer across all items), and another 18 individuals were excluded from the analyses because even though they came from an English-speaking country, they assessed their English fluency at a C1 or C2 levels (meaning that English might have been their second language). Ultimately, the data pool came from 81 individuals—39 (48.1%) women, 41 (50.6%) men, and 1 (1.2%) person who chose not to supply this information. Their age ranged between 18 and 71 ( $M = 37.02$ ,  $SD = 13.650$ ). With regard to the country best describing the participants' LC background, 54 (66.7%) indicated the United States, 15 (18.5%) the United Kingdom, 8 (9.9%) Canada, and 4 (4.9%) New Zealand.

## ANALYSES

The statistical analyses were conducted by the means of the IBM SPSS Statistics 29 software. Because the data were not normally distributed and the groups varied in sizes, Mann-Whitney  $U$  tests were performed. The effects' sizes (Eta-squared) were calculated from the  $Z$ -values provided by the inferential tests with the help of the MS Excel package, which was also used to visualize the final results.

Prior to the analyses, the raw numerical values for each pair—ranging from 1 to 7—were transformed so that the neutral label's value was zero and the scale ranged from  $-3$  to  $+3$  (left to right). Although the Mann-Whitney test does not compare means, median would be hardly useful in visualizing the data, and for that reason for each of the binary dimensions the mean was also calculated and then transformed into percentages of the extreme values of the scales (i.e.,  $\bar{x}/3 \times 100\%$ ; meaning that  $-3$  would translate to  $-100\%$  and  $+3$  to  $+100\%$ ). The values were then visualized as bars in Figure 1; each reflecting the group's average perception of a given toponym with regard to the particular connotational category.

The first analysis aimed to verify the  $H_{1.1}$  and  $H_{1.2}$  and compared the BDSM results from two groups of the NSPL. Each member of the first group, *NSPL Witches' Hollow*, was presented with the toponym in its original form (copying technique), and each member of the other group, *NSPL aggregated renditions*, was presented with one of three Polish renditions of Witches' Hollow. The second analysis aimed to verify the  $H_2$  and compared the NSEN's perception of Witches' Hollow with the NSPL's perception of Witches' Hollow and with the aggregated Polish renditions (the two above-mentioned groups).

## RESULTS

Tables 1–3 present the detailed analyses for dimensions that reached the assumed significance level ( $\alpha = 5\%$ ) or were nearly significant. Although the results for the remainder—non-significant—dimensions are not included, the complete connotational profile for all three conditions is visualized in Figure 1. Customarily, eta-squared values 0.14 and above indicate large effects, below 0.14 but equal or above 0.06—medium, while below 0.06 but above 0.01—small (Cohen, 1988, pp. 283–288).

The comparison of connotations for two types of translation in the NSPL found that out of 41 binary oppositions of the inventory, 12 showed statistically significant divergence in connoted meaning, while 2 more results reached near-significant levels (see Table 1). In terms of CALM(NESS)—ANXIETY, the original version connoted greater anxiety than its Polish renditions. Witches’ Hollow was also DARKER and more ALIEN, EVIL, (AC)CURSED, DEATH-related, IMPURE, and DANGEROUS than the same place imagined on the basis of the Polish renditions of the toponym. The dimension of ORDER—CHAOS was found to be significant, although barely, and it reached significance only for the directional H<sub>1.2</sub> (for the purpose of verifying the H<sub>1.1</sub> it was not significant). Additionally, the translation by copying was also related to greater levels of COLD, STENCH, and MISFORTUNE. Furthermore, *Wiedźmi Jar*, *Wiedźmia Kotlina*, and *Dolina Wiedźm* together proved to be more INACCESSIBLE than Witches’ Hollow. With the exception of medium effect for SAFETY—DANGER, the remainder of the above-mentioned effects were small. The results lend support to the H<sub>1.1</sub> and H<sub>1.2</sub> (significance levels for the latter hypothesis are one-tailed, as it postulated the direction of the relationship). Additionally, an almost-significant difference was found for the PLEASANT—UNPLEASANT dimension, in which case the toponym in its original form seemed to have stronger negative connotations.

TABLE 1. Copying vs. rendering in Native Speakers of Polish—descriptives, Mann-Whitney U test’s significance<sup>a</sup>, and effect size for differences in connotational meaning

Binary Dimension	Translation Variant	N	Mean	U	Z	p <sup>b</sup>	Effect Size (η <sup>2</sup> )
CALM(NESS)—ANXIETY	NSPL Witches’ Hollow	52	1.56	3225.0	-2.523	<b>.012</b>	<b>.030</b>
	NSPL aggregated renditions	160	0.96				
COLD—HOT	NSPL Witches’ Hollow	129	-0.75	21504.5	-2.324	<b>.020</b>	<b>.011</b>
	NSPL aggregated renditions	385	-0.36				
DARKNESS—LIGHT	NSPL Witches’ Hollow	52	-1.87	3170.5	-2.698	<b>.007</b>	<b>.034</b>
	NSPL aggregated renditions	160	-1.42				
FAMILIAR—ALIEN	NSPL Witches’ Hollow	52	1.06	2916.5	-3.290	<b>.001<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>.051</b>
	NSPL aggregated renditions	160	0.08				
FRAGRANCE—STENCH	NSPL Witches’ Hollow	129	0.61	21412.0	-2.377	<b>.017</b>	<b>.011</b>
	NSPL aggregated renditions	385	0.19				
GOOD—EVIL	NSPL Witches’ Hollow	52	1.58	2919.0	-3.325	< <b>.001</b>	<b>.052</b>
	NSPL aggregated renditions	160	0.86				
HOLY—(AC)CURSED	NSPL Witches’ Hollow	52	1.83	2923.5	-3.298	< <b>.001</b>	<b>.051</b>
	NSPL aggregated renditions	160	1.09				
LIFE—DEATH	NSPL Witches’ Hollow	52	1.17	3323.0	-2.247	<b>.025</b>	<b>.024</b>
	NSPL aggregated renditions	160	0.64				
LUCK—MISFORTUNE	NSPL Witches’ Hollow	52	1.29	3172.5	-2.647	<b>.008</b>	<b>.033</b>
	NSPL aggregated renditions	160	0.76				
ORDER—CHAOS	NSPL Witches’ Hollow	52	1.31	3521.0	-1.705	.088	<b>.014</b>
	NSPL aggregated renditions	160	0.81				
PLEASANT—UNPLEASANT	NSPL Witches’ Hollow	77	1.05	7419.5	-1.917	.055	.012
	NSPL aggregated renditions	225	0.64				
PURITY—IMPURITY	NSPL Witches’ Hollow	52	1.60	2930.5	-3.285	<b>.001</b>	<b>.051</b>
	NSPL aggregated renditions	160	0.94				
REACHABLE—INACCESSIBLE	NSPL Witches’ Hollow	52	1.15	3327.0	-2.277	<b>.023</b>	<b>.024</b>
	NSPL aggregated renditions	160	1.72				
SAFETY—DANGER	NSPL Witches’ Hollow	52	1.71	2809.5	-3.634	< <b>.001</b>	<b>.062</b>
	NSPL aggregated renditions	160	0.94				

<sup>a</sup> Statistically significant results are presented in **bold**.

<sup>b</sup> Two-tailed p-value unless stated otherwise.

<sup>c</sup> One-tailed p-value for the directional H<sub>1.2</sub>.

Significant and near-significant results of the comparison of the Witches' Hollow's connotations for the NSPL and NSEN are shown in Table 2. Out of 41 of the BDSM's items, 12 showed significant differences, and another five—near-significant. Compared to the NSEN, the NSPL found Witches' Hollow to be less INTERESTING, less SPIRITUAL, and more related to ANXIETY, EVIL, the (AC)CURSED, the SECRET, NORTH, CHAOS, IMPURITY, the INACCESSIBLE, DANGER, and DEPTH. Despite not having reached the assumed significance levels, other differences might also include Polish-speakers associating the place to a lesser extent with the EXOTIC, and to a greater degree with SADNESS, DEATH, MISFORTUNE, and SMALL size. The effect size was large for CALMNESS—ANXIETY, medium for GOOD—EVIL, NORTH—SOUTH, and PURITY—IMPURITY, and small for the remaining dimensions.

TABLE 2. Witches' Hollow in Native Speakers of English and Native Speakers of Polish—descriptives, Mann-Whitney U test's significance<sup>a</sup>, and effect size for differences in connotational meaning

Binary Dimension	Linguacultural Group and Toponym Presented	N	Mean	U	Z	p (two-tailed)	Effect Size (η <sup>2</sup> )
BORING—INTERESTING	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	1.85	2321.5	-2.875	<b>.004</b>	<b>.052</b>
	NSPL Witches' Hollow	77	1.35				
CALM(NESS)—ANXIETY	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	0.31	1142.0	-4.539	< <b>.001</b>	<b>.155</b>
	NSPL Witches' Hollow	52	1.56				
COMMON—EXOTIC	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	1.19	1703.5	-1.898	.058	.027
	NSPL Witches' Hollow	52	0.67				
CORPOREAL—SPIRITUAL	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	1.22	1532.0	-2.709	<b>.007</b>	<b>.055</b>
	NSPL Witches' Hollow	52	0.56				
GOOD—EVIL	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	0.80	1471.0	-3.009	<b>.003</b>	<b>.068</b>
	NSPL Witches' Hollow	52	1.58				
HOLY—(AC)CURSED	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	1.06	1521.5	-2.783	<b>.005</b>	<b>.058</b>
	NSPL Witches' Hollow	52	1.83				
JOY—SADNESS	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	0.52	2601.5	-1.849	.065	.022
	NSPL Witches' Hollow	77	0.96				
KNOWN—SECRET	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	1.62	1644.0	-2.236	<b>.025</b>	<b>.038</b>
	NSPL Witches' Hollow	52	2.06				
LIFE—DEATH	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	0.65	1724.0	-1.805	.071	.024
	NSPL Witches' Hollow	52	1.17				
LUCK—MISFORTUNE	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	0.78	1723.5	-1.802	.071	.024
	NSPL Witches' Hollow	52	1.29				
NORTH—SOUTH	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	-0.15	1436.0	-3.216	<b>.001</b>	<b>.078</b>
	NSPL Witches' Hollow	52	-0.98				
ORDER—CHAOS	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	0.78	1641.0	-2.207	<b>.027</b>	<b>.037</b>
	NSPL Witches' Hollow	52	1.31				
PURITY—IMPURITY	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	0.88	1498.5	-2.865	<b>.004</b>	<b>.062</b>
	NSPL Witches' Hollow	52	1.60				
REACHABLE—INACCESSIBLE	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	0.80	1677.5	-2.037	<b>.042</b>	<b>.031</b>
	NSPL Witches' Hollow	52	1.15				
SAFETY—DANGER	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	1.01	1583.5	-2.504	<b>.012</b>	<b>.047</b>
	NSPL Witches' Hollow	52	1.71				
SHALLOW—DEEP	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	0.72	4402.0	-1.962	< <b>.050</b>	<b>.018</b>
	NSPL Witches' Hollow	129	1.11				
SMALL—GREAT	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	-0.09	1705.0	-1.878	.060	.027
	NSPL Witches' Hollow	52	-0.63				

<sup>a</sup> Statistically significant results are presented in **bold**.

The analyses of the connotations of Witches' Hollow in the NSEN and of the toponym's renditions in the NSPL yielded 13 significant results and one almost-significant (Table 3). Compared to the NSEN, the Polish group, on average, associated *Wiedźmi Jar*, *Wiedźmia Kotlina*, and *Dolina Wiedźm* to a lesser extent with such qualities as the INTERESTING, COLD, the SPIRITUAL,

DARKNESS, and the ALIEN; at the same time, they also associated the rendered toponyms to a greater degree with ANXIETY, RAGE (contrary to the NSEN who linked Witches' Hollow with CALM(NESS)), the ANCIENT, WETNESS, SECRECY, NORTH, INACCESSIBILITY, and DEPTH. The COMMON—EXOTIC dimension, although nearly-significant, might suggest that Polish renditions seemed less exotic to the NSPL than the original toponym to the NSEN. One effect, for REACHABLE—INACCESSIBLE, was medium, and the rest were small.

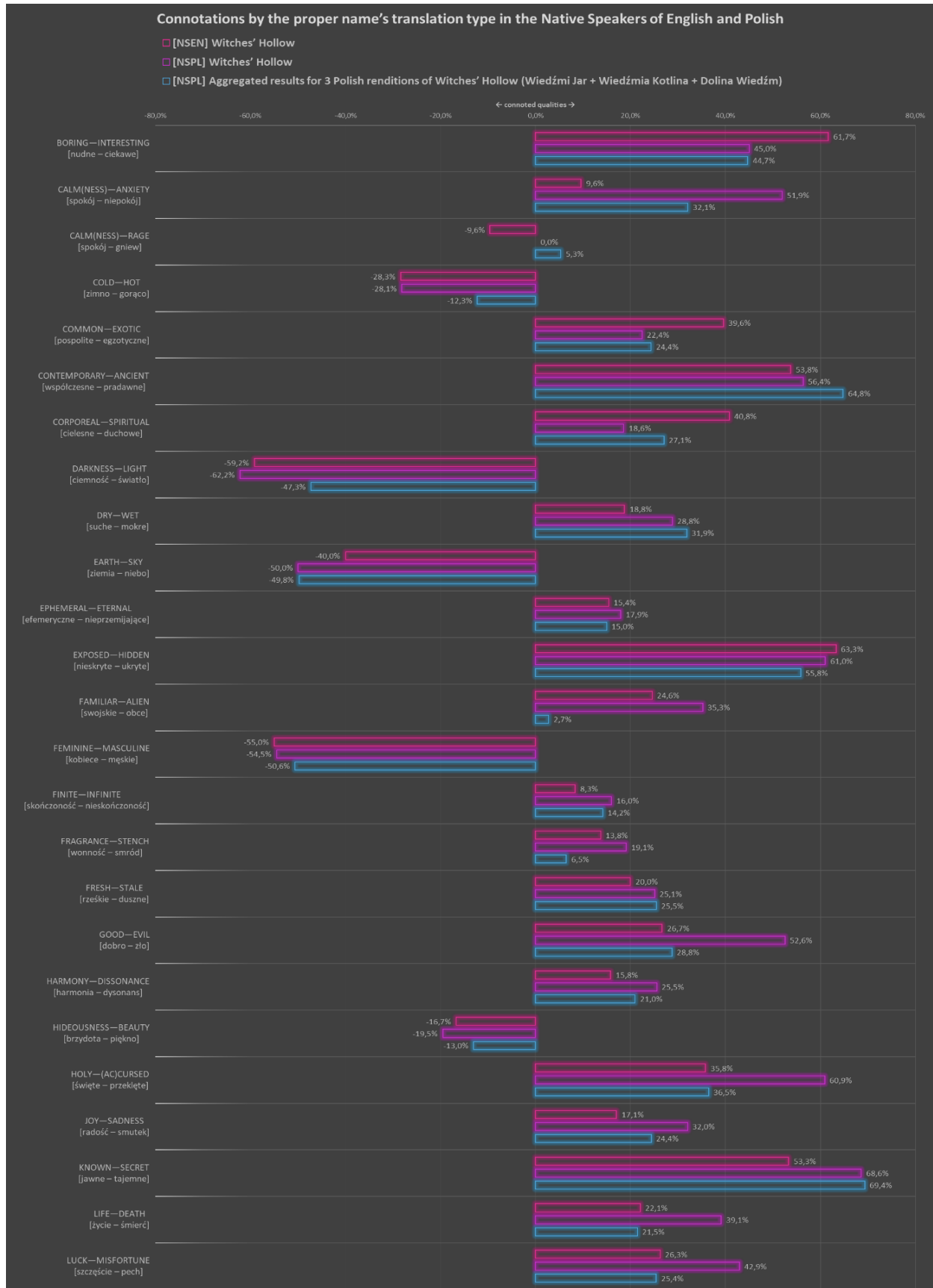
TABLE 3. Witches' Hollow in Native Speakers of English vs. Polish renditions in Native Speakers of Polish—descriptives, Mann-Whitney U test's significance<sup>a</sup>, and effect size for differences in connotational meaning

Binary Dimension	Translation Variant	N	Mean	U	Z	p (two-tailed)	Effect Size (η <sup>2</sup> )
BORING—INTERESTING	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	1.85	7075.5	-3.091	<b>.002</b>	<b>.031</b>
	NSPL aggregated renditions	225	1.34				
CALM(NESS)—ANXIETY	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	0.31	4918.0	-3.131	<b>.002</b>	<b>.041</b>
	NSPL aggregated renditions	160	0.96				
CALM(NESS)—RAGE	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	-0.30	7322.0	-2.668	<b>.008</b>	<b>.023</b>
	NSPL aggregated renditions	225	0.21				
COLD—HOT	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	-0.86	12725.5	-2.659	<b>.008</b>	<b>.015</b>
	NSPL aggregated renditions	385	-0.36				
COMMON—EXOTIC	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	1.19	5639.0	-1.681	.093	.012
	NSPL aggregated renditions	160	0.73				
CONTEMPORARY—ANCIENT	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	1.60	5127.0	-2.799	<b>.005</b>	<b>.033</b>
	NSPL aggregated renditions	160	1.94				
CORPOREAL—SPIRITUAL	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	1.22	5353.0	-2.272	<b>.023</b>	<b>.021</b>
	NSPL aggregated renditions	160	0.81				
DARKNESS—LIGHT	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	-1.78	5486.5	-2.031	<b>.042</b>	<b>.017</b>
	NSPL aggregated renditions	160	-1.42				
DRY—WET	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	0.57	5392.0	-2.194	<b>.028</b>	<b>.020</b>
	NSPL aggregated renditions	160	0.96				
FAMILIAR—ALIEN	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	0.73	5308.5	-2.330	<b>.020</b>	<b>.023</b>
	NSPL aggregated renditions	160	0.08				
KNOWN—SECRET	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	1.62	5085.5	-2.895	<b>.004</b>	<b>.035</b>
	NSPL aggregated renditions	160	2.08				
NORTH—SOUTH	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	-0.15	4704.0	-3.569	< <b>.001</b>	<b>.053</b>
	NSPL aggregated renditions	160	-0.88				
REACHABLE—INACCESSIBLE	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	0.80	3801.5	-5.439	< <b>.001</b>	<b>.123</b>
	NSPL aggregated renditions	160	1.72				
SHALLOW—DEEP	NSEN Witches' Hollow	81	0.72	12513.5	-2.866	<b>.004</b>	<b>.018</b>
	NSPL aggregated renditions	385	1.16				

<sup>a</sup> Statistically significant results are presented in **bold**.

Given that there were 12 significant connotational differences between the NSPL and NSEN with regard to the name Witches' Hollow and 13 significant differences between the NSEN and the Polish renditions it would seem that the H<sub>2</sub> was also confirmed, if only by a narrow margin. However, having considered the effects' sizes—1 large, 3 medium, and 8 small in the former case vs. 1 medium and 12 small in the latter case—it need be noted that even though technically confirmed (fewer instances of divergence), with the overall strength of the divergence pointing in the opposite direction, the matter may be more complex.

With regard to translation assessment, the mean rating of the excerpt with Witches' Hollow was 3.00, while the mean for the aggregated renditions was slightly higher and amounted to 3.27 ( $p = .015$ ,  $U = 60071.000$ ,  $Z = -2.433$ ,  $\eta^2 = .007$ , a statistically significant but negligible result).



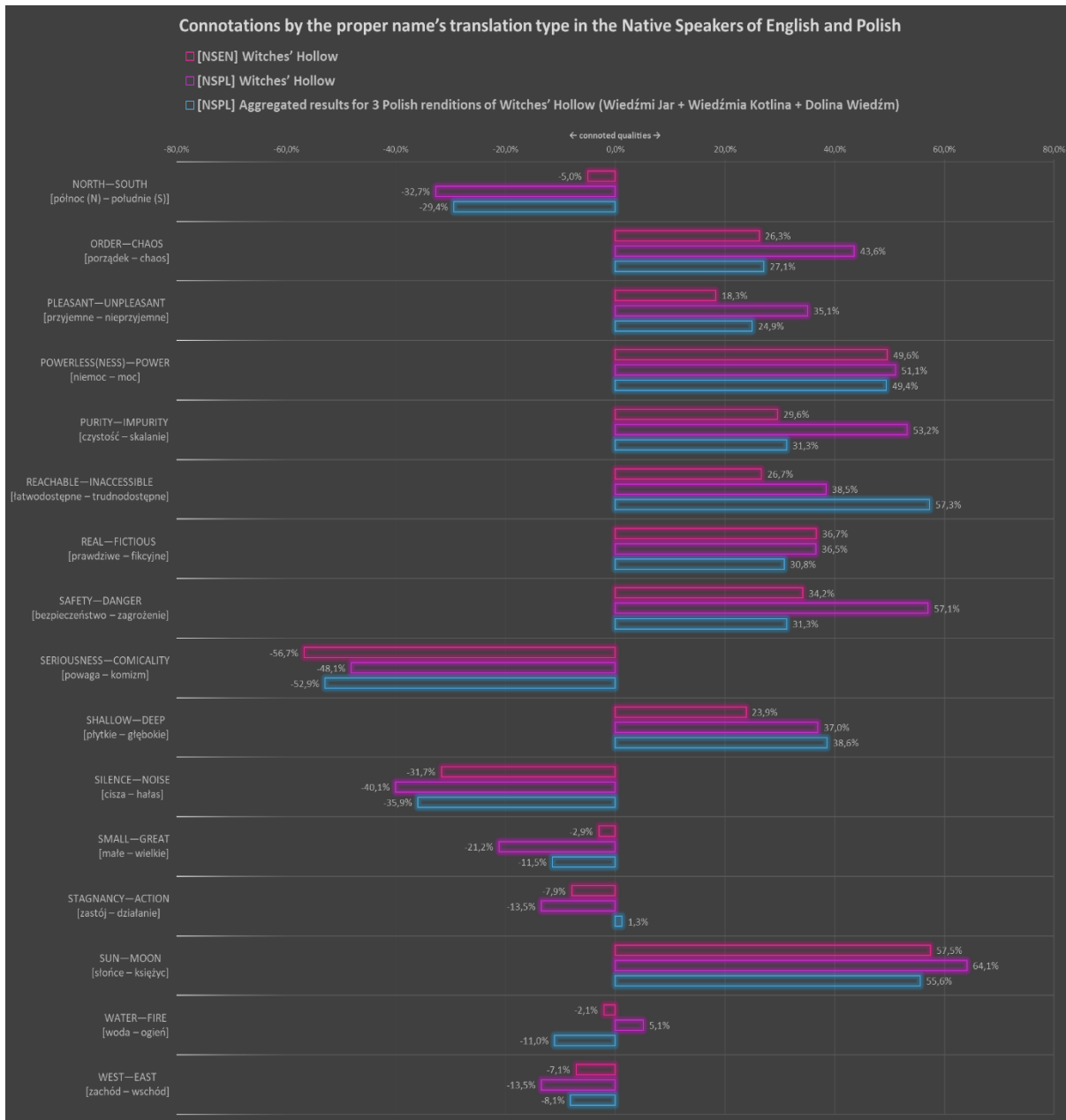


FIGURE 1. Connotations by the participants' native language and by the proper name's translation type

## DISCUSSION

In behavioral sciences, the majority of the effect sizes obtained are traditionally classified as small (but not negligible). This is to be expected when comparing connotations of linguistic items whose literal meanings are considered to be as close to equivalent as possible, as it is the numerous details, feelings, and associations that differentiate between them. Despite that, the measures of effect sizes were calculated because they provide more practical insights into the data obtained. The value of eta-squared is the proportion of the total variance in the results that can be explained by—in this

case—the toponym variant. Although the values for several items cannot be summed up, they can still indicate which dimensions are subject to the greatest changes. Additionally, the values can serve to establish a benchmark for similar studies in the future.

The  $H_{1.1}$  was confirmed on the account of 12 significant connotational differences discovered. Given that 30% of the questionnaire's items indicated significant differences, this seems like a very good result, especially since not all the items must necessarily be relevant to this particular toponym and that not all the items are expected to always yield differences. Take WEST—EAST. The copied toponym implies the place is located in an English-speaking country, so probably the so-called Western world (relatively to Poland), but it may also be just a conventional exotic name in a fantastic world. There is also no reason to expect that any of the Polish renditions would suggest any particular location of the place along the WEST—EAST axis; the meanings (and connotations) of *dolina*, *kotlina*, and *jar* in members of the Polish LC are contingent on their (prototypical) experience with Polish lay of the land, which gives no preference to any of them based the location on the WEST—EAST axis. This is consistent with the fact that in both Polish groups the mode was located in the middle of the scale (no preference). The fact that the results are slightly leaning towards west most probably stems from the combination of the name's exoticism and genre's convention—the inability to pinpoint the location would make it more ambiguous and liminal, thus adding to the atmosphere of mystery. Perhaps that is also one of the reasons for the perceived inaccessibility of the place.

In order of the decreasing effect size, copying proved superior in connoting **DANGER**, **EVIL**, **IMPURITY**, the **(AC)CURSED**, the **ALIEN**, **DARKNESS**, **MISFORTUNE**, **ANXIETY**, **DEATH**, **CHAOS**, and **COLDNESS**. In bold are the qualities that lend support to the  $H_{1.2}$  as they were hypothesized to be stronger when foreignized. It would seem that the technique proved very efficient in evoking all the desired associations, with danger being the greatest (medium size) connotational difference, as it is precisely the sense of danger that evokes the thrill of horror. Evil, impurity, and unholiness that are the next to follow, seem to form a semantic complex whose in-depth analysis—informed by religious studies—would require a separate paper. The next two dimensions, alienness and darkness, are also related to the unknown; the notion is supported by consistently high results in the categories of the **HIDDEN** and **SECRET**. Although the hypothesis did not mention **MISFORTUNE**, it is also consistent with the overall notion of malevolent higher power present in Witches' Hollow. **ANXIETY**, a connate to **DANGER**, shows a far weaker effect, which is hardly surprising when the comparison with the **NSEN** is taken into account. Apparently, the Polish renditions are not associated with **ANXIETY** as much as the copy, but they are still significantly more **ANXIETY**-laden than Witches' Hollow for the **NSEN**. It seems that even Polish renditions sound **EXOTIC**, if not peculiar, which is consistent with the fact that the renditions also proved significantly more **INACCESSIBLE**. In the case of the next two dimensions **LIFE—DEATH** and **ORDER—CHAOS**, the renditions are on a par with how the **NSEN** experience the toponym, but the connotations are weaker than for the copied name. Being a known danger, **DEATH** is not as terrifying as the unknown, perhaps that is why the unspecified **DANGER** ranks higher. Had the direction of the associations not been hypothesized the **ORDER—CHAOS** dimension would not have qualified as a significant difference. It seemed, however, only logical that a Lovecraftian toponym be brimming with **CHAOS**. At the same time, it should be noted that Witches' Hollow is not a name that implies anything unearthly large, immeasurably ancient, or even balefully sentient as the Old Ones, so—perhaps—that is why its relationship with chaos is just enough to unnerve and cue something sinister, but is nowhere near the numinotic experience that places such as Lovecraftian R'lyeh would instantly evoke.



Although technically the H<sub>2</sub> has been confirmed—which would suggest that foreignization ensures less connotational divergence than domestication—the number of differences found may not be the only measure of fidelity. On average, the effect sizes in Table 3 are smaller than the ones in Table 2 (also in terms of the number of medium effects: one in Table 2 vs. none in Table 3), which may indicate that domesticating causes the translation loss to manifest at smaller strength but across greater number of categories, while foreignizing is more limited in scope but greater in intensity. This would also indicate that translation loss (Hervey & Higgins, 2002, p. 20) may be seen as a two-dimensional phenomenon wherein translators may decide to ‘minimize difference’ by increasing its scope and decreasing intensity (domestication) or decreasing the number of qualitative differences at the cost of making them stronger (foreignization). This interpretation is consistent with the fact that included in Table 3 are the aggregated results for three separate renditions whose individual quirks mutually cancel out and accentuate the effects they have in common. Still, a more detailed analysis of the individual renditions would be required to further explore the matter.

The fact that the translation assessment question revealed a slight preference for the Polish renditions is far more difficult to interpret on its own because the participants’ assessment criteria are unknown—it might be due to the renditions having more appeal because of their creativity, the fact that declined names sound more natural in an inflectional language, a bias, or something else entirely. Combined with the more detailed data, however, the finding may suggest that it is precisely the jarring aspect of the name that founds its evocative potential. Counter-intuitive as it may be, it supports the notion that connotational measures such as the BDSM can yield more reliable data, explicitly showing the implications of given techniques or strategies and revealing whole complexes of meaning for interpretation.

## LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on their self-assessment, the Polish participants can be regarded as possessing a good command of English (80.3% were at least B2), which presumably contributed to unlocking the meanings of words comprising the copied toponym. It remains unclear, however, how the two approaches would work for a group located in a greater cultural distance from the SLC (e.g., as in Atikah Zabir & Haslina Haroon, 2018).

It should also be noted that since the participants were recruited by purposive and snowball sampling methods, it is not possible to know whether the same approach to translation would have similar effects in other genres and for other—less weird, so to say—audiences (Chrobak, 2024, p. 113; Tuominen, 2018, p. 86). The extent to which the effectiveness of the translative techniques is contingent on the genre’s convention and readers’ familiarity with it also requires further investigation.

## CONCLUSION

Despite being taken somewhat out of the original context of Tymoczko's work, the question opening this paper remains fundamental to the work of a translator—particularly so when telling names are in question. And while the answer to it—at least with regard to the scope of this inquiry—would be negative, it is also true that even rendered meaningful weird fiction toponyms are not the same name as the name from the source text, as both the SLC and TLC may construe and experience them differently.

What the study has demonstrated was that there is no single most appropriate choice, as all depends on a number of factors, chiefly the skopos, the genre, the textual function of the proprium, and the distance between the SLC and TLC. Consequently, the most appropriate approach is the one that takes *all* these factors into account, as the same skopos for different LC pairs and genres may require a different approach. In some cases, the jarring effects of foreignization may minimize immersion and entertainment value (cf. Pettini, 2021, pp. 99–100), but in others (e.g., in the English–Polish LCs and the horror genre) they may enhance the weird and ominous nature of the place and intensify the 'horrific' experience in the TLC, thus maximizing the immersion. The study also shows that—at least in the case of weird fiction—unlike a name, the experience of the weird or the horror cannot be copied into to TLC, as in both cases there may be unique qualities to the experience that can only be shared by members of the same languaculture, thus partially confirming the conclusions of Atikah Zabir and Haslina Haroon (2018) and adding to the understanding of the notion of translation loss as described by Hervey and Higgins (2002). Furthermore, reconceptualizing translation loss as a two-fold phenomenon that can be considered on qualitative and quantitative levels alike may provide translators with deeper insight into a more effective use of domestication and foreignization, especially in the context of designing readers' emotions, and realizing the skopos, be it minimizing differences in scope and intensity or maximizing immersion and entertainment value.

In terms of a new approach to Reception and Translation Studies, although participants' general statements and judgements may offer valuable insights, their usefulness is strongly conditioned by the fact that the assessment criteria are not known to researchers and vary from participant to participant (i.e., each participant may understand and operationalize the question differently). As a result, the BDSM shows much promise as a user-friendly, comparable measure that can deliver quantifiable, easily interpretable data.

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## APPENDIX

### THE VISUALIZATION OF A BILINGUAL (EN|PL) VERSION OF THE BINARY DIMENSIONS MATRIX

#### HOW DO YOU EXPERIENCE THE MAGIC OF WORDS?

Close your eyes for a moment and try to picture a place called **WITCHES' HOLLOW**. What is it like? What comes to your mind? How does it make you feel?

Which element of the following pair describes **WITCHES' HOLLOW** better?

- 1 = only the first (←Left) word of the pair
- 2 = mostly the first word (L) of the pair
- 3 = rather the first word (L)
- 4 = both words equally
- 5 = rather the second word (R)
- 6 = mostly the second word (R) of the pair
- 7 = only the second (Right→) word of the pair

#### JAK CZUJESZ KLIMAT SŁÓW?

Zamknij na chwilę oczy i spróbuj wyobrazić sobie miejsce zwane **[TOPONYM VARIANT]**. Jakie ono jest? Z czym Ci się kojarzy? Jakie budzi emocje? Który z elementów poniższych par przeciwieństw lepiej oddaje istotę **[TOPONYM VARIANT]**?


- 1 = wyłącznie pierwsze (←L) określenie z pary
- 2 = głównie pierwsze (L) określenie z pary
- 3 = raczej pierwsze (L)
- 4 = obydwa po równo
- 5 = raczej drugie (R)
- 6 = głównie drugie (R) określenie z pary
- 7 = wyłącznie drugie (R→) określenie z pary

first (L)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	second (R)
BORING nudne	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	INTERESTING ciekawe
CALM(NESS) spokój	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	ANXIETY niepokój
CALM(NESS) spokój	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	RAGE gniew
COLD zimno	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	HOT gorąco
COMMON pospolite	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	EXOTIC egzotyczne
CONTEMPORARY współczesne	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	ANCIENT pradawne
CORPOREAL cielesne	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	SPIRITUAL duchowe
DARKNESS ciemność	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	LIGHT światło
DRY suche	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	WET mrok
EARTH ziemia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	SKY niebo
EPHEMERAL efemeryczne	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	ETERNAL nieprzemijające
EXPOSED nieskryte	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	HIDDEN ukryte
FAMILIAR swojskie	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	ALIEN obce
FEMININE kobiece	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	MASCULINE męskie
FINITE skończoność	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	INFINITE nieskończoność
FRAGRANCE wonność	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	STENCH smród
FRESH rzeźkie	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	STALE duszne
GOOD dobro	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	EVIL zło

HARMONY harmonia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	DISSONANCE dysonans
HIDEOUSNESS brzydota	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	BEAUTY piękno
HOLY święte	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	(AC)CURSED przeklęte
JOY radość	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	SADNESS smutek
KNOWN jawne	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	SECRET tajemne
LIFE życie	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	DEATH śmierć
LUCK szczęście	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	MISFORTUNE nieszczęście
NORTH północ (N)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	SOUTH południe (S)
ORDER porządek	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	CHAOS chaos
PLEASANT przyjemne	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	UNPLEASANT nieprzyjemne
POWERLESS(NESS) niemoc	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	POWER moc
PURITY czystość	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	IMPURITY skalanie
REACHABLE łatwodostępne	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	INACCESSIBLE trudnodostępne
REAL prawdziwe	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	FICTITIOUS fikcyjne
SAFETY bezpieczeństwo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	DANGER zagrożenie
SERIOUSNESS powaga	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	COMICALITY komizm
SHALLOW plytkie	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	DEEP głębokie
SILENCE cisza	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	NOISE hałas
SMALL małe	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	GREAT wielkie
STAGNANCY zastój	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	ACTION działanie
SUN słońce	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	MOON księżyc
WATER woda	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	FIRE ogień
WEST zachód (W)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	EAST wschód (E)

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Piotr A. Wesołowski, a graduate of Psychology and Comparative Studies of Civilizations currently pursuing a translation-oriented Ph.D. in Linguistics. Despite having worked as a professional translator of fantasy literature and games for the past 20 years, he is still passionate about it.

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