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Difficulties in translating movie titles

Today, cinema is one of the main spheres of sought-after areas of popular culture. The popularity of a movie largely depends on how its name or title has been translated. The title is the first thing that people notice while going past advertisements or billboards. It should attract the attention and interest the target audience.

Translation of movie titles is considered to be one of the most difficult types of cross-language communication, as it requires a translator not only an excellent knowledge of the languages, but also a creative approach, awareness of cultural demands of the target audience.

At best, the title, which turns out to be the beginning of what is happening on the screen, determines the key image of the movie. But, unfortunately, very often the Russian version of the film name is largely inferior to the original title. Since the title is a certain marketing move that helps to orient the product to a commercial effect, translators often ignore the basic principles of matching the title to the movie content.

Reflecting on the choice of the title, the author should take into account the features of a potential viewer [3]. In this case, the title role in different spectator circles is different. If the name of the director or screenwriter is the decisive factor in the choice of the movie for the elite viewer, then for the consumer of popular culture the main guideline is the film name.

That is why in our country, movie titles are not invented by translators and specialists in the field of cross-cultural communication but by distributors.

The title adaptation is not only word translation, but also translation of ideas. In order not to lose the marketing content of the title, as well as preserve the originality, you should interpret the content of the title, not copy it. However, it is worth noting that some of the names can be successfully transferred to the Russian language with the help of traditional methods of translation, in particular, lexical (transcription, transliteration, calculation, lexical replacement) and grammatical translation transformations (syntactic assimilation, sentence division, compensation) [2].

So, while analyzing movie titles, certain ways of their translation can be specified. The material for the study was the headlines of English-language films, both classical and modern ones.

Direct translation of English-language movie titles into Russian. Basically, this principle refers to the names of films where there are no untranslatable specific features (exoticism, barbarism and special realities of the cultural environment). These are mostly names consisting of one or 2-3 word forms [1]. For example: "Titanic", "Gladiator", "Fight Club", "Casino", etc. Direct translation widely uses such techniques as transliteration and transcription of proper names: "Forrest Gump", "Jason Bourne", "John Wick", etc. Such a translation is the most popular one as it is the simplest and the most correct in the content.

Title transformation. Recently, transformations have been investigated from the point of cognitive process features, and ones of the cultural picture of the world reflected in feature films. It should be noted that many movie titles are translated with the expansion of information by replacing or adding lexical elements [4]. Such methods fill semantic or genre lack of direct translation in the title.

Let's consider "007: Coordinates "Skyfall" by Sam Mendes, the original film has the title "Skyfall". The title of the movie is translated with the addition of the numeral "007" which immediately gives the viewer an idea that in front of him there is a movie about the English agent James bond, as well as the word "coordinates" which bears the function of the place where the scenery is laid (Skyfall is the name of the Bond estate).

The interesting thing is that as soon as the original movie becomes known, unofficial translations of the headline appeared on the Internet. For example, one of them was "And the heavens will fall" i.e.

the translator tried to literally reflect the meaning of the film without knowing the details of the plot. It turned out, one was deeply mistaken.

Another example of this strategy is the translation of the movie title «Крепкий орешек» ("die Hard»). If the translation was literal, the movie would be named «Умереть тяжело». However, native English speakers know that "Die Hard" is an idiom referring to an assertive and persistent person, therefore, the movie is called "Die Hard".

As part of the same approach, one can single out a group of films that have been named using the transliteration technique. These are mostly fantastic films of recent years: "Interstellar", "Oblivion", but there are also such names that have already become well-established, for example, "Batman".

Replacing movie titles. Despite the basic requirements for translators, there are a lot of cases of changing film names in translation. In such situations, there is a method of full lexical and sometimes lexical-semantic substitution. This translation group is unique. Russian distributors seek to reflect the meaning of the picture in its title to prepare a trusting viewer to what will be shown even before the movie starts. Sometimes distributors (giving color to the title) change it in such a way that the original idea of a producer or screenwriter is completely changed, and compared to the first version looks awkward. It is not surprising that articles have appeared on the Internet, which criticize one or another name.

To demonstrate this strategy, refer to the table below:

Rental name	Original name	Correct translation
«Первый мститель: Другая война»	«Captain America: Winter Soldier»	«Капитан Америка: Зимний солдат»
«Цель номер один»	«Zero Dark Thirty»	«Нулевая видимость 30»
«Повелитель бури»	«The Hurt Locker»	«Ящик боли»
«Поймай толстуху, если сможешь»	«Identity Thief»	«Кража личности»
«На игле»	«Trainspotting»	«Трейнспоттинг»
«Форсаж»	«Fast and Furious»	«Быстрые и разъяренные»
«Иллюзия обмана»	«Now you see me»	«Сейчас ты видишь меня»
«Джонни Д.»	«Public Enemy»	«Враги общества»
«Мой парень – псих»	«Silver Linings Playbook»	«Пьеса со счастливым концом»

There is another group of translations which stands apart from the above-mentioned ones. It deals with film names which the translation at first glance looks right to the native speaker, but a detailed analysis can reveal mismatch.

Such a discrepancy is found in the title of Quentin Tarantino's "Death Proof". In the literal translation, we find the correctness of this name, but, in fact, "Death Proof" means "death resistance" of the main character's car (e.g. like waterproof). He himself reports this more than once throughout the film. But because of the illiteracy of translators, the name "Proof of death (Доказательство смерти)" is firmly fixed in the rental [5].

The distortion of the content of Christopher Nolan's "Inception" can be seen in its Russian version "Начало". In the dictionary you can find this translation of the word, and it's true to the point.

Thus, the analysis of the translation of film titles shows that the choice of a particular translation strategy is influenced by a number of reasons. The principal consideration is the impossibility of transferring the pragmatic meaning of the original text due to the presence or absence of "background knowledge" of the culturological context of foreign viewers, but there are also some cases when Russian film distributors try to convey the meaning of the film in its title, deliberately distorting it, in order to make the picture more successful at the rental.

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