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The challenges of film translation from English to Russian

Mass culture is a significant part of an average person's life and every day people deal with sources of it including films, music, television programs and radio shows. Cinema has an impact on every aspect of a person's life and it also has entered the profession of a translator. Translation demands a deep understanding of the rules of a language and the habits of the people who speak it. [2] It may be challenging to take into consideration both cultural and linguistical factors while translating a film and still end up with the original context.

There are certain types of translation which can be distinguished in two groups such as dubbing and subtitling. These two processes include localization of films into local languages. One specializes in an audio format and the other represents a text format. Dubbing is the translation of the audio into different languages whereas subtitling deals with making translated texts at the bottom of a film screen.

The most common aspects which make the translation of films difficult include slang, idioms, untranslatable words, cultural differences, phrasal verbs and humour. [3] Slang is an informal language which is often used by people who belong to a particular group. [4] It is the translator's job to come up with a slang that has the same meaning as the original one or end up doing a word to word translation which often changes the initial meaning. Idioms are considered to be difficult items to translate. They explain something by unusual examples or figures of speech. The meaning of these phrases is non-literal and cannot be predicted by the definitions of the words. The untranslatable words usually have no identical words in another language and translating them directly would change their original meaning. Cultural differences are also difficult items to translate. It becomes even harder when the translator is not a native speaker of a particular language and has to do a research for additional information about cultural features of a certain country. Phrasal verbs are tough to translate from English into languages that do not use similar constructions. Phrasal verbs are composed of a verb and a preposition, an adverb or both. The most challenging part of translation is that the phrasal verb gets a different meaning after one adds a preposition or an adverb. In case the phrasal verb has more than one explanation, the translator needs context to understand the right meaning and make an accurate translation. Humor is the most challenging task for translators because the sense of humor depends on the cultural background of people and the society they were brought up in. There is a direct relation between humor and languages because language and history belong to other people. Sometimes translators cannot transmit the amusing part because there is no identical wordplay in the target language. In other cases, the cultural background of an audience does not allow them to understand the humor. Puns are considered to be a common source of humour. Pun is a joke which is made by using a word that has two meanings. [4]

Some examples of how certain phrases from films are translated into Russian language can be given.

1) Translators should know how to translate jokes closely to their meaning in the original language and make it amusing in the translated version. There are two different examples of translation of the cartoon called "Star vs. Forces of Evil" to be compared. One translation was made by Disney Channel and the other by a translator Dmitry Syenduk. [1]

I knew you would like here. This place is full of squares. Many square characters groan.

Translation by Syenduk: Я знала, что тебе это место понравится, ведь тут скучно в квадрате.

Translation by Disney: Я знала, что ты оценишь, тут полно ботаников.

2) Star (when getting the results for a test): I got an 'F' for fantastic.

Marco: That is an 'F' for fail.

Translation by Syenduk.

Стар: Я получила кол, что значит колоссально!

Марко: Вообще-то, кол – это единица.

Translation by Disney.

Стар: Я получила Ф что значит фантастично!

Марко: Вообще-то Ф – это двойка.

3) What is that fresh of breath air?

Translation by Syenduk: Кто этот модрый долодец (добрый молодец)?

Translation by Disney: Кто этот ветерок нового дуновения?

Литература

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2) Common challenges of translation [электронный ресурс]. – Режим доступа: <https://www.smartling.com/resources/101/common-challenges-of-translation/>

3) Audio-Visual (Film) Translation Challenges [электронный ресурс]. – Режим доступа: <https://dubbingking.com/audio-visual-film-translation-challenges/>

4) Cambridge dictionary [электронный ресурс]. – Режим доступа: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/>