



MAJOR DIFFICULTIES OF TRANSLATING THE TITLES OF ENGLISH FILMS INTO RUSSIAN

Safarova Dilarom Abdukadirovna

A teacher of Termez University of Economics and Service

Abstract

The translation of film titles represents a complex area of audiovisual translation, combining linguistic, cultural, pragmatic, and marketing considerations. English movie titles, when translated into Russian, often undergo significant transformations, which may result in semantic shifts, loss of stylistic effect, or cultural reinterpretation. This article examines the main problems encountered in translating English film titles into Russian, identifying main translation strategies, and analyzes the factors influencing translators' decisions. Special attention is paid to lexical meaning, cultural references, pragmatic adaptation, and commercial motivations.

Keywords: film title translation, English–Russian translation, lexicology, cultural adaptation, audiovisual translation, pragmatics.

Introduction

In modern linguistics, the study of translation has expanded beyond traditional literary texts to include audiovisual media, particularly cinema. Film titles occupy a unique position within translation studies because they serve not only as linguistic units but also as marketing tools designed to attract audiences. As Newmark (1988) notes, titles are “independent textual elements” whose function may outweigh their literal meaning¹. The translation of English film titles into Russian presents numerous challenges due to differences in lexical systems, cultural background, idiomatic usage, and audience expectations. In many cases, Russian versions of film titles diverge substantially from the original, raising questions about translation adequacy and equivalence. The aim of this article is to analyze the key problems associated with translating English movie titles into Russian and to identify the main strategies used to resolve these problems.

Film titles represent a specific category of proper names that perform several functions simultaneously. According to Nord (1995), titles are characterized by their **informative**, **expressive**, and **appellative** functions². In cinema, the appellative (attractive) function often dominates.

Film titles differ from other lexical units with:

- Are short and semantically dense
- Often contain metaphors, idioms, or wordplay
- Reflect cultural and genre conventions
- Serve commercial and advertising purposes

Because of these features, film title translation frequently departs from strict semantic equivalence in favor of functional or pragmatic equivalence. One of the major difficulties in

¹ Newmark, P. (1988). *A Textbook of Translation*. London: Prentice Hall

² Nord, C. (1995). *Text Analysis in Translation*. Amsterdam: Rodopi



translating English film titles is **polysemy**, where a single word has multiple meanings. English allows a high degree of semantic compression, which may not be easily reproduced in Russian. Without prior knowledge of the film's plot, selecting an appropriate Russian equivalent becomes problematic. As Baker (2011) argues, semantic ambiguity often forces translators to choose one dominant meaning, potentially narrowing the interpretative scope of the original title.

Many English movie titles include references to historical events, social practices, or cultural symbols familiar to English-speaking audiences but obscure to Russian viewers. According to Vermeer's Skopos theory (1989)³, translation strategies must be determined by the target audience's cultural competence. As a result, translators often replace culturally marked elements with more familiar concepts or omit them entirely. While this enhances accessibility, it may reduce cultural authenticity.

To illustrate the theoretical issues discussed above, this section analyzes several well-known English film titles and their official Russian translations. The selected examples demonstrate different translation strategies and reveal typical problems related to semantics, culture, and pragmatics. For example, **Die Hard** → «Крепкий орешек», where the English idiom *die hard* means "to resist strongly" or "be difficult to defeat." The Russian translation «Крепкий орешек» is not a literal equivalent but a **functional idiomatic substitution**. From a lexicological perspective, both expressions share a common connotational meaning: resilience and toughness. This translation can be considered highly successful, as it preserves the expressive and evaluative components of the original while sounding natural to Russian audiences. According to Baker (2011), such cases demonstrate **pragmatic equivalence**, where the communicative effect is retained despite lexical differences. **Conclusion**

The translation of English film titles into Russian is a complex process influenced by linguistic, cultural, pragmatic, and commercial factors. Lexical ambiguity, idiomatic expressions, cultural references, and marketing considerations often necessitate adaptive or free translation strategies. While such transformations can enhance audience engagement, they may also lead to semantic loss or misrepresentation of the original title. A linguistically informed and culturally sensitive approach is essential for achieving functional adequacy without sacrificing meaning.

The list of used literature

1. Baker, M. (2011). *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*. London: Routledge.
2. Gambier, Y. (2003). Screen translation. *The Translator*, 9(2), 171–189.
3. Jakobson, R. (1959). On linguistic aspects of translation. In *On Translation* (pp. 232–239). Harvard University Press.
4. Newmark, P. (1988). *A Textbook of Translation*. London: Prentice Hall.
5. Nida, E. (1964). *Toward a Science of Translating*. Leiden: Brill.
6. Nord, C. (1995). *Text Analysis in Translation*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
7. Vermeer, H. J. (1989). Skopos and commission in translational action. In *Readings in Translation Theory*⁴.

³ Vermeer, H. J. (1989). Skopos and commission in translational action. In *Readings in Translation Theory*



8. Safarova Dilarom Abdukadirovna. (2023). The Ideonyms in Onomastics. Best Journal of Innovation in Science, Research and Development, 2(12), 504–506. Retrieved from <https://www.bjisrd.com/index.php/bjisrd/article/view/1236>
9. 3. Safarova Dilarom Abdukadirovna. (2023). THE PROPER NOUNS IN THE LEXICO-SEMANTICAL SYSTEM OF THE LANGUAGE. American Journal of Philological Sciences, 3(11), 29–31. <https://doi.org/10.37547/ajps/Volume03Issue11-05>