

OK in Harry Potter and in translation

Amélie Depierre

University of Perpignan & CRTT (Lyon)

Amelie.Depierre@univ-perp.fr

Abstract

OK was coined in the US as a jocular initialism, and survived thanks to circumstances, its flexibility of form and possibilities for re-interpretation. Today, *OK* has grown in frequency, diversified in usage and been naturalised in other languages around the world as a symbol of American culture. This paper defines the deep meaning of *OK*, then focuses on its 283 occurrences in a purposefully aligned corpus of the seven *Harry Potter* books and their translations in French and some other European languages; in the translations, the multitude of context-dependent equivalents of *OK* is most striking, as is the use of meliorative words – sometimes antiphrastically – to signal well-being or agreement in a non-neutral fashion. The data suggest that in English, *OK* has pushed aside other linguistic markers to occupy a semantic node of its own, i.e. neutral conformity to a standard, and it may be doing the same in other languages, such as Swedish, but cultural factors must be considered, too. Conversely, *OK* is rare in the French and Spanish translations, possibly owing to the translators' effort at linguistic purity or the publishers' guidelines, although it is known to be used in informal speech in these languages.

Keywords: *OK*, deep meaning, corpus analysis, *Harry Potter* books, translation.

Résumé

OK est né aux USA sous forme de plaisanterie qui a survécu grâce à un concours de circonstances, à sa flexibilité de forme et à ses possibilités de réinterprétation. Aujourd'hui, la fréquence d'utilisation de *OK* augmente, ses emplois se diversifient et il a été adopté dans de nombreuses autres langues comme symbole culturel américain. Cet article définit le sens profond de *OK*, puis présente ses 283 occurrences dans un corpus aligné composé des sept livres *Harry Potter* et de leurs traductions en français et dans d'autres langues européennes ; ces traductions montrent un grand nombre d'équivalents différents de *OK* selon le contexte, en particulier des mots mélioratifs qui expriment l'accord ou le bien-être de façon non neutre. Les données analysées montrent qu'en anglais *OK* a déplacé d'autres marqueurs linguistiques pour occuper un nœud sémantique qui lui est propre, à savoir la conformité neutre à un standard. Le même phénomène semble se produire dans d'autres langues, comme le suédois, mais des facteurs culturels complexes doivent être pris en compte. Inversement, *OK* est rare dans les traductions vers le français et l'espagnol, possiblement en raison d'efforts de purisme linguistique, alors que *OK* est bien attesté à l'oral dans ces langues.

Mots-clés : *OK*, sens profond, analyses sur corpus, livres *Harry Potter*, traduction

1. Introduction: The coinage that lived

OK started as an initialism coined for jocular purposes 180 years ago in the US and survived unlike other contemporary coinages. Today, *OK* has grown in frequency, diversified in usage and spread to other languages around the world, becoming as American a symbol as Coca-Cola, or rather *Coke*.

Among the many fancy speculations about the origin of *OK*, one is documented by Read (1963) and Metcalf (2011), who trace the first attested occurrence of *OK* back to 23 March 1839 in the *Boston Morning Post*; it was probably coined by its editor, Charles Gordon Greene: “He [...] would have the ‘contribution box’, et ceteras, *o.k.* – all correct – and cause the corks to fly, like sparks, upward.” (Metcalf, 2011, p. 29); it was re-used soon afterwards in the *Salem Gazette*: “The house was *O.K.* at the last concert, and did credit to the musical taste of the young ladies and gents” and in the *Boston Evening Transcript*: “Our Bank Directors have not thought it worth their while to call a meeting, even for consultation, on the subject. It is *O.K.* (*all correct*) in this quarter.” These first three occurrences are differentiated enough to foreshadow the subsequent rapid evolution of the usage and grammar of *OK* (cf. §2.2 below).

OK was one of many then fashionable misspelt initialisms (e.g., K.Y., i.e. ‘know yuse’, for ‘no use’). Predictably, other such humorous coinages died out: “Konspikuous clever koinages rarely make it into the everyday vocabulary of a language” (Metcalf, 2011, p. 56). The remarkable survival of *OK* was due to a combination of circumstances: the lucky coincidence with the initials of the Democratic candidate Martin Van Buren’s nickname, Old Kinderhook, during his 1840 presidential re-election campaign, together with the flexibility of form and possibilities for semantic re-interpretation of *OK*. Metcalf also puts forward its highly satisfactory graphic qualities when written in capital as well as lower-case letters, a round feminine O and an angular masculine K, and the “catchiness” of the letter K, which is relatively rare in English words.

Despite being coined by an intellectual who certainly knew how to spell, *OK* was considered slang or uneducated, doubtlessly because of its association with misspelling. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, *OK* was very rarely used in literature and then only in dialogue, in the speech of unrefined male characters. In a possible attempt to cover up the uneducated connotations of the misspelt initialism, the spelling was altered to *okay*, making it look more like a real word; *okay* was first attested in *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott (1869) in a letter from one of the four sisters to her mother, but in the revised 1880 edition, *okay* was replaced with *cozy*, either by the author herself or by the publisher, obliterating *OK* from the writing of a young woman who defines herself as a lady (Metcalf, 2011, p. 126-7). In England, *OK* started as a “swell” Americanism in a song famous around 1870 (Metcalf, 2011, p. 173) and there was no need to alter the spelling in order to disguise its origins; the spelling in two capital letters prevails in British English and internationally to this day (cf. §2.1 below).

The frequency of use of *OK*, which at its beginnings was low for over a century, increased steadily after 1945, the rise becoming exponential between the 1970s and 2010, according to data from Google Books Ngram Viewer.

This paper proposes to verify the above historical remarks in a recent translated corpus aligned by me purposefully for this study and discussed in part 3 below. The corpus consists of the seven *Harry Potter* books and their translations in French and some other European languages. The following re-search questions will be addressed:

What is the deep meaning of *OK*?

How does *OK* compare with its near synonyms *all right*, *right* and *finé*?

Which characters use *OK* in the *Harry Potter* books and in what contexts?

What are the equivalents of *OK* in French and in other European languages?

2. Linguistic matters: the form, meaning and uses of *OK*

2.1. Spelling and statistics

Greene first spelt *OK* as o.k., a lower-case initialism with punctuation marks, and followed it with an explanatory “all correct”, which was indeed necessary in order to clarify the jocular misspelling. The second and third attested occurrences are of upper-case *O.K.* Other spellings in the US and abroad include *OK*, *ok*, *Ok*, *okeh*, *okay*, *okey*, *okej* (in Swedish), *oké* (in Dutch), etc.

Two main spellings, *OK* and *okay*, coexist in English today. Most dictionaries list *OK* first, and so does the *Associated Press Stylebook*, which is the reference for journalistic writing. The *Chicago Manual of Style*, which is preferred by academic and literary circles, does not recommend one spelling over the other, although it does use *OK* twice. However, publishers’ guidelines make *okay* the dominant form in modern American fiction.

A Google search on 16 March 2019 yielded 5,820,000,000 results for *OK* vs 852,000,000 for *okay*; a similar search on 14 June 2019 yielded 6,470,000,000 results for *OK* vs 729,000,000 for *okay*, and on 30 October 2019 the results were 11,010,000,000 for *OK* vs 687,000,000 for *okay*; this suggests that the spelling *OK* prevails internationally and is steadily on the rise, with results almost doubling between March and October 2019, while *okay* is declining; the use of *OK* in communication with computers and in texting on mobile phones may be a contributing factor.

A broad search in Google Books Ngram Viewer covering all English shows that the spelling *OK* overtook *okay* in frequency of use in 1990; the trend was reversed in 2005, with *okay* taking the lead again. The Viewer also shows that in British English, the spelling *OK* is about three times as frequent as *okay*; in French, German, Italian, Spanish and Russian, *okay* is virtually non-existent, while the

frequency of use of *OK* started to grow exponentially after 1995, which coincides with the publication of the *Harry Potter* books between 1997 and 2007 (Table 1 below), i.e. during a peak in the frequency of use of *OK* in English.

The viewer does not show any data for Danish, Swedish or Dutch, where *OK* is spelt *okay*, *okej* and *oké*, respectively. Extracts from some of the *Harry Potter* books in these languages are also included in the *Harry Potter-OK* translated corpus underlying this paper.

book	year	number of words per book	
HP1	1997	76,944	7%
HP2	1998	85,141	8%
HP3	1999	107,253	10%
HP4	2000	190,637	17.5%
HP5	2003	257,045	24%
HP6	2005	168,923	15%
HP7	2007	198,227	18.5%
Total		1,084,170	100%

Table 1: The year of publication and number of words¹ of the seven *Harry Potter* books.

2.2. The grammar and syntax of *OK*

The first attested occurrence of *OK* was in the phrase *have something OK*, from which I infer the meaning ‘in the proper fashion; as it should be’, pointing to the deep meaning of *OK* (cf. §2.3 below). The second and third occurrences confirm this meaning and pave the way for the now widespread use of *OK* as a predicative adjective (“The house was O.K.”), sometimes with impersonal *it* as a subject (“It is OK”).

In present-day English dictionaries, *OK* (or *okay*) falls into functional categories as diverse as adjective, noun, adverb, verb and exclamation, aka interjection, i.e. what has been defined as a “discourse marker” in pragmatics.

Several existing studies (Beach, 1993; Condon, 2001; Bangerter & Clark, 2003; Huddleston & Fairhurst, 2013, etc.) mention *OK* as one of many discourse markers, globally defined as “sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk”, with brackets understood as “devices which are [...] in initial or terminal position” (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 31); discourse markers are said to be “a class of lexical expressions drawn primarily from the syntactic classes of conjunctions, adverbs, and prepositional phrases” (Fraser, 1999, p. 931). *OK* is used in conversation “where what is ‘at stake’ involves movements from prior to next-positioned matter(s)” (Beach, 1993, p. 326). On the basis of the above-mentioned studies, the characteristics of *OK* as a discourse marker are listed below:

¹ Source for the number of words: <http://www.hogwartsprofessor.com/harry-potter-by-the-numbers-1084170/>.

- *OK* belongs to a class of short, recurrent linguistic items with little lexical import but with significant pragmatic functions in conversation,
- *OK* can be found at the beginning or at the end of a statement, like a bracket,
- *OK* functions as a pivot between two segments of discourse,
- *OK* signals a relationship between the topic of the introduced segment and that of the prior segment, or a change of topic,
- *OK* and *all right* are used similarly for vertical transitions² in a dialogue, to initiate or complete joint projects,
- the core meaning of *OK* is procedural, not conceptual (cf. §2.3),
- the specific interpretation of *OK* depends on the context.

These characteristics were taken into account for the analysis of the *Harry Potter-OK* corpus and confirmed whenever *OK* is a discourse marker; they had to be adapted to analyse *OK* in its functions as an adjective or an adverb, to which only the last item of the above list applies.

2.3. The meaning of *OK*

Although most dictionaries list a range of uses and meanings of *OK* in context, to the best of my knowledge, its “deep meaning³” has not been investigated.

According to Fraser (1999, p. 931), all discourse markers “have a core meaning, which is procedural, not conceptual”, in other words, they have no lexical meaning of their own but function at an abstract level, connecting utterances and ensuring discourse coherence. However, at first *OK* did not function as a discourse marker and had a lexical meaning of its own, which was subsequently attenuated when it did start to function as a discourse marker. Attenuation does not mean total disappearance.

² “Conversation coordinates joint activities and the joint projects that compose them. Participants coordinate (1) vertical transitions on entering and exiting joint projects; and (2) horizontal transitions in continuing within them. Transitions are coordinated using project markers such as uh-huh, yeah, right, and okay. [...] [P]articipants use uh-huh, yeah, and right to continue within joint projects, and okay and all right to enter and exit them.” [...] “[The] uses of okay correspond to vertical transitions in a hierarchy. As a pre-closing device, okay is used in exiting the main body of conversation. In using okay to link larger segments of discourse or to move between levels, people are entering and exiting joint projects. So okay is a prime candidate for being a vertical navigation tool. In the literature on okay, all right is treated as approximately equivalent” (Bangerter & Clark, 2003, p. 195, p. 202).

³ The term “deep meaning” translates “sens profond”, coined by the Canadian linguist Gustave Guillaume, the father of the theory of the psychomechanics of language. Each linguistic marker, such as a determiner, a modal, a preposition, etc., has a unitary deep meaning at language (as opposed to discourse) level; the deep meaning of a specific marker is more or less easy to grasp, but always present in its uses in context.

Unlike the core meaning which is specific to pragmatics, the deep meaning accounts for all the uses of *OK* in context, be they conceptual (i.e. lexical) or procedural (i.e. functional).

What is the deep meaning of *OK*? As an abbreviated form of *all correct*, *OK* is a very close synonym of *all right*. The two are suppletive synonyms (Depierre, 2005), i.e. words, phrases or terms similar in meaning but differing by their etymology and by their usage or connotations, e.g., *cooking* vs *cuisine*, *put up with* vs *tolerate*, *kidney stone* vs *renal calculus* vs *nephrolith*, etc. Etymologically, *correct* comes from Latin, while *right* is the native word from Old English, sharing the same Indo-European root **reg-* ‘move in a straight line; direct, lead, rule’. The first element *all* ‘wholly, quite’ maximises the semantic content of the following word; *all* was originally present as an intensifier, but *OK* seems to have lost the connection with *all* and its intensifying ability⁴, since *all* is occasionally added somewhat pleonastically, as in *it’s all OK*, which occurs in the corpus.

To access its deep meaning, I scrutinised an extensive number of occurrences of *OK* in various contexts, which helped me to define it as “neutral⁵ conformity to a standard”, in other words, *OK* signals that something – a situation, a person’s health, etc. – is according to expectations or as it should be. This meaning was present in the first attested occurrence of *OK* (cf. §2.2 above), as well as in all the subsequent uses of *OK*. The loss of the connection with *all* as an intensifier implies that *OK* denotes “conformity to a standard” in a normal, neutral way, neither good nor bad. The standard can be set (1) by the speaker, (2) by the hearer or (3) by generally accepted social norms.

Neutrality from positive or negative connotations accounts for the semantic versatility and flexibility of use of *OK* in context:

- to state/check that something, or someone, is according to expectations,
- to express or elicit agreement⁶,
- to check/confirm understanding,
- to state one’s well-being, health, safety from danger, etc. or to inquire about somebody else’s,
- to change the topic of conversation, i.e. close a topic and open a new one; this is the extended (peripheral) meaning which *OK* acquired as it became a discourse marker.

⁴ Lapaire & Rotgé (1991, p. 257) discuss a similar loss of connection with the intensifier *all* in *as*, from Old English *eal-swá* ‘all’ + ‘so’; the connection with *all* was lost and with it was also lost the intensifying ability, allowing the notion of similarity to prevail in *as*.

⁵ Among the various acceptations of these three words, here neutral is understood as “having no strongly marked negative or positive characteristics”, conformity as “compliance with standards” or “agreement in character” and standard as “something used as a measure, norm or model in comparative evaluations”.

⁶ Bangertter & Clark (2003, p. 220) distinguish between “acknowledgement”, “agreement” and “consent”, marked with *uh-huh*, *right* and *OK*, respectively. I only retain the umbrella term “agreement”, but in the present corpus *OK*, *all right*, and *right* were found to mark either “agreement” or “consent”.

All of the above semantic effects are present in the *Harry Potter-OK* corpus and included in the analysis in part 3.

3. Corpus study: *OK* in the seven *Harry Potter* books

The choice of the seven *Harry Potter* books and their translations as a corpus was predetermined by several factors: personal interest, my good knowledge of the books and my extensive previous use of them as a corpus for teaching and for research (Depierre, 2014, 2018), the publication dates between 1997 and 2007 at a turning point in the frequency of use of *OK*, the large number of dialogues mainly between teenage characters who are likely to use informal speech peppered with *OK*; last but not least, the seven books total over one million words, which is a reasonable size for a corpus.

Although – or perhaps because – the *Harry Potter* series was not originally written in American English, the *Harry Potter-OK* corpus seemed to be suitable for a study of such a typically American word as *OK* in its expansion to British English and to other languages through cultural influence or literary translation.

3.1. Methodology: how the *Harry Potter-OK* corpus was built and analysed

For the corpus-builder, the graphic quality of *OK* is an added bonus, making it quite distinctive and easy to spot in printed texts. I selected the passages containing *OK* from the seven original books by skim-reading and with the help of the search function in the electronic scanned version. Then I added the corresponding passages in the French translation and those in what other languages I managed to procure, i.e. book one in Danish, Swedish, Dutch, German, Spanish, Italian, Romanian, Latin and Russian, book three in Spanish, book five in Swedish, book six in Danish and book seven in German⁷.

Unfortunately, I was unable to put together a more consistent collection of the books in all of the above languages. The highest number of different translations, ten, are of the first book, which is therefore presented separately (Table 2 below). Still more regrettably, the first book is also the one with the lowest number of occurrences of *OK*, five; though quantitatively unreliable, the inter-linguistic comparison provides useful qualitative information (cf. §3.2 below).

All the passages containing *OK* were aligned with the corresponding available translations. Then they were copied into tables to facilitate tagging. Finally, the tags from the seven tables were combined into one Excel spreadsheet and statistics were calculated. Extracts from the corpus are presented in the tables in the Appendix (pp. 194-196) and discussed below.

⁷ Most of the original and translated books are from my personal collection, five were provided by Sonja Böttger, and Alice Noyelle-Depierre assisted with aligning the corpus; my warmest thanks to both.

	Original	FR	DA	SV	DU	GE	SP	IT	RO	LA	RU		
HP1-1	Er – OK		okay	okej	oké							Harry	agr
HP1-2	we'll be OK											Harry	wb
HP1-3	OK, got that.		okay	okej	oké							Harry	agr
HP1-4	OK, men		Okay	Okej	Oké	Okay			OK			Wood	dm
HP1-5	It's OK! [...] you can jump.	C'est O.K.!		Det er OKEJ!	Alles oké!							Harry	it
Total	5	1	3	4	4	1	0	0	1	0	0		

Table 2: The occurrences of *OK* in the first *Harry Potter* book and its translations⁸.

3.2. Findings in the *Harry Potter-OK* corpus and discussion

Table 1 (cf. §2.1) shows the date of publication and the number of words of each of the original seven *Harry Potter* books. *OK* occurs 283 times in the original, i.e. 3‰⁹ of the total of over one million words; almost all of these occurrences are in dialogues, with only 2 in Harry's thoughts and 7 in informal writing, i.e. letters; unsurprisingly, *OK* does not occur in the narrative.

3.2.1. The tagged corpus

The tagging of *OK* in the *Harry Potter-OK* corpus was based on discursive, syntactic and semantic criteria, i.e. who is speaking, in what order and in what situation.

Table 2 above and Tables 3 and 6 in the Appendix (pp. 194-195)¹⁰ show samples of the tagged corpus. First the speaker using *OK* was identified by name, e.g., Harry, Hermione, etc. Secondly, the order of speech was tagged S1 for speaker one, who starts a new conversation topic in a vertical transition, or S2 for speaker two. In some utterances, the same person can be S2 responding to one S1, then become S1 in turn – by using *OK* as a pivot for turn-switching – to address the previous S1 now become S2, or a different S2, e.g., in HP7-33¹¹, Harry utters *OK* both as S2 in response to Griphook and as S1 to proffer instructions to Ron and Hermione. Thirdly, each occurrence of *OK* was tagged according to syntax and meaning, as follows:

⁸ The table includes the French (FR), Danish (DA), Swedish (SV), Dutch (DU), German (GE), Spanish (SP), Italian (IT), Romanian (RO), Latin (LA) and Russian (RU) translations. The last two columns on the right show the tags used to analyse the corpus.

⁹ The symbol ‰ (per myriad) indicates a proportion per ten thousand.

¹⁰ The data presented in Tables 2 to 8 are from the *Harry Potter-OK* translated corpus, built and analysed by the author of this paper.

¹¹ The coded extracts mentioned in this section are to be found in Table 3 in the Appendix (p. 194).

[dm]: discourse marker, used at the beginning of a statement to start a conversation, a speech or a set of instructions or to change the topic,

[Eagr]: at the end of a statement, the speaker (often S1) elicits agreement,

[agr]: the speaker (usually S2) expresses agreement,

[wb]: well-being, including health, safety from danger or any form of harm,

[nrm]: normal, standard, neither good nor bad, acceptable,

[it]: impersonal *it*, *that* or *everything* as a subject, often used to reassure and comfort someone who is sick, hurt or emotionally distressed (*it / that / everything is OK*),

[prm]: permission, a subcategory of the above, usually in a question with impersonal *it* as a subject (*Is it OK if...?*),

[vb]: adverbial use of *OK* after some verbs.

In the first three categories, [dm], [Eagr] and [agr], *OK* is used in isolation to open or to close a statement; [dm] and [Eagr] correspond to what Schiffrin (1987, p. 33) calls “brackets” (cf. §2.2 above); [dm] is usually followed by a comma (e.g., HP3-10), while [Eagr] is always preceded by a comma and followed by a question mark (e.g., HP5-80).

OK is a predicative adjective either with a personal subject in [wb] (e.g., HP3-5) and [nrm] (e.g., HP6-15), or with an impersonal subject in [it] (e.g., HP6-24) and [prm] (e.g., HP3-9); the verb preceding *OK* is usually *be*, but *look*, *sound* or *smell* can also occur; *OK* is found in one compound adjective, *OK-looking* (HP6-2), used predicatively; *OK* does not occur as an attributive adjective in the corpus.

In [vb], *OK* is an adverb after verbs such as *find*, *make*, *get back*, *turn out*, etc. (e.g., HP7-4).

The tag [x] was added to signal that the speaker is lying, typically saying that they are *OK* while it is obvious that they are not, or agreeing half-heartedly (e.g., HP5-81) or against their will (e.g., HP7-7); [x] co-occurs mainly with [wb] and [agr], and sometimes with [Eagr] when the speaker adopts an aggressive or defensive attitude (e.g., HP7-15).

Table 4 presents the number of occurrences of each tagged category: among the 283 occurrences, *OK* is used as a discourse marker in 53%, of which 28% as S1 (21% at the beginning and 7% at the end of a statement) and 25% as S2 to express agreement; *OK* is a predicative adjective in 44%, of which 26% with a personal subject and 18% with an impersonal subject; *OK* is an adverb in 3% of the occurrences. Of the 283 occurrences only 34 (12%) are translated with “O.K.” in French (cf. §3.2.4).

Tags	Type of <i>OK</i>	Number of occurrences in the original			FR
[dm]	discourse marker, beginning of statement or change of topic	60	21%	53%	19
[Eagr]	discourse marker, end of statement, eliciting agreement	20	7%		3
[agr]	expressing agreement	69	25%		10
[wb]	well-being, one's own or concern for other people's, including safety from harm or danger	63	22%	44%	0
[nrm]	normality	11	4%		0
[it]	<i>OK</i> with impersonal subjects	44	16%		2
[prm]	permission	6	2%		0
[vb]	adverbial use of <i>OK</i> after a verb	9	3%	3%	0
Total		283	100%		34

Table 4: The occurrences of *OK* in its different functions in the original and in the French translation.

3.2.2. *OK* vs *all right*, *right* and *fine*

A quantitative comparison of *OK* with *all right*, *right* and *fine* in the corpus revealed 1003 occurrences for the four together, with an overall proportion of over one-quarter (28%) for *OK* alone.

Table 5 below shows some surprising differences between the books. The 5 occurrences of *OK* in book one are very low compared with *all right* (44) and *right* (15); the explanation may lie in the year of publication of book one, 1997, which was a turning point in the evolution of the overall frequency of use of *OK* vs *all right*. The peak (36%) in books three and four, which were published at the turn of the century, parallels the peak in the overall frequency of use of *OK*; the subsequent slight decline of *OK*, 31%, 19% and 25% in books five, six and seven (published in 2003, 2005 and 2007, respectively) is also consistent with the data from the Google Books Ngram Viewer (cf. §2.1 above).

Book	<i>OK</i>		<i>all right</i>		<i>right</i>		<i>fine</i>		Total	
HP1	5	7%	44	65%	15	22%	4	6%	68	8 ‰
HP2	20	27.5%	34	46.5%	13	18%	6	8%	73	8.6 ‰
HP3	44	36.5%	33	28%	29	24.5%	13	11%	119	11 ‰
HP4	64	36%	71	40%	20	11.5%	22	12.5%	177	9.3 ‰
HP5	86	31%	98	35%	40	14%	56	20%	280	11 ‰
HP6	24	19%	62	48%	25	20%	17	13%	128	7.6 ‰
HP7	40	25%	72	45.5%	18	11.5%	28	18%	158	8 ‰
Total	283	28%	414	41%	160	16%	146	14.5%	1003	9.2 ‰

Table 5: The number of occurrences of *OK*, *all right*, *right*¹² and *fine* in the seven *Harry Potter* books.

¹² The percentages add up horizontally. The symbol ‰ is explained in note 9 above.

Right was counted only as a discourse marker, capitalised at the beginning of a statement, possibly an elliptical form of *all right* or, according to Bangerter & Clark (2003, p. 219), the elliptical form of “That’s right”, marking agreement with someone’s claim.

Despite its meliorative connotations, *fine* was included in this study as another near synonym of *OK*; *fine* was only counted as a discourse marker used in isolation at the beginning of a statement and capitalised or as a predicative adjective (as in *I’m fine*), but not as an attributive adjective (as in *it’s a fine day*), the higher frequency of which would have weighted the results. *Fine* thus restricted is used only 4 times in book one and peaks at 20% in book five, in which Harry is fifteen years old, constantly angry and lying about being ... *fine*. Other characters, such as Mrs Weasley or Hagrid, also use *fine* antiphrastically.

3.2.3. Who uses *OK* in *Harry Potter* and what for?

In the corpus, 29 characters use *OK* in informal speech or writing, in situations ranging from leadership to agreement to concern for the well-being or safety of others.

Unsurprisingly, the three protagonists come first, since they speak a lot more than the other characters. Top of the list is Harry with 137 occurrences of *OK*, i.e. 48.5% of the total 283, followed by Hermione and Ron, 37 (13%) each. The gap between Harry and the other two can be explained partly by the internal focalisation on him and so his necessary presence on almost every page, sometimes in the company of both Ron and Hermione, at other times only one of them. Harry emerges as the leader in many different situations, in which he uses *OK* as a leader-specific discourse marker. Harry’s overall use of *OK* is almost equally balanced between leadership ([dm] + [Eagr]), agreement ([agr]) and well-being [wb], both his own and concern for that of others.

Fourth comes Oliver Wood, who uses *OK* 9 times (3%), which is a very high proportion for a minor character present in only a few scenes in books one, two and three. On 7 of these 9 occasions Wood, in his capacity of Quidditch captain, uses the leader-specific *OK* to address the team or prompt them into action (e.g., HP1-4 and HP3-10). Angelina Johnson, who takes over the captaincy after Wood has left the school, similarly uses *OK* 5 times.

The other characters who use *OK* are either students (Ginny 6, Neville 4, Fred 3, George 2, etc.) or adults in informal speech (Hagrid 8, Sirius 6, Charlie 3, Tonks 3, Ted Tonks 3, Mr Weasley 2, Mundungus Fletcher 2, Lupin 1, Mad-Eye Moody 1, Uncle Vernon 1). Quite predictably, Professors Dumbledore, McGonagall and Snape never use *OK*, and neither does Mrs Weasley. What they do use are tag questions to elicit agreement or adverbs (*exactly*, *certainly*) to express agreement, or else *all right* or *fine* as discourse markers; *OK* is encroaching upon all of these words as it gains ground in informal speech.

3.2.4. *OK* in translation

In the French translation of the *Harry Potter* books (Table 6 in the Appendix, p. 195), only 34 occurrences of *OK*, spelt O.K., are to be found, i.e. 12 % of the 283 in the original (HP1-FR: 1, HP2-FR: 2, HP3-FR: 0, HP4-FR: 1, HP5-FR: a peak of 21, HP6-FR: 3, HP7-FR: 6); in more than half of the 34 occurrences, it is a discourse marker: 19 [dm] and 3 [Eagr]; it is used 10 times to express agreement [agr], and twice to translate an impersonal construction [it] (Table 4); it is never used to refer to someone's well-being with a personal subject (Table 8 [wb], in the Appendix, p. 196). In French *OK* stands out as a word apart and is not syntactically integrated as an adjective. One exception is “je suis OK”, the literal translation of *I'm OK*; it does not occur in the French translation of the *Harry Potter* books; in spoken French it denotes agreement, not well-being, thus creating a false friend for a lexical unit which is quite recent in terms of linguistic evolution.

In the other translations, different spellings are to be found, e.g., *okay* in Danish and German. Swedish *okej* and Dutch *oké* are language-specific phonetic and graphic adaptations. The rate of use of *OK* varies across the languages, from very high in Swedish and Dutch to zero in Spanish, Italian and Russian, with Danish, French, German and Romanian situated in between (Table 2, cf. §3.1). The translation of *OK* in Latin poses a cultural problem, not unlike some other common words, such as *train* or *sandwich*; *OK* is rendered periphrastically by “sit ita” (‘so be it’) for agreement [agr], “audite” (‘listen’) for [dm], “bene habet” (‘that’s good’) for impersonal [it] and “nos salvos fore” (‘we shall be healthy’, i.e. ‘safe’) for *OK* as a predicative adjective with a personal subject [wb].

OK does not occur in the French and Spanish translations of book three, possibly because it had not yet come into fashion in 1999. A comparison of French vs Swedish, Danish or German for books five, six and seven (Table 7 below) confirms that Danish makes a higher use of *OK* than French, but lower than Swedish, which is consistent with the count for book one. German scores the same as French for book one, but a difference is visible in book seven, where 19 of the 40 occurrences of *OK* are translated literally in German vs only 6 in French. Remarkably, *okej* is used more frequently in book five in Swedish than *OK* in the original (104 vs 86), with *okej* translating *all right* on several occasions. One may wonder to what extent these figures reveal cultural trends and whether (the resistance to) *OK* is a pointer to the degree of (non)acceptance of American culture in a given country.

	original	FR	SV	DA	GE
HP5	86	21	71		
HP6	24	3		16	
HP7	40	6			19

Table 7: The occurrences of *OK* in the original and in the French, Swedish, Danish and German translations.

Table 8 (in the Appendix, p. 196) shows the main lexical equivalents of *OK* in the French, Spanish, Danish, Swedish and German translations. Beside cultural acceptance, linguistic aspects emerge, such as the integration of *OK* into the grammatical system of a language: it is easier to borrow a discourse marker, i.e. a word used in syntactic isolation, than an adjective or a verb with inflected forms, let alone use a borrowed item to form new words. The sole example of *OK* in a compound adjective, *OK-looking* (HP6-2, Table 3, p. 194), is translated periphrastically in French “n’est pas mal” (‘is not bad’) and in Danish “ser da okay ud” (‘looks OK’); both translations attempt to render the “neither good nor bad” quality of *OK* through different linguistic means: Danish naturalises *OK*, whereas French does not. Other striking features of the translations of *OK* are their diversity and the frequent use of *bon*, (*très*) *bien*, *bueno*, *muy bien*, *perfecto*, *estupendo*, *godt*, *bra*, *gut*, whether they are used antiphrastically or not, such words retain some positive connotations, departing from the neutrality which is present in the deep meaning of *OK* in English and suggesting the lack of a perfect equivalent of *OK* in other languages, i.e. a linguistic gap; among other possible methods to fill this gap, borrowing *OK* seems to be a ready-made expedient.

No statistics are included in Table 8, since the corpus does not cover the seven books in all of these languages. A finer study could be conducted if more sets of the seven books in translation were available, ideally in electronic format, but for copyright reasons this is still wishful thinking.

3.3. Examples from the corpus

3.3.1. Book one as a training corpus

The five occurrences of *OK* in book one (Table 2) outline the findings for the whole of the series.

3.3.1.1. *OK* to express agreement

The very first *OK* in book one expresses Harry’s agreement in response to Mrs Weasley’s suggestion that he should take a run at a solid wall to get to the platform, just as he is about to embark upon his magical journey. The eleven-year-old boy voices his nervousness with ‘*Er – OK*’. *Er* marks a moment’s hesitation before he states his agreement with *OK* and takes the momentous step, or run.

The third *OK* marks Harry’s understanding (i.e. a form of agreement): ‘*OK, got that*’, while Wood explains the rules of Quidditch.

Both occurrences are translated by *okay*, *okej* and *oké* in Danish, Swedish and Dutch, respectively, while in French and the six other languages under study they are given different equivalents, e.g., *oui*, *d'accord* and *d'accord, compris* in French (Table 8 [agr]).

3.3.1.2. *OK* in impersonal sentences

Harry is the first to leap through the trapdoor and into the unknown and he calls to reassure his friends: *'It's OK! [...] you can jump'*. Here *OK* is a predicative adjective; its use is similar to its historical appearance in the *Boston Evening Transcript* (cf. §1 above), meaning that the situation represented by impersonal *It* is as expected (i.e. in compliance with the speaker's norm), neutral (i.e. neither positive nor negative); in the present context, no danger is apparent, so it seems safe for the other two to join him; that appearances are misleading does not affect the analysis of *OK*.

The translated equivalents are *C'est O.K.!* in French, *Det er OKEJ!* in Swedish and *Alles oké!* in Dutch, but do not include *OK* in the other languages under study.

OK with impersonal *It*, *that* or *everything* occurs 44 times (16%) in the corpus and is translated with *O.K.* in French only twice (Table 4); other equivalents are presented in table 8.

3.3.1.3. *OK* to express well-being or safety

Safety from danger can also be expressed with *OK* as a predicative adjective with a personal subject, e.g., *'I think we'll be OK'*, where Harry is optimistic about the outcome, i.e. his expectations are positive and his appreciation of the situation is in compliance with them.

There are 63 occurrences of this use of *OK* in the corpus, i.e. 22% (Table 4). In no other language is *OK* used in this context, cf. "je crois qu'on va s'en tirer" in French (Table 8 [wb]).

3.3.1.4. *OK* as a discourse marker

Oliver Wood, the captain of the Quidditch team, uses *OK* at the beginning of his pep talk before the match. No one has spoken before and *OK* serves as an initial bracket (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 31, cf. also §2.2 and §3.2.1) or a form of vertical transition (cf. note 2, §2.2).

This particular *OK* is omitted in the French translation, but features in the Danish, Swedish, Dutch, German and Romanian, thus confirming that *OK* as a discourse marker had already been borrowed in several languages in the years preceding 2000.

Wood uses *OK* as an initial bracket once in book two and four times in book three. In book five, which was published in 2000, the new captain Angelina Johnson uses initial *OK* four times and *All right* once. In French, two more of Wood's *OKs* are omitted, while two of Angelina's are translated as *O.K.*, the others as *bon* or *alors*. The year 2000 appears as a turning point in the acceptance of *OK* as a discourse marker in French. In Swedish, the four *OKs*, as well as *All right* uttered by Angelina are translated as *Okej*.

3.3.2. Harry and Ron work on a joint project

- (1) ‘Next Monday,’ he said as he scribbled, ‘I am likely to develop a cough, owing to the unlucky conjunction of Mars and Jupiter.’ He looked up at Harry. ‘You know her – just put in loads of misery, she’ll lap it up.’

Right,’ said Harry, crumpling up his first attempt and lobbing it over the heads of a group of chattering first-years into the fire. ‘OK ... on Monday, I will be in danger of – er – burns.’

‘Yeah, you will be,’ said Ron darkly, ‘we’re seeing the Skrewts again on Monday. OK, Tuesday, I’ll ... erm ...’

[...] ‘And on Wednesday, I think I’ll come off worst in a fight.’

‘Aaah, I was going to have a fight. OK, I’ll lose a bet.’

‘Yeah, you’ll be betting I’ll win my fight ...’

- FR – Tu la connais, avec elle, il suffit de raconter tout un tas de malheurs et elle gobe tout.
 – Tu as raison, approuva Harry. [...]
 – Bon, alors... dit-il, lundi, je vais probablement subir... heu... voyons... des brûlures.
 – Ça, ça risque d’être vrai, dit Ron d’un air sombre. Lundi, on va retrouver les Scrounts à pétard.
 Passons à mardi, maintenant... Je vais... heu... [...]
 – Ah, et mercredi, je crois que je vais me faire casser la figure dans une bagarre.
 – Moi aussi, je voulais faire le coup de la bagarre. On va remplacer par un pari que j’aurai perdu.
 – Oui, parce que tu auras parié que ce serait moi qui sortirais vainqueur de la bagarre...

The three occurrences of *OK* above [emphasis mine] are from book four, Chapter 14, in which Harry and Ron make up predictions for their divination homework. In this joint project, *OK* is used as a discourse marker for vertical transition, i.e. the speakers’ agreement with each other, along with a change of topic. *Right* appears as a synonym of *That’s right*, expressing agreement. *Yeah*, *er* and *and* are continuation markers and *Aaah* shows appreciation. The French translation does not include *OK* and replaces most discourse markers with circumlocutions.

3.3.3. Harry takes on leadership

Although Harry has lead Ron and Hermione in every adventure since the encounter with Fluffy in book one, it is in book five that he is officially elected leader at the first meeting of the DA (Dumbledore’s Army); he uses *OK* in a vertical transition to resume his talk after several interruptions and digressions. This *OK* is preserved in both French and Swedish:

- (2) Smith did not move. Nor did anybody else.
 ‘OK,’ said Harry, his mouth slightly drier than usual with all these eyes upon him, ‘I reckon we should all divide into pairs and practise.’
- FR – O.K., reprit Harry, la bouche un peu plus sèche que d’habitude en voyant tous ces regards tournés vers lui. Nous allons former des équipes de deux et nous mettre au travail.
- SV “Okej”, sa Harry [OM], med allas blickar på sig. “Jag tycker att vi borde dela upp oss i par och öva.”

The end of book five provides a touchstone for Harry's leadership against his will, as five members of the DA insist on accompanying him in the expedition to the Ministry of Magic; after many an attempt to dissuade them, he gives the signal for departure, using *OK*, which again is preserved in both French and Swedish:

- (3) "We all ready, then?"
They all nodded and he saw five pairs of knees tighten beneath their robes.
"OK ..." He looked down at the back of his Thestral's glossy black head and swallowed. "Ministry of Magic, visitors' entrance, London, then", he said uncertainly. "Er ... if you know ... where to go ..."
FR – Bon, vous êtes prêts ? [...] O.K....
SV "Är vi klara då?" [...] "Okej ..."

Once inside the Ministry, Harry continues to be the leader and to use *OK* as a vertical transition marker, which is preserved in Swedish, but not in French:

- (4) "Let's go", he whispered, and he led the way down the corridor, Luna right behind him, gazing around with her mouth slightly open. "OK, listen", said Harry
FR – Allons-y, murmura-t-il. [...] Bon, écoutez, dit Harry
SV "Kom, så går vi" [...] "Okej, hör på nu", sa Harry
- (5) "Good thinking", said Harry. "OK, let's try this one" –
FR – C'était une bonne idée, dit Harry. Essayons celle-ci, maintenant.
SV "Smart idé", sa Harry. "Okej, vi försöker med den här [...]"

3.3.4. *OK* as a topic-closing discourse marker

While *OK* as an initial bracket is used by a leader to initiate a topic or to prompt others into action, *OK* as a final bracket is used to establish or re-establish peace through agreement and/or to close a topic, sometimes aggressively or submissively or with some other emotion; in this use *OK* is not always preserved in translation:

- (6) "Who suspects me?" said Malfoy angrily. "For the last time, I didn't do it, OK? [...]" (HP6)
FR – Qui me soupçonne ? répliqua Malefoy avec colère. Je vous répète que je n'y suis pour rien, O.K. ?
SV "Hvem mistænker mig?" spurgte Malfoy vredt. "For sidste gang, det var ikke mig, okay?"
- (7) "I – oh, all right", she said desperately. "You go and get the Invisibility Cloak and we'll meet you at the end of Umbridge's corridor, OK?" (HP5)
FR – Je... Bon, d'accord, dit-elle, résignée. Va chercher la cape d'invisibilité et on se retrouve au bout du couloir d'Ombrage, O.K. ?
SV "Jag ... ja, okej då", sa hon uppgivet. "Gå och hämta osynlighetsmanteln så möter vi dig i änden av Umbridges korridor, okej?"
- (8) "Give it a rest, OK? He can make up his own mind." (HP5)
FR – Laisse-le un peu tranquille, tu veux ? Il est capable de décider tout seul.
SV "Lägg av nu, ya? Han kan bestämma själv."

- (9) “Harry, let’s go, OK?” said Hermione more forcefully. (HP5)
 FR – Harry, allons-nous-en, d’accord ? répéta Hermione avec insistance.
 SV “Harry, kom nu, låt oss gå härifrån! [OM]” sa Hermione med ännu större eftertryck.
- (10) “You’ll be safe once you’re in the grounds”, said Tonks, casting a careful eye around at the deserted road. “Have a good term, OK?” (HP5)
 FR – Bon trimestre ! [OM]
 SV “Hej då och hoppas ni får en bra termin!”
- (11) “If you keep groping her every chance you get–”
 “It won’t happen again”, said Harry harshly. “OK?” (HP7)
 FR – Ça n’arrivera plus, coupa Harry d’un ton brusque. [OM]
 GE “Das kommt nicht noch mal vor”, sagte Harry schroff. [...] “Okay?”

4. Conclusion

The use of *OK* has grown exponentially in American English and spread to British English as well as many other languages. The international expansion of *OK* seems to be due to broad cultural influence and the advent of computers rather than literary translation.

This paper has identified the deep meaning of *OK* as “neutral conformity to a standard”; it is present in its occurrences in context in English, but imperfectly preserved in translation.

All right and to a certain extent *right* and *fine* are near synonyms of *OK*. The evolution of the frequencies of use of *OK* and *all right* seem to be inversely proportional with time. *Fine* as a discourse marker is used mainly antiphrastically when the speaker is angry, or untruthfully to reassure another by concealing an alarming fact.

In the *Harry Potter-OK* corpus, *OK* is used only in informal speech or writing, mainly by Harry, Ron, Hermione or other students, rarely by adults and never by those who use a formal register in speech. In terms of grammar and function, *OK* occurs mainly as a predicative adjective with a personal or impersonal subject, to state or inquire about well-being, health, absence of injury, safety in a dangerous situation, etc.; *OK* is also often found as a discourse marker at the beginning or end of a statement to signal a change of subject, prompt into action or elicit agreement; another use of *OK* is to express agreement, sincere or constrained; impersonal phrases containing *OK* are often used to comfort or reassure, or to ask for permission; *OK* was never found as a verb and rarely as an adverb, after verbs such as *find*, *make*, *get back*, *turn out*, etc.; the one instance of *OK* in a compound adjective, *OK-looking*, illustrates the syntactic flexibility of *OK* and its advanced integration into the linguistic system of English; reinforcement, as in *it’s all OK*, shows that *OK* has lost the etymological connection with the intensifier *all*.

The most striking features of the translated corpus are the different rate of naturalisation of *OK* in different languages, the linguistic diversity of its translations and the meliorative – though often antiphrastic – equivalents, e.g., *bon, très bien, bueno, va bene, gut*, in French, Spanish, Italian and German, which seem linguistically unequipped to express well-being or agreement in a neutral fashion; last but not least, *OK* as a discourse marker is sometimes omitted in translation.

The data suggest that in English *OK* occupies a semantic node of its own to signify “normal conformity to a standard”, having pushed aside other linguistic markers, and it may be doing the same in some other languages such as Swedish, and to a lesser extent Danish and German. In French and Spanish, despite its attested use in informal conversation, *OK* seems to be a superfluous, though fashionable, Americanism competing with various native words; in the translations of the *Harry Potter* books in these languages *OK* is rare or even non-existent; the reasons may lie beyond the field of linguistics, in the translators’ effort at linguistic purity or the publishers’ guidelines.

References

- Bangerter, A. & Clark, H. (2003). Navigating joint projects with dialogue. *Cognitive Science*, 27, 195-225.
- Beach, W. (1993). Transitional regularities for “casual” “Okay” usages. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 19, 325-352.
- Condon, S. (2001). Discourse ok revisited: Default organization in verbal interaction. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 33, 491-513.
- Depierre, A. (2005). De la distinction entre synonymes : Étude de cas en anglais et en français dans le domaine médical. *Traduire*, 206, 85-113.
- Depierre, A. (2014). Harry Potter in True Translation. *Forum* 12(2), 1-24.
- Depierre, A. (2018). Laughing matters: Humour and comic relief across cultures and their use in the first *Harry Potter* and its French translation. *Reflexion(s)*. <http://reflexions.univ-perp.fr/>
- Fraser, B. (1999). What are discourse markers? *Journal of Pragmatics*, 31, 931-952.
- Google Books Ngram Viewer: <https://books.google.com/ngrams/>
- Guillaume, G. (1964). *Langage et science du langage*. Laval : Presses de l’Université de Laval.
- Huddleston, K. & Fairhurst, M. (2013). The pragmatic markers anyway, okay, and shame: A South African English corpus study. *Stellenbosch Papers in Linguistics Plus*, 42, 93-110.
- Lapaire, J.-R. & Rotgé, W. (1991). *Linguistique et grammaire de l’anglais*. Toulouse : Presses Universitaires du Mirail.
- Metcalf, A. (2011). *OK: The Improbable Story of America’s Greatest Word*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Read, A. (1963). The first stage in the history of O.K. *American Speech*, 38(1), 5-27.

Schiffrin, D. (1987). *Discourse markers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Primary sources

J.K. Rowling's seven *Harry Potter* books 1997-2007, in the original Bloomsbury edition and in the Scholastic edition, their French translation by J.-F. Ménard and translations into several other European languages. The detailed list can be furnished upon request.

Appendix

HP2-17	“Ginny’s OK! I’ve got her!”	Harry	S1	wb
HP2-20	“Call me at the Dursleys’, OK?”	Harry	S1	Eagr
HP3-5	“Are you sure you’re OK, Harry?” said Hermione, watching Harry anxiously.	Hermione	S1	wb
HP3-9	“[...] I mean, will it be OK if I – if I go to Hogsmeade?”	Harry	S1	prm / it
HP3-10	“Brilliant!” [...] “OK, team, let’s go for it!”	Wood	S1	dm
HP3-25	Hermione poked her head around the door. “OK”, she whispered, “no one there – cloak on –”	Hermione	S1	dm / prm
HP3-26	“It’s OK, Scabbers!” said Ron. “No cats! There’s nothing here to hurt you!”	Ron	S1	it
HP3-44	“Oh, cheer up, Harry!” said Hermione sadly. “I’m OK”, said Harry quickly. “Just thinking about the holidays”.	Harry	S2	wb x
HP4-4	“Ron, it’s all OK, the Muggles say I can come”.	Harry	W	it
HP4-9	“Fred, George and Ginny got back OK, but the others –”	Charlie	S1	vb
HP4-11	“Well, they’re OK!” said Ron angrily, looking at Harry’s robes.	Ron	S1	nrm
HP5-5	“[...] wand still in your jeans? Both buttocks still on? OK, let’s go. <i>Locomotor trunk.</i> ”	Tonks	S1	dm
HP5-38	“[...] all together, come on – <i>Impervius!</i> OK. Let’s go.”	Angelina	S1	dm
HP5-41	“Well”, said Harry [...]. “This is the place we’ve found for practice sessions, and you’ve – er – obviously found it OK.”	Harry	S1	vb
HP5-43	‘OK, stop!’ Harry shouted. “Stop! STOP!”	Harry	S1	dm
HP5-75	Every moment [...] was precious; he did not have time to argue. “OK, fine, it’s your choice”, he said curtly	Harry	S2	agr x
HP5-80	“Harry, lets go, OK?” said Hermione more forcefully.	Hermione	S1	Eagr
HP5-81	“OK”, he said, but did not move.	Harry	S2	agr x
HP5-83, 84, 85	“But that’s OK, is it?” yelled Harry [...] “It’s OK for Snape to hate my dad, but it’s not OK for Sirius to hate Kreacher?”	Harry	S1	prm / it
HP6-2	“I mean, Tonks is OK-looking when she isn’t doing stupid things to her hair and her nose, but –”	Ron	S1	nrm
HP6-24	“Sir – it’s OK, sir, you’re going to be all right, don’t worry –”	Harry	S2	it
HP7-4	“Well, at least we got you back OK”, said George.	George	S1	vb
HP7-7	“If you keep groping her [...]” “It won’t happen again”, said Harry harshly. [...] “OK?”	Harry	S2	Eagr x
HP7-15	“Right, we’ve got a few questions for you”, Harry told Mundungus, who shouted at once. “I panicked, OK?”	Mundungus Fletcher	S2	Eagr x
HP7-33	“OK, don’t touch anything!” said Harry desperately	Harry	S2/ S1	agr / dm
HP7-40	“It’s all right”, Ginny was saying. “It’s OK. We’re going to get you inside. [...] It’s going to be all right.”	Ginny	S1	it

Table 3: A sample of the tagged *Harry Potter-OK* corpus¹³, from book 2 to book 7.

¹³ The first column on the left indicates the book in which the passage occurs and its order of appearance, e.g., HP6-2 stands for the second occurrence of OK in book 6.

HP1-5	C'est O. K. !	Harry	S1	it
HP2-1	O. K., on y va	George	S1	dm
HP2-11	Harry hésita encore une fraction de seconde, puis il écrivit : « O. K. »	Harry	W2	agr
HP5-4	– Interdiction de voler de la nourriture dans le frigo. – O.K.	Harry	S2	agr
HP5-5	O.K., alors, allons-y.	Tonks	S1	dm
HP5-7	O.K., Harry... Qu'est-ce que tu veux savoir ?	Sirius	S1	dm
HP5-14	Tout est O.K.	Mad-Eye Moody	S1	it
HP5-18	O.K., dit Harry.	Harry	S2	agr
HP5-19	Je... enfin... Bon, O.K., je vais te le dire mais ne te moque pas de moi, d'accord ?	Ron	S2	agr
HP5-24	O.K., tout le monde, allons-y	Angelina	S1	dm
HP5-30	O.K., alors il faut additionner [...]	Ron	S1	dm
HP5-32	Non, reconnu Harry, non. Bon, O.K., je sais que j'ai réussi certaines choses sans aucune aide	Harry	S2	agr
HP5-38	Allez, tous ensemble : <i>Impervius !</i> O.K., allons-y.	Angelina	S1	dm
HP5-40	O.K., murmura Harry.	Harry	S1	dm
HP5-42	O.K., reprit Harry	Harry	S1	dm
HP5-49	O.K., on y va ! chuchota Fred.	Fred	S1	dm
HP5-50	O.K., répondit Harry	Harry	S2	agr x
HP4-53	OK, dit Harry avec curiosité.	Harry	S2	agr
HP5-66	O.K., reprit-elle, effrayée mais déterminée, maintenant, écoutez ce que j'ai à vous dire...	Hermione	S2	dm
HP5-67, 68	O.K., dit Harry à Hermione d'une voix agressive, O.K., si tu trouves le moyen de le faire vite, je marche avec toi	Harry	S2	dm
HP5-70	O.K., dit Hermione.	Hermione	S2	dm / agr
HP5-72	[...] et on se retrouve au bout du couloir d'Ombrage, O.K.	Hermione	S1	Eagr
HP5-77	O.K...	Harry	S1	dm
HP5-81	O.K., dit-il, mais il ne bougea pas.	Harry	S2	agr x
HP6-7	Je vous répète que je n'y suis pour rien, O.K. ?	Draco	S1	Eagr x
HP6-9	O.K., dit Harry	Harry	S2	dm
HP6-13	O.K., dit Harry.	Harry	S1	dm
HP7-7	Ça n'arrivera plus, coupa Harry d'un ton brusque. [...] OK ?	Harry	S2	Eagr x
HP7-28	OK, murmura Hermione, donne-moi la cape d'invisibilité.	Hermione	S1	dm
HP7-33	OK. Ne touchez à rien ! lança Harry, affolé.	Harry	S2 / S1	agr / dm
HP7-34, 35	OK, OK, du calme ! s'exclama Neville.	Neville	S1	dm
HP7-36	OK ! s'écria-t-il pour se faire entendre de toute la salle.	Harry	S1	dm

Table 6: The 34 occurrences of *OK* in the French translation of the seven *Harry Potter* books.

Tags	FR	SP	DA	SV
[dm]	[omission] O.K. Bon Alors (écoutez) Et maintenant Vas-y / Allons-y	Bueno Muy bien Vamos Arríba [omission]	Okay Det er okay Godt	Okej Fint Kör för det
[Eagr]	d'accord ? O.K. ?	[omission]	okay? siger jeg jo! ikke? [omission]	okej? va? förstår du? förstås
[agr]	d'accord Tu as raison O.K. / Bon, O.K. Très bien C'est entendu	de acuerdo vale listo perfecto ya, ya	okay fint godt	okej Som ni vill då
[wb]	X ¹⁴ va bien / X va bien ? Comment va X ? Ça va / Ça va ? Tu n'es pas malade ? Tu n'es pas blessé ? Comment tu te sens ? Tu es sûr que ça va ? Il va / devrait guérir (bientôt) on va s'en tirer / sortir pas de problèmes (avec)	Estoy bien ¿Te encuentras bien? ¿Seguro que estás bien ? Se pondrá bien Nos vamos a escapar	Har du det godt i- gen? X, er du okay? X nok skal komme sig Vi er sluppet fra ham	Är det okej med X? Är det bra med dig? Är du okej? Hur är det (med dig då), X? vi klarar oss X klarar sig fint ingen fara (med) Det är ingen fara
[it]	Tout va (très) bien Tout ira bien Ça va aller Ce n'est pas grave Ce n'est rien Ça n'a pas d'importance Du calme Ne t'inquiète pas C'est O.K. !	No temas No te preocupes Estupendo Ha sido la mejor manera. Todo (saldrá) bien Todo irá de perlas [omission]	Det er helt i orden Det skal nok gå Nej bare rolig	Det är (helt) okej Allt är okej
[other]	Tu peux y aller possible intéressant assez facilement X ne sent pas trop mau- vais	podría	ordentligt	X är okej det är okej X luktar okej Går det bra om ...?

Table 8: The types of *OK*, with samples of their equivalents in other languages.

¹⁴ The letter X stands for a person's name or a personal pronoun.