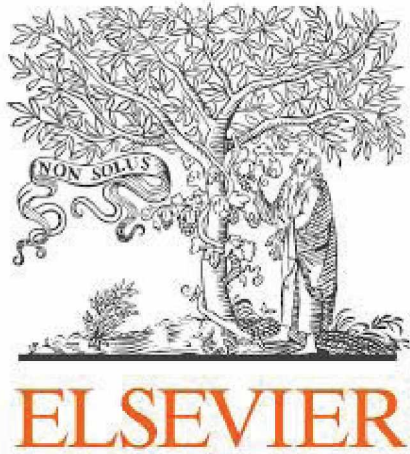




**LANGUAGE
AND
LITERATURE**



Language and Literature

Issue 4 (2), 2017

VOLUME 26



2017

Koknova Tetiana,

Luhansk Taras Shavchenko State University

Cross-cultural adaptation of English film's titles into Ukrainian

Abstract: This article is devoted to an innovative approach to manage the cross-cultural adaptation of English films' titles. This strategy can be useful for linguists who work in the sphere of cross-cultural communication. The organization of this process should take into account the two main functions (an orientation to culture, censorship and an advertising function) together.

Keywords: adaptation, cross-cultural adaptation, cross-cultural understanding, film's titles.

Modern development of the film industry is on the increase and a title plays a really significant role nowadays. The majority of linguists face a difficult task, that is to convey the meaning of a film in a word or some phrases. Therefore, there is a necessity to study some important peculiarities of the adaptation of English film's titles in order to ensure effective cross-cultural communication.

The scientific heritage has lots of material concerning the problem of the title's adaptation into different languages. However, linguists still have inconsistencies in the correct techniques because a modern approach is not always implemented in accordance with cultural factors and social norms. An insufficient theoretical and practical study of the aforementioned problem leads to the specification of some characteristic features of the adaptation of English film's titles into the Ukrainian language by reason of efficacious cross-cultural understanding.

A famous American film director, actor and producer, Martin Scorsese, says: "The name of the film fulfills a unique function. It influences the emotional perception or mood and discovers the events of the plot" [1]. Undoubtedly, the name of the film is an inevitable and formidable challenge for its creators because this phrase will be on flyers, posters, billboards, etc. Moreover, it must be printed on people's mind and take a leading place among the other major stories in the film industry. The scientists believe that the film's title fulfills five main ideas: nominative, informative; separating; expressive-appellative [2].

Analyzing the title as a cross-cultural unit, psychologists emphasize that about 80 percent of the audience pay attention only to the titles and as a result, they take their own attitude towards a film and decide whether to watch it or not [3]. The linguists who pay attention to the commercial success of the distribution of films often neglect the basic principles of a correspondence between the film's title and its content. Furthermore, a detailed analysis of a better understanding of the films' titles shows that the changes occur due to the influence of cultural and linguistic specifics of the country where a foreign film is released.

There are different ideas about the adequacy of an adaptation in the linguistic practice. In fact, the text is created within one culture, but its interpretation takes place beyond the borders of this culture, that's why other characteristic features should be taken into consideration. Consequently, the phenomenon which is called "an adaptation" becomes popular. It is one of the main factors of the adequacy of a translation from one language into another one because it takes into account national, social and cultural behavior of a special audience.

First of all, it is necessary to mention that the text is always aimed at a particular reader who is the bearer of the cultural consciousness. At the same time, an adaptation is directed at a receptor i.e. the member of a completely different cultural environment. The scientific literature emphasizes that the adaptation takes notice of social, national and cultural behavior of a peculiar audience. However, some changes are made in an approach to the adaptation with reference to the modernization of society and the modification of norms and beliefs every year. To determine the changes in different approaches to the adaptation, it was analyzed English film's titles adapted to a clear cross-cultural understanding by Ukrainians.

The material of our research is based on the names of films which have been released during two time periods. The first period is between 1960 and 1990 (includes 80 films) and the second one is between 1990 and 2016 (contains 80 films).

The analysis of the obtained results shows that the majority of films (90 percent – 80 film's titles) focused on cultural and censorial features in the period of time between 1960 and 1989. The censorship of that period depended on cultural and political peculiarities of the national context, including the moral acceptability of the text. For example, the English name of the film "Die hard" was interpreted into the Ukrainian language as "Міцний горішок". As a matter of fact, a fixed expression "Die

hard” was popular in the wartime and identified the man who fought to the finish. Today, people do not like the idea to fight to the last drop of blood that was socially acceptable in the past. An idiom “Міцний горішок” is used in the Ukrainian adaptation version and it coincides with its English original meaning. By the way, this phraseological unit is quite appropriate because it conveys the determination of a hero.

Another interesting fact is that there are some examples of the exclusion of obscene names. For instance, the name of the film “The Girl from the Naked Eye” may be paraphrased into the Ukrainian language as “Помилка тілоохоронця”. To avoid the word “оголений” a linguist has to draw his attention to a film script and find a new, transformed equivalent with its specific features in cross-cultural understanding.

There are some other striking examples of the title’s adaptation when linguists were able not only to avoid long-running disputes over the incompatibility of the title and the norms of the society, but also to give the name of the film that described the plot and captured people’s attention immediately. The English film “Some like it hot” and its Ukrainian title “А дехто любить і гарячіше” would be considered incorrect. Therefore, the film was called “В джазі тільки дівчата” in Ukraine. Generally, that phrase was repeated several times in the film. When linguists were looking for an appropriate name of the film, they decided to choose the Ukrainian title “В джазі тільки дівчата” because it perfectly covers the content of the story.

It was selected 10 percent of the film’s titles (i.e. 10 films) that were adapted by the transliteration and loan translation, that’s why they are understandable for native speakers in both a foreign language and a native language. For example, linguists used the transliteration of the English movie title “Judgment at Nurember” (“Нурембергський процес”) and the search for various correspondences of the word “judgment” during its adaptation. Considering the following examples, it should be noted that the literal change was quite appropriate and understandable in the language of interpretation, and thus adequate: “The Godfather” – “Хрещений батько”, “Apocalypse Now” – “Апокаліпсис сьогодні”, “Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?” – “Хто боїться Вірджинії Вульф?”.

A different situation is observed in the period of time between 1990 and 2016. 60 percent of the film’s titles were adapted basing on the following techniques and methods of adaptation. The philological method that has two objectives: the structure

of a foreign language is studied in comparison with its native one, as a result, it is interpreted literary; it is achieved when the learning of a foreign language is used in the adaptation of literary texts by poets or writers who do not know a foreign language at a high level. The main principle of linguists was to create the film's title which would take account of both the maintenance of the culture of communication and the censorial principles in the period from 1960 to 1989.

The results of the analysis of the second time period (1960-2016) show a great variety of genres. A large number of action films, melodramas about love, horror films and fantasy were showing in cinemas during that time. By the way, a modern film can cover any topic. All of the banned films of the period from 1960 to 1989 can hit the TV screens and will be considered socially acceptable now. Besides, it is possible to notice a growing tendency to the popularity of a series that was totally unacceptable in the first time period.

The target audience of a modern cinema is mainly aimed at young people who bring their attention to the brightest films that have no restrictions and censorship. A lot of detective films and series with violent elements such as crime, murder, theft, suicide are becoming increasingly popular today. So, what was unpopular about 50 years ago has become commonplace in recent years, especially for the youth.

It should be observed that there are 60 percent of the names (i.e. 45 film's titles) in which philologists intend to achieve a particular interpretation of the problem, namely the successful advertisement of a film with the high ratings of its release. The scholar, who has a goal of making a profit, selects a title which can be the centre of attention and can intrigue the audience, that's why this criterion has been called "purposeful".

The Ukrainian literal translation of the English film's title "Lost" is "Зарублені", but the Ukrainian film was called "Залишитися в живих". This name was formed by conversion in order to make a connection between the name of a series and a reality show "Останній герой", whose slogan was the phrase "Залишитися в живих" in Ukraine. The above-named reality show was very popular, thus the possibility of capturing people's attention increased.

Another example is the word "афера" in the Ukrainian film's title "Аферисти: Дік і Джейн розважаються" ("Fun with dick and Jane") which draws people's attention to a viewing of this film.

Philologists want to convey the precise meaning in 20 percent of the names (i.e. 30 film's titles). Their goal is to give a viewer an idea of the content of the film. For instance, a means of addition was used during the adaptation of the English film's title "Hitch", so the Ukrainian film was called "Правила зйому – Метод Хітча". The main purpose of using the addition in the name of the film was to achieve a great success on general release. The film has been named after the main character; hence the film's title expresses its main idea and attracts young people's attention due to the fact that it sounds in a foreign manner.

An additional element was used in the interpretation of the English film's title "Little Nicky", so the audience of our country, Ukraine, watched that film which was called "Нікі, диявол молодший". This title can definitely attract people's attention and increase the ratings of the film in stark contrast to the Ukrainian literal translation "Маленький Нікі".

One more example is the English film's title "House, M.D." which was translated into the Ukrainian language as "Доктор Хауз". If linguists had used the transliteration of the title, Ukrainians would not have understood the meaning of "M.D.". Therefore, taking into consideration cultural characteristics and the lack of the above-mentioned abbreviation in the Ukrainian language, "M.D." was replaced by the word "doctor" that described the major events of the film.

The transliteration and loan translation are observed in the 13 percent of the film's titles (i.e. 20 films) because they have proper names. For example, "The Green Mile" – "Зелена миля", "Forest Gump" – "Форрест Гамп", "Sherlock" – "Шерлок".

The analysis of the data shows that scholars focused on the social norms of the time period from 1960 to 1989. The norms did not always meet the plot requirements of a film, thus they were not clear for a wide audience. The orientation only on an advertising function of the title was noticed in the period of time between 1990 and 2016. Furthermore, cultural characteristics or censorial views were not taken into account.

It is essential to adopt a new approach to an effective adaptation of the film's titles after a comparative analysis. The approach must combine cultural and censorial features and go by a modern marketing strategy. It should be noted that an orientation to the cultural features of a receptor, as well as to the acceptability of the used lexical units is meant by a cultural and censorial strategy. The modern

marketing strategy that is focused on the young audience aims to profit from a release of the film.

Nowadays, it is better to combine the aforesaid strategies and take an approach to the adaptation in order to avoid the development of a lack of education and the usage of obscene words. This new approach will contribute to the production of a successful film without breaking the censorial principles and the norms of our society. Therefore, it will be possible to attract the attention of viewers of different ages and to use the aesthetic Ukrainian language in the film's title. The proof of the above-mentioned fact is the interpretation of an English well-known television series "One three hill", adapted as "Школа виживання".

The Ukrainian film's title "Школа виживання" is more understandable to the audience of our country, Ukraine, than its literal translation "Пагорб одного дерева". The Ukrainian title "Школа виживання" contains a small part of the plot of the whole film. Ukrainian linguists have used the perfect contextual replacement in this particular case. The Ukrainian name of the film "Школа виживання" reflects the main events of the plot and helps people to understand what will be discussed in the series.

To conclude, an interpreter chooses the film's title under the influence of the culture of communication. Adapting the name of the film, he has to satisfy the cultural needs of Ukrainians and reveal the main idea of the film. The main task of a scholar is to cover all important elements of the original and not to distort the adapted text. Therefore, an ideal way of the adaptation is to combine two aforementioned strategies and create a new approach which will join an orientation to culture, censorship and an advertising function together. The name of the film starts telling people its own story before being on general release, that's why the film will have a great success if its title is creating, impressive, bright and unforgettable.

References:

1. Barnwell J., *The Fundamentals of Film-making*. – Lausanne: AVA Publishing, 2008. – P. 45, 91.
2. Nida E.A., Taber C. *The Theory and Practice of Translation*. – Shanghai Foreign language education press, 2004. – P. 123.
3. Darwish Ali, *Elements of Translation: a practical guide for translators*, Melbourne: Writescop, 2010. – P. 50.