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# CLASSIFICATION OF TRANSLATORS' MISTAKES IN THE MOVIES FOR THE UKRAINIAN AUDIENCE

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This article provides brief theoretical and extended practical overview of the difficulties which arise in the process of the movies and television series translation. It might be a contribution to further development of professional competence of people who translate movie scripts. Despite English-Ukrainian mistakes were studied, obtained results can be applied to process of movie translation into other languages. This article is based on the related scientific information analysis, deep research, personal author's observations and data resulting from the conducted survey. Due to the skilled professional use of the qualitative research methods and statistical data analysis the author has managed to make important findings about state of film translation and show how it influences on the lives of ordinary people. The stated goal is to develop nonexistent before classification of causes of mistranslations in the English speaking movies adjusted to the Ukrainian viewers. The systemized reasons of mistakes are sustained by vivid examples. Furthermore, the frequency of these causes is determined and shown in the chart. Taking into consideration provided in the article data, it would be possible to overcome the most common mistakes connected with film text adaptation. In conclusion, the author emphasizes the importance of both appropriate translation and dubbing.

**Key words:** film text, movie translation, translation mistake, adaptation.

**Introduction.** It is well-known fact that nowadays cinematograph is the most widespread and popular branch of culture. However, there were shot less movies in the years of Ukraine's independence than United States of America produce in a month. In this regard, there is a inevitable demand in translating foreign movies for Ukrainian audience. It is also evident that success of movie distribution is highly dependent upon the quality of translation, which in its turn depends on translator's qualification and responsibility. Unfortunately, long-term experience of screening English speaking movies to Ukrainian people shows that our viewers are often not able to have the same enjoyment as native English speakers, which is translator's fault.

Linguists have been interested in movie phenomenon in the context of its language and stylistic organization, as well as translation patterns. As a result, there is a lot scientific information related to lingual features of the film text, however, it is not represented in translation models, as their creation is complicated by genre peculiarities of each particular movie. Consequently, the idea of a film scene or even the whole movie might be distorted.

**The relevance of the research** lies in the necessity in systematic study of the translator's mistakes present in English movies and television series taking into account their causes and searching the ways of their elimination. Furthermore, it might be contribution to the theory of translation and might decrease translator's imperfections in practice.

**The object** is to determine causes of mistakes in films' and series' translation from English language to Ukrainian and Russian languages by analyzing and systemizing typical mistranslations. In order to realize this object, the following scopes of research were defined:

– To discover typical mistakes in translation of English movies into Ukrainian and Russian;

– To systemize indicated mistakes by linguistic levels;

– To classify causes of mistranslations.

**Aspects of the movies translation**. Separate issues of social, cultural and linguistic film text peculiarities are covered in works of national and international linguists. Y. M. Lotman, G. G. Slushkina, U. Eco, U. N. Tunyanova, Y. G. Tsuvian and others give the definition of the film text, its characteristics as language phenomenon, describe linguistics and structural special aspects. It is also mentioned, that the main idea of semiotic approach towards film text is presence of own language in the movies, which can be described in terms of syntax and grammar [1]. M.O. Yefremova points out that language in the movies is represented by linguistic and non-linguistic constituents. Linguistic part includes written share (subtitles and lettering) and dubbing (actor's phrases, off-camera text, songs) [6, p. 17-18]. Whereupon, universal text categories, which are essential for any literary text, are peculiar to the linguistic part of the movies [2] and they could be taken into consideration in process of translation.

However, as the necessity to adapt foreign movies rises, in particular, linguistic part of the film text, the translator faces linguistic and technical challenged, which may affect on appropriateness and equivalence of translation in addition to synchronization [4]. As the practice shows, it is not always possible to eliminate these difficulties and avoid mistakes, which might be divided into the following categories:

1. Non-essential mistakes in the translation of a word;
2. Inadmissible mistakes in translation of a key word;
3. Non-essential mistakes due insubstantial transformation of a structure;
4. Substantial mistake due to significant transformation of a structure [5].

Presence of these mistakes results in misrepresentation of director's ideas, which he wanted to deliver to the audience. Moreover, it is the reason of incorrect understanding and intussusceptions of the motion picture. It is confirmed by a survey conducted in fall of 2012. 273 people aged between 17-23 were asked to answer questions about quality of movies' translation. Responds' analyzing resulted in the following findings:

1. Majority (61,3 %) of respondents claim that there are some incomprehensible moments in foreign movies, which in 40,1% cases arise due to inaccurate or inexplicit for the viewer translation (fig.1);

2. More than 75% of surveyed stated that they had mentioned translator's mistakes (fig.2), while in 34% cases these mistakes did not affect on the film perception.

3. 55,5% of respondents think that there are considerably greater number of mistakes in Ukrainian translation compared to Russian. Obtained results confirm that problem does not stay unnoticed.
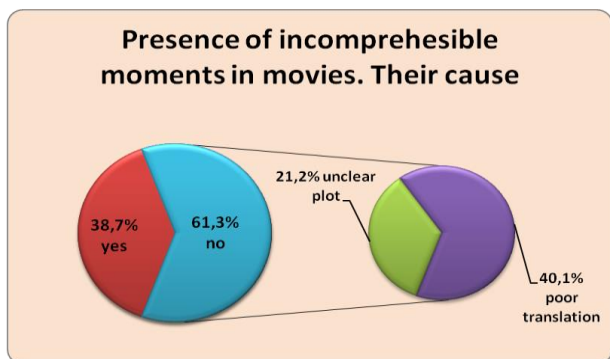
Figure 1                                                Figure 2

**Classification of translator's mistakes in translation of the movies**. According to the need to define causes of mistranslations' emergence, analyzed mistakes may de systemized into the following categories:

1.      Mistakes that arise because of **translators' unskillfulness**, that is translator does not understand initial sense of the utterances and is unable to interpret them. Examples of these type mistakes in the film text translation are provided below:

a) *- Out of 350 planes, we have lost only 29. We are prepared to launch a third wave, Admiral.*

*- We no longer have surprise. We will withdraw the third wave. (Pearl Harbor, 2001)*

*Off-air translation (OAT): -* **Из 350 самолетов осталось 29. Мы преподали им урок, Адмирал.**

**- Для них это было настоящим сюрпризом. Их флот утонул в волнах.** This translation angles the original sense, which had to sound like:

- Из 350 самолетов мы потеряли только 29. Мы готовим к пуску третью волну, Адмирал.

- Нам больше нечему удивляться. Мы отменяем третью волну.

b) - Still friends?

- **Only if you give me what I want** (*appropriate translation*: Только если дашь мне то, чего я хочу). *(Sweet November, 2001)*

*OAT:* - Всё еще друзья?

**- Когда я хочу, тогда и будем друзями.**

c) - I hope **I can eat all this** (*AT*: Я надеюсь, что смогу это все съесть). *(Sweet November, 2001)*

*OAT:* - Я думаю, **что это все съедобно**.

d) - I have **fallen from grace** with the world (*AT*: Я стал изгоем). *(Crawlspace, 1986)*

OAT: - Я **достиг совершенства** в мире.

e): - And what is your name, please?

- Hercule Poirot.

- **Come again** (*AT*: Повторіть)?

- HERCULE POIROT! *(Agatha Christie's Poirot, 1989-2013)*

*OAT*: - Як вас представити?

-  Эркюль Пуаро.

-  **Знову прийшли?**

-  Эркюль Пуаро!

f) - I would like to ask you a few questions, Miss Jenny.

- ***Jenny will do*** (*AT*: Можно просто Дженни). *(Columbo, 1971-1978)*

*OAT*: - Я хочу задать вам несколько вопросов, мисс Дженни.

- ***Дженни ответит.***

g) - Give 'em a tip. 50 cents.

- ***Apiece*** (*AT*: каждому)? *(Columbo, 1971-1978)*

*OAT*: - Дайте им на чай 50 центов.

- ***Взять чек?***

h) - Biggles and Ginger are comrades, ***comrades-in-arms*** (*AT*: товарищи по оружию)! ( *The Thin Blue Line, 1988*)

*OAT*: - Биглз и Джинджер друзья, ***близкие друзья***!

2.     Mistakes in rendering **culture-specific vocabulary**, which has remained unintelligible to translator, and hence failed to adapt it to the Ukrainian culture.

a) - You wanna take the ***80 to Oakland*** (*AT*: автомагистраль 80), right? *(Sweet November, 2001)*

*OAT*: - Нам нужно ***километров 80 до Окленда*** проехать, да?

b) - OK. Here we go. Classics, ***Twisted Sister*** (*explanation*: Twisted Sister – достатньо відома у 80ті роки метадічна група). *(Alf, 1986-1990)*

*OAT*: - Так. Що тут у нас? Класика, ***обмануті сестри***…;

c) - Would you like to make it ***f2f*** (*explanation*: face to face – віч-на-віч). *(Wandering eye, 2011)*

*OAT*: - Натисни ***F2F***;

d) - Go to ***Saville Row*** (*explanation*: street in London). *(Agatha Christie's Poirot, 1989-2013)*

*OAT*: Йдіть ***до Севіля Роя***.

It is evident from the foregoing, that translator is not knowledgeable about specific cultural words, which are important to overcome linguistic cultural barrier. Therefore, in case of inaccurate adaptation translator causes difficulties in understanding movies by audience.

However, sometimes translator replaces culture specific units of the source language with words familiar to the target language viewers, taking into account peculiarities and traditions of that country [5]. For example, in *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005)* phrase "Do you want some ***Turkish delights*** (explanation: Turkish sweet speciality)?" was rendered as "Хочеш ***пиріжків з медом***?".

**3)** Presence in the film text **translator's false friends,** which have similar phonetic structure in the source and target languages. These interlingual homonyms are captious for the interpreter.

a) - … with a monkey, playing ***cymbals*** (*AT*: музыкальные тарелки)... *(The Phantom of the Opera, 2004)*

*OAT*: - …обезьянка, играющая на ***цимбалах***…;

b) - Oh, ***God*** (*AT*: О, Боже)! *(Predator 2, 1990)*

*OAT*: - От ***гад***!

c) - Where is my dress? *(27 Dresses, 2008)*

- Look in the ***closet*** (*AT*: шкаф), dear.

*OAT*: - Где мое платье?

- Посмотри в ***клозете***.

d) - Whatever the ***case*** (*AT*: В чому б не була справа). *(Lost, 2004-2010)*

*OAT*: - Щоб не було в цьому ***кейсі***.

e)    - Bree, your **complexion** (*AT*: колір обличчя) looks so good today! What did you do to your face? *(Desperate Housewives, 2004-2012)*

*OAT*: - Брі, твоя **комплекція** так добре виглядає сьогодні. Що ти зробила з обличчям?

- I don't want any **partisanship** (*AT*: пристрастие) on this issue. *(Elvira: Mistress of the Dark, 1988)*

*OAT*: - И чтобы никакой **партизанщины**.

**4) Word for word translation**, that is translating of an utterance not in one piece, but each part separately.  In such situations, phrase is considered to be rendered exactly, although it functions differently, as styling and shades of meaning are lost. As a result, nonexistent notions emerge, which obtain inappropriate meaning [5].

a) - The **human race** (*AT*: людство)  must be afraid. *(Predator 2, 1990)*

*OAT*: - **Людська раса**, напевно, налякана.

b) - What's the **ship number** (*AT*: позывные)? *(Pearl Harbor, 2001)*

*OAT*: - Как **называется этот корабль**?

**5) Homonyms,** the meaning of which might be confused because of the similar sounding, spelling and identity in all forms and may have the following effect:

a) – **Shells** (*AT*: набої)! Where did I see the box with **shells**?! (*The Evil Dead, 1981*)

*OAT*: - **Ракушки!** Где я видел коробку с **ракушками**?!

b) - *Whatever the case* (*AT*: В чому б не була справа). *(Lost, 2004-2010)*

*OAT*: - Щоб не було в цьому **кейсі**.

c) - I love **stinks** (*AT*: скандали). *(The Wedding Singer, 1998)*

*OAT*: - Я люблю **сморід**.

**6) Homophones** are usually defined as words that share the same pronunciation, regardless of how they are spelled. **Homophones** might become a reason of mistranslation, since they distract translator, especially, when movie is being interpreted aurally without screenplay, for instance:

a) - Curl and **Dye** (*AT*: фарбувати волосся). *(Runaway Bride, 1999)*

*OAT*: - Завейся и **умри**.

b) - In memory of my **Dad** (*AT*: тато). *(Van Helsing, 2004)*

*OAT*:  – Присвячується моїм **померлим**.

c) - **John, dear** (*AT*: дорогий, любий)! *(Lost, 2004-2010)*

*OAT*: - Джон, **олень**!

**7) Homoforms,** which are words that are pronounced alike only in certain forms (of the same or different parts of speech), for example:

a) - You should go to sleep. *(Alf, 1986-1990)*

- I can't. I'm too **wound up.** (*explanation*: wound up – бути збудженим / напруженим, to be wound**ed** – бути пораненим)

*OAT*: - Лягай спати.

- Не можу. Я дуже **поранений**.

**8)** Translator may misrecognize meanings of **synonyms**, which are characterized by multiple semes, usually related by contiguity of meaning within a semantic field.

a) - This is my **dream** (*AT*: сон)! *(Alf, 1986-1990)*

*OAT*: - Це моя **мрія**!

б) - This **arm** (*AT*: товста гілляка) could have killed us! *(Lost, 2004-2010)*

*OAT*: - Ця **рука** могла вбити нас!

**9) Paronyms** are words similar in sound, whereas the partial coincidence in outward form occurs simply by chance and is not conditioned by semantic or word-formation processes. Sometimes they are confused in movies' translation.

a) - That's ***unanimous*** (*AT*: одноголосно). *(Elvira: Mistress of the Dark, 1988)*

*OAT*: - ***Анонимное*** голосование!

b) - I'm ***retired*** (*AT*: пенсіонер). *(The Replacements, 2000)*

*OAT*: - Я ***втомився***.

In addition, sometimes not poor translation obscure the pleasure of watching movies but actor who post synchronize the film and cannot render required intonations and accents. The example is animation film Shrek. Main characters have bright accents, as donkey has Black Americans slang, cat speaks with Spanish accent and Shrek's speech resembles Scottish. However, in Russian variant all characters speak similar and, therefore, lose their originality.

**Conclusion**. Compilation of research results is shown on Fig.3, which demonstrates interrelation between examined mistakes in English movies translation for Ukrainian audience and frequency of their occurrence.
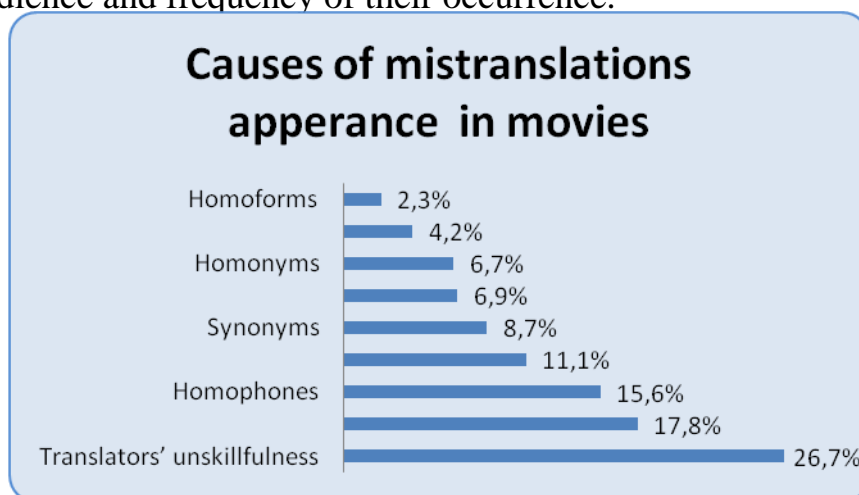


Figure 3

These figures show that majority of mistakes arise from unskillfulness and carelessness of people who adapt foreign films to Ukrainian distribution. It is important to note though that solution of this problem is connected not only with letter perfect translation but also with reflecting unique foreign culture, which is put in actor's utterances, their distinctive sounding, humor etc. Adequate translation has great impact on film dubbing, which has to correspond to genre and audience, and consequently, will influence on movie's success on the screen.

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**А. О. Артюх. Класифікація перекладацьких помилок у фільмах для української аудиторії.**

Стаття присвячена проблемі появи помилок при адаптації кінопродукції для української аудиторії. У статті поданий короткий теоретичний та детальний практичний огляд окресленої проблеми. Дана стаття базується на аналізі наукових робіт з суміжної тематики, проведеному комплексному дослідженні, власних спостереженнях автора та даних отриманих після проведення опитування щодо якості перекладу кінофільмів. Метою дослідження була систематизація та, як наслідок, розробка класифікації причин помилок фахівців при перекладі англомовних фільмів та серіалів для українського глядача. Передумови появи перекладацьких огріхів підкріплені наглядними прикладами. Крім того, частота появи визначених причини помилок підрахована та продемонстрована у діаграмі. У висновку, автор наголошує на важливості як адекватного перекладу, так і якісного дубляжу, які є запорукою успіху стрічки у прокаті.

**Ключові слова:** кінотекст, кінопереклад, перекладацька помилка, адаптація.

**А. А. Артюх. Классификация переводческих ошибок при переводе фильмов для украинской аудитории.**

Данная статья посвящена проблеме ошибок переводчиков при работе над украинским/русским вариантами фильмов и сериалов. В статье рассмотрены теоретическая и практическая стороны проблемы. Статья основана на анализе научных работ по данной тематике, проведенном комплексном исследовании, наблюдениях автора, а также результатах опроса касательно качества перевода кинофильмов. Целью исследовательской работы была систематизация и, как следствие, разработка классификации причин появления ошибок при переводе англоязычных кинофильмов для украинского зрителя. Определенные причины подкреплены наглядными примерами. Также, подсчитана частота проявления каждой причины, что продемонстрировано в диаграмме. В заключение, автор подчеркивает важность адекватного перевода в комплексе с качественным дубляжом, поскольку это является залогом успеха киноленты в прокате.

**Ключевые слова:** кинотекст, киноперевод, переводческая ошибка, адаптация.