PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology

ENGLISH FILMONYM: THE PROBLEM OF ITS TRANSLATION IN THE RUSSIAN FILM INDUSTRY

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Pankratova Svetlana A. ENGLISH FILMONYM: THE PROBLEM OF ITS TRANSLATION IN THE RUSSIAN FILM INDUSTRY -- Palarch's Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 17(7), 7939-7948. ISSN 1567-214x

Keywords: localization, filmonym, transcreation, domestication, forenization.

ABSTRACT:

The paper deals with the leading trends in the translation of English filmonyms of the last two decades. The topic is new due to the growth of international competition in the film industry, which requires the observance of language norms and authors' rights. More than 500 of filmonyms became the object under study, including television, video and animation film titles in English and American English of any genre or volume. These filmonyms are studied with the aim of evaluating the cultural and pragmatic variation between the source filmonym and its translation into the Russian language. The material of the study allows to draw conclusions regarding the perfection of the translation techniques and methods of the home film industry. The main recommendations state the need to observe the balance between source and receiving cultures. The paper implements the method of the synchronous typological comparison, which enables to correlate peculiarities, similarities and differences between filmonyms' translations. The results of the study demonstrate ten trends in modern filmonyms' translation: dramatisation, jargonizm, infernality, de-personification, explanation, misogyny, negativism, minimal word play and forenization. The paper recommends to to pay attention to the cultural clearness of the language, to offer women-friendly translations, to avoid jargon and to raise educated film-goers by elevating their minds.

INTRODUCTION

Cinema is widely known as the seventh art and its visual authenticity and persuasive power requires adequate study and evaluation which, in its turn, will elevate cinematic tastes of the general public. In connection with this the importance of the translators' attempts in rendering English filmonyms into Russian must not be underestimated. The problem of the filmonym translation is especially important in the era of globalisation, when international competition is on the rise and the language norm is often violated to suit the

economic needs of the box-office. The problem of translation in films is very topical since it is viewed as the interaction between two cultures and the reflection of foreign ideas, views and language in the home domain. The theoretical foundations of the study of filmonyms' translation is based on the theory of translation, film text semiotics, discourse theory and the study of cultural interaction. The object of study incorporates more than five hundred film titles in English, which had been differently translated in the Russian film distribution.

METHODS

The method of typological synchronous comparison is used in the analysis of localized filmonyms. It allows us to compare similarities, differences and peculiarities of filmonym translation in the cultural interaction between Russian and English languages. The method of functional analysis takes into account the degree of suitability of the translation for the home culture. In the classical theory of translation its main subject is viewed as inter-linguistic transformation of the source text into the secondary text (translatum) where the interpreter's role is to render the conceptual essence of the text adequately [Neliybin 2009]. The translation is expected to be equivalent to the original text, while the distancing from the poetic license should be maximized. There are four basic tools in the arsenal of the interpreter: transposition, change, addition and omission [Barkhudarov 1975: 191]. Russian scholar Ya. Retsker widens the circle of lexical transformations: specialisation, generalisation, defferentiation of meaning, antonymic and compensatory translation [Retsker 1974]. Traditional approach postulates that transcoding of the language imagery should preserve the wholesome nature of the information enclosed in the source text [Krupnov 1976].

As it will be shown in the paper, the notion of careful translation is becoming obscured. N. Garbovsky states, that «...in the process of translation there is no place for the transformation of the subject, as in its strict sense any transformation entails the elimination of the primary condition, the form of the subject etc., and there is subsequent replacement of the subject by other forms. In the translation the subject, the source text is left unchanged. As a result of translation a new art form, a new subject is created. Therefore, there is no possibility for neither transformational, not deformational changes in translation» [Garbovsky 2007: 360]. In the new light, there is a "gap", a refusal from rendering the exact sense in favour of the cultural specifics of the receiving culture. The recognition always goes hand in hand with the explanation thus making the cultural exactitude a variable entity. As a result, the leading trend in filmonym translation is to interpret and re-conceptualise the subject, which entails the refusal to deal with the essence of the subject in favour of personalized ad hoc remakes.

The content of the film often proves to be irrelevant for the filmonym's translation. The system of distribution and the backlist of films in circulation play an important role in the choice of the new title for a foreign film. The algorithm of the film title's choice is very complex and involves advertisers, chief executives, directors, all of whom are able to offer their variants. Naming stages include «market research, approval of title requirements, name

generation, preliminary choice, test group poll, and final choice. Step by step the abundance of offers makes place for something suitable» [Shmitt 2001]. It is clear that not only translators have thir say in the choice, but it must be remembered that a good interpreter retains a mega-concept in the new film title, while a careless one, on the contrary, indulges into trivial word-for-word rendering. In the printed television programme «Saint-Petersburg Viewer» №36 published on the 16th of September 2018 the film rubric commentator Alexander Chekulaev was asked about the overseas control over filmonyms translation. This is what he said: «...big film studios often control the translation and affect the choice of important projects, but nobody cares about the majority of films, if Russians believe that "an unauthorised" adapted film title would make a lot of money - that will do» [Peterburgskij telezritel' 2018: 10]. Continuous monitoring of the localization of filmonyms in the XX – XXI century distribution has allowed the author of the paper to collect more than 500 film titles with inequivalent Russian translation. Futher on the following trends discussed in detail: dramatisation, jargonizm, discursiveness, depersonification, explanation, misogyny, negativism, minimal word play and forenization.

DRAMATISATION IN FILMONYMS' TRANSLATION

A number of significant translations were chosen from the modern sources [Peterburgskij telezritel' 2018] (in the list of filmonyms we first give the Russian transliterated film title, next its translation into English and finally its original English title): "Bol'shaja Igra (Big Game)" < (Molly's Game) (2017), "Bol'shoj Chelovek (Big Man)" < (Crossing the Line) (1990), "Velikij Uravnitel' (Great Equalizer 2)" < (The Equalizer 2) (2018), "Opasnyj Biznes (Dangerous Business)" < (Gringo) (2018), "Posledniaja Nadezhda Chelovechestva (The Last Hope of Humanity)" < (Against The Dark) (2009), "Samyj Pjanyj Okrug v Mire (The Drunkest District in the World)" < (Lawless) (2012) etc.

Cinema is gaining more and more power over the minds of people. Dramatising filmonyms use a number of means to make a film's title attractive - hyperbole (to name a character a great person), romantisation (to elevate the essence of the illegal activity), mystification (to make the film's essence look weird). Epithets like 'dangerous', 'new', 'the last' and 'very' are used to intensify the translation's emotional charge. The film industry is skilfully using the public's naive expectation of the grand miracle. Skilful interpreters use this desire magnifying the suggestive power of the film's title.

JARGONIZM IN FILMONYMS' TRANSLATION

A row of modern film titles are chosen from the modern sources [Peterburgskij telezritel' 2018]. In the translation interpreters used omission and conceptual substitution accompanied by the pejorative shading of meaning (in the list of filmonyms we first give the Russian transliterated film title, next its translation into English and finally its original English title): *«Bezbashennaja Pulja (Crazy Bullet)»* < (Hollow Point) (2019), *«Boss-Molokosos (Boss-Milksucker)»* < (The Boss Baby) (2017), *«Klevyj Paren"* (Cool Guy)» < (Bowfinger) (1999), *«Krutoj i Tsypochki (The Cool Man and the Chicks)»* < (Man of the House) (2005),

«Lesnaja Bratva (The Forest Mob)» < (Over the Hedge) (2006), «Podvodnaja Bratva (Deepsea Mob)» < (Shark Tale) (2004) etc.

The cinematic art as the youngest of arts is rightly addressing younger generations, aged 16 to 25, those who are different from the traditions and norms established in the polite society. Youngsters demand acceptance of their lifestyle and values, their linguistic self-expression finds vent in jargonisms like 'cool', 'crap', 'chick' etc. Localisation serves as a useful mechanism of fixating these topical trends. Although the trend for liberalization of the linguistic means is obvious here, the norm is being violated in favour of bright, expressive means acceptable in non-official communication, which is full of humour, irony and even sarcasm. The downside of such linguistic liberalization is the ease with which personal bounds are violated, disregard for norms of modesty and political correctness.

INFERNALITY IN FILMONYMS' TRANSLATION

Let us enumerate the most revealing examples of this category found in the modern edition [Peterburgskij telezritel' 2018]. The technique of demonisation was used in the following translated titles (in the list of filmonyms we first give the Russian transliterated film title, next its translation into English and finally its original English title): *«Adskaja Kukhnja (Hell's Kitchen)»* < (Paradise Alley) (1978), *«Adskij Smerch (Hell's Twister)»* < (Fire Twister) (2015), *«Djavol'skij* Osobnjak (Devil's Mansion)» < (Cold Creek Manor) (2003), *«Pazmanskij Djavol (Pazman Devil)»* < (Bleed for This) (2016), *«Prizraki (Ghosts)»* < (Wind Chill) (2007), *«Furgon Smerti (Death Vagon)»* < (The Toybox) (2018) etc.

Infernality of translation in this category goes hand in hand with morbiality as well as the tendency for occult studies and back morals. Modernity is characterised by the aggressiveness in the day-to-day and parliamentary communication [Savvateeva 2008]. The abovementioned translated film titles are aimed at evoking the sense of shock in the viewer. The shock is followed by the communicative "glitch" (I can't believe it!) and the ensuing attempts to interpret the essence of the shocking title. Social psychologist L. Festinger offered the theory of the communicative imbalance underscoring the existence of «...hindered understanding as a result of the imbalance in the models of the world» [Festinger 1999]. No big surprise that, even negative qualities like ugliness, vice or passion are regarded as able to attract interest in the viewer. As a result even negative emotion of fear, shame and morbid curiosity motivate people to choose the film for watching - anything goes, anything for a box-office - this might be the slogan of the modern film industry.

DISCURSIVITY IN FILMONYMS' TRANSLATION

Let us enumerate the most demonstrative examples of the discursive category found in the modern edition [Peterburgskij telezritel' 2018]: «Zdravstvuj Papa, Novij God! (Hello, Daddy, Happy New Year!)» < (Daddy's Home) (2015), «Kto Nash Papa, Chuvak? (Who Is Our Daddy, Dude?» < (Father Figures) (2017), «Moj Paren' - Killer (My Boyfriend Is a Killer» < (Mr. Right) (2015), «Okh, Uzh Eti Detki (Oh, Those Kids!» < (Rugrats) (2006), «Seksa Ne Budet! (There Won't Be Any Sex!!!» < (Blockers) (2018) etc.

The dialogic nature of filmonyms is retina-like since it is addressed to the heterogeneous viewers. A. Potebnya had stated that there are four elements, which characterise communication: 1) kinesics (facial expressions, gestures), 2) oculesics (eye contact), 3) optics (physiognomy), 4) acoustics (rhyme and rhythm). These parameters are expressed in the language of thought vs. language of feelings dichotomy. Importantly, the language of feelings manifests itself not only in the popular «...linguistic means (particle, interjection, phraseologism), but in the mimics and gestures as well» [Potebnya 1999: 84]. subdivided The discursive category can be into translated filmonyms-exclamations, stickers, slogans, statements and questions. It is significant that Russian tradition had always been both modest. Ours was the tendency to deepen the inter-cultural understanding. Unfortunately, nowadays the non-typical shift towards everything immodest, seductive, rude and garish is becoming more and more prominent. Dialogic nature of translation in films supports the abovementioned tendency. Following the famous advertising AIDA (attention, interest, desire, action) formula, viewers follow the emotive invitation, go and buy cinema tickets while the development of refined tastes is often left aside [Pankratova 2019: 836].

EXPLANATORY NATURE IN FILMONYMS' TRANSLATION

Let us enumerate the most revealing examples of this category found in the modern edition [Peterburgskij telezritel' 2018]: «Djon Ef Kennedi: Vystrely v Dallase (John F.Kennedy: Shots in Dallas)» < (JFK) (1991), «Meg: Monstr Glubiny (Meg: The Monster of the Depth» < (The Meg) (2018), «Otkrytoe More: Novyje Zhertvy (Open Sea: New Victims» < (The Reef) (2010), «Hero From Hell)» < (Hellboy) (2004) etc.

According to the classification of E. Hall, cultures can be divided into two categories - some are concrete and others are abstract. Some state things directly, others have a tendency for implicitness, polysemy and partial verbalisation of thought. Russian culture is highly contextual, the responsibility for the understanding of the message is divided between the writer and the reader [Hall 1966]. Highly contextual Eastern cultures make it a rule to explain the unsaid to the presumably "unimaginative" viewer. Nowadays the explanatory tendency is accompanied by the so-called 'clip thinking', perfunctory cognitive mode, apt to choose the most attractive pieces of information. Modern viewers are less and less accustomed to the in-depth contemplation, they ask for «...breathtaking themes, eye-catching titles, graphic representation, colourful scripts and memes, apellations» [Leffler 2003: 56]. Explanatory film title correspond well with the tendency of the 'clip thinking' because they transmit the information through the number of channels, informing the viewer of the place, time, qualities of the happening which amplifies the sensory impact warmly directing him to the cinema theatre.

DEPERSONIFICATION IN FILMONYMS' TRANSLATION

First of all we will enumerate the most revealing examples of the personifying translations found in the modern edition [Peterburgskij telezritel' 2018]: «Djek Stoun (Jack Stone)» < (Riot) (2015), «Djonni D. (Jonny D.)» < (Public Enemies) (2009), «Ruslan» < (Driven To Kill) (2009), «Frenni (Franny)» < (The Benefactor) (2015). In personified film titles there's the feeling of authenticity due to the name's tendency to denote a specific person, place or

institution. Although there are examples where characters' names come forward in the film title, there are way more de-personified filmonyms' translations in the Russian distribution: *«Bol'shaja Igra (Big Game)» < (Molly's Game)* (2017), *«Dikij (Wild)» < (Braven)* (2018), *«Zarazhyonnaja (Infected)»* (Maggie) (2015), *«Krasavitsa iz Trushchob (Beauty from the Slums)» < (Trishna)* (2011), *«Moja Uzhasnaja Nyanya (My Terrible Nanny)» < (Nanny McPhee)* (2005), *«Muzhchina Moej Mechty (The Man of My dreams)» < (Mrs. Winterbourne)* (1996) etc.

Naturally, any personal name creates the aura of authenticity in film's title, whereas depersonification does away with the realness of the story. Contrary to the name-related nature, a depersonified film title aids to create the image of the story in a nutshell. What is significant, in a number of titles the change is politically determined. Place names of the Western world (America, US, California, England) are purposefully substituted by neutral filmonyms: «Moj Papa - Psikh (My Dad is a Madman)» < (California King) (2007), «Najomnik (Hireling)» < (American Assassin) (2017), «Pervyj Mstitel' (First Avenger)» < (Captain America) (2011), «Professional» < (Siberia) (2018), «Sluzhiteli Zakona (Servants of Law)» < (U.S. Marshals) (1998), «Snajper (Sharpshooter)» < (American Sniper) (2014), «Trener (The Coach)» < (Mike Bassett: England Manager) (2001), «Trener (The Coach)» < (McFarland, USA) (2015). Of course there's a place for national pride in every country, which is very prominent in the United States of America. Here we can observe how the feeling of national pride is reflected in American film titles which are systematically changed and replaced in Russian distribution. It is obvious that the cultural dialogue makes place for another global trend - «the change of the universe of the shared discourse» [Dimitrov, Russell 1994]. The tendency to avoid foreign names can serve as the revealing symptom of the closed, unsociable conscience and xenophobia. It seems, that Russian localizers strive to lessen the unknown in the filmonym as a sure means to reach home marketing goals of film distribution.

MISOGYNY IN FILMONYMS' TRANSLATION

Let us enumerate the most revealing examples of this category found in the modern edition [Peterburgskij telezritel' 2018]. On one hand, there are a few film titles presenting a heroic image of men: «Vyshibaly (Bouncers)» < (DodgeBall: A True Underdog Story) (2004), «Geroij-Odinochka (Hero-Loner)» < (Last Man Standing) (1996), «Geroj Supermarketa (Supermarket Hero)» < (Mall Cop) (2009), «Mal'chishnik v Vegase (Vegas Stag Party)» < (Hangover) (2009). It is clear that male ill luck is silenced or ignored in the translation. Deformational translation is substituting unsavoury adjectives like "underdog" with more positive thus supporting the stereotype of male superiority. On the other hand, there's a large group of filmonyms with unfavourable presentation of women: «Zamerzshja iz Majami (Frozen From Maimi)» < (New In Town) (2008), «Zarazhennaja (Infected)» < (Maggie) (2015), «Konchenaja (Good-For-Nothing)» < (Terminal) (2018), «Krasavitsa dlja Chudivishscha (Beauty for the Beast)» < (Mary Shelley) (2017), «Nesnosnyje Ledi (Insufferable Ladies)» < (Mother's Day) (2016), «Ochen' *Plokhije Devchonki (Very Bad Girls)»* < (Rough Night) (2017) etc.

Judging by the list, women are represented as losers, slow-witted, victims, criminals, bitchy or obese. These sexist translated titles aggravate the stereotype of women as emotional, unstable creatures. The stereotypical presentation takes roots in the society's envy, exploitation and disrespect for women. Robin Lacoff had noted that women have to dwell in the situation of the «double bind» when successful women are criticized for non-conformism to social expectations of femininity while more feminine women are criticized for being unable for personal and social progress [Lakoff 1973]. While abroad the trend for correctness is developing, the respect to women hasn't become an all-embracing ideology in Russia as shown in the filmonyms' translation and the gender equality stays the ideal to fight for in the modern film industry.

NEGATIVISM IN FILMONYMS' TRANSLATION

There is a group of translations where replacement of the emotional tonality takes place. Let us enumerate the most revealing examples of this category found in the modern edition [Peterburgskij telezritel' 2018]: «Adskaja Kuhnija (Hell's Kitchen)» < (Paradise Alley) (1978), «V Aktivnom Poiske (In Active Search)» < (How To Be Single) (2016), «Zhizn' Khuzhe Obychnoj (Life Worse Than Usual)» < (Less Ordinary Life) (1997), «Ideal'naja Zapadnija (An Ideal Trap» < (Welcome Home) (2018), «Igra bez Pravil (Play Without Rules)» < (Fair Game) (1995), «Ne Ugasnet Nadezhda (Hope Will Not Die)» < (All Is Lost) (2013) etc.

Indeed, film translations give rich material for contemplation about the language trends and fashions. Negative evaluational asymmetry can be attributed to the sharp imprints negative events leave in the human memory. A man has a more detailed notion of negative emotions (danger, pain, discomfort) than of positive ones, states psychology [Batyrshin 1984: 31]. It is noteworthy that the concept of positive thinking occupies a leading position in the hierarchy of concepts and in the picture of the world of modern Americans [Karpova 2011]. Hopefully, the tendency to underscore the worst and to lessen the better should not take roots in the Russian distribution.

MINIMAL WORD-PLAY IN FILMONYMS' TRANSLATION

The play of words, citation and allusion are very good means of film naming. Let us study how these tools are implemented in translation, the source material of our choice is the modern edition [Peterburgskij telezritel' 2018]. It is clear that Russian idioms are rarely used in film titles: «Ne Pojman - Nr Vor (No Man's Thief Till He's Caught)» < (Inside Man) (2006), «Tretij Lishnij (Two Is a Company, Three Is a Crowd)» < (Ted) (2012). In another subgroup we can present a row of titles where the foreign lingvo-creative specifics is ignored: «Afera Po-Anglijski (An English Affair)» < (Trespass Against Us) (2016), «Vystrel v Pustotu (Shot in the Emptiness)» < (Shot Caller) (2017), «Golubaja Krov' (Blue Blood)» < (Relative Values) (2000), «Ograblenije Kazino (Kazino Hold-Up)» < (Killing Them Softly) (2012), «Okhota na Vorov (Hunting Thieves)» < (Den of Thieves) (2018), «Podal'she ot Tebya (Away From You)» < (In Her Shoes) (2005) etc.

It is typical for naming when the choice is based on a word-play with the «... intentional violation of the linguistic norm aims to create a subtext with two

possible interpretations of the dilemma – understanding and misunderstanding. The play is a purposeful balancing on the brink of the norm» [Temnokhud 2013: 142-144]. The general naming specifics reflects the English national character with its slant for irony, paradox, pun, and the American national character with its businesslike approach and eccentricity. But these traits are ignored in the Russian translation. A number of allusions are omitted whatsoever - including religious (*Den of Thieves, Trespass Against Us*), musical (*Killing Them Softly*), and linguistic (*In Her Shoes*). Meaningful hints are left available only to narrow specialists, who suggest multiple readings of problems [Kiseljova 2009]. This type of translation is very laborious since it requires complete grasp of the film's subject matter. The translation is usually the result of a group decision and being a collective product, it is strange why so many precious idiomatic solutions are left unnoticed.

FORENIZATION IN FILMONYMS' TRANSLATION

Let us enumerate the most revealing examples of this category found in the modern edition [Peterburgskij telezritel' 2018]. Some film titles are translated literally: "Beguschij Po Lezviju (Running Alonf the Blade)" < (Bladerunner) (1982), "Nachalo (Beginning)" < (Inception) (2010), "Strana Tigrov (Country of Tigers)" (Tigerland) (2000) etc. But as a matter of fact, we have encountered a great wealth of film titles transliterated as it is: "Alpha Dog" < (Alpha Dog) (2005), "Blejd" < (Blade) (1998), "Blou Up" < (Blow-Up) (1966), "Warkraft" < (Warcraft) (2016), "Divergent" < (Divergent) (2014), "Kajt" < (Kite) (2014), "Sinister" < (Sinister) (2012), "Skajlajn" < (Skyline) (2010), "Slenderman" < (Slender Man) (2018), "Spaun" < (Spawn) (1997) etc.

Letterish translation is not always very exact. The rules of English pronunciation are not observed to a tee as in the filmonym «Divergent» < (Divergent) (2014). Originally this word sounds like [dar'væ:dʒənt], while the translation makes is closer to the Russian sound system. What makes this way of translation so attractive? We can suggest that the absence of a transparent meaningful form, euphemistic nature, the aura of something foreign and strange. New concepts of masculinity («Alpha Dog»), new computer games («Warcraft»), new sports and professional terms («Match Point, Blow Up») are introduced by means of transliteration. More than that, some discordant, inharmonious notions are veiled by means of their foreign presentation: 'divergent' means pervert, spawn 'means born outside marriage bonds'. Linguistic amelioration goes hand in hand with transliteration in these filmonyms. This case clearly supports the modern trend for bilingualization when code switching becomes normalcy and foreign inclusions are welcomed in the language. Russian national character had always had a trait of internationalism, a likeness and readiness to understand all strange, different. It seems that only at first all transliterations seem queer, later they take honourable place in the language system.

CONCLUSION

The material under study had demonstrated that the topic of filmonyms translation is very modern, innovational and full of controversial aspects. Therefore the interest to translation in film will grow in the sphere of international film industry, where questions of authors' rights and linguistic

norms arise on a regular basis. Very often the interpreter's thought takes an easy path of replacement, change and recombination without dealing with the film's ideologically and artistically tricky subject matter. There's St. Hieronimus oath, which states that the interpreter should be understanding, truthful, clear, reliable - these requirements are often violated in filmonyms' translation. Loyalty to the language transforms into the loyalty to those who dictate the final variant of the filmonym's translation: clients, producers and distributors. E. Hirsch had once described understanding as a picnic where authors bring words and readers bring meanings: "It has been said of Boehme that his books are like a picnic to which the author brings the words and the reader the meanings" [Hirsch 1967]. In connection with the translation in movies it seems that modern viewers are promised a posh banquet, but are fed with low-quality fast food. Those responsible for decision-making take a viewer for a fun-loving xenophobic mediocrity, offering us run-of-the-mill low quality translated matter. The situation should change, as the author of the article strongly believes, in the direction of justified cultural appropriation. The translators must pay more careful attention to the standards and norms of the receiving culture.

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