TRANSLATION TECHNIQUES IN WALT DISNEY ANIMATION STUDIOS FEATURE FILM TITLES - A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF BULGARIAN AND RUSSIAN TRANSLATIONS

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Abstract: The present article focuses on a descriptive analysis of the translation techniques employed in the rendering of the titles of Walt Disney Animation Studios feature films from English into Bulgarian and Russian, respectively. Titles have been selected as an appropriate subject for research due to the integral role they play in the initial presentation of film products and the first impression audiences receive. The fact that feature films are marketing products intended to sell internationally and bring in profit based on the interest of the public is also relevant here - it underscores the importance of making adequate choices in selecting a title and, subsequently, in rendering that very title into a number of foreign languages in order to reach the widest possible audience, while still remaining on-brand and recognizable. It is considered as potentially beneficial to study the practices of the most popular and successful production studios and their approach to dealing with the translation of titles into various languages as it may point out particular meaningful tendencies and elucidate the process of translation through an analysis and observation of the product it has rendered.

The present article acknowledges the existing incongruence in matters of terminology and approach between the different schools of translation as outlined by Sirakova and Michev (2015), Harmon (2019) and Gambier (2018), to name but a few. This ambiguity does not only exist between the Western-centered (European and American, represented by scholars such as Vinay and Darbelnet, Urtado Albir and Molina Martinez, Nida, Newmark, Chesterman, etc.) tradition and the Russian-centered one (represented by theoreticians such as Retsker, Barhudarov, Komissarov, Latishev, Alekseeva etc.), but is also visible in the terminological differences existing among the works of authors seemingly belonging to the same school or tradition.

In light of this multitude of theoretical framework and apparatus options and the existing limitations in terms of time and volume, the present paper offers an observation and analysis based on the propositions of Albir and Molina who distinguish clearly between translation strategies and translation techniques. According to this framework, translation strategies are employed in the translation process and are therefore not directly observable in research based on corpus data, whereas translation techniques are the visible result of the translation process and can be identified in the product of translation, i.e., in the titles comprising the corpus.

The study itself is based on a specially-created corpus encompassing the 45 titles (original and translated) of all 15 full-length animated feature films produced by the Walt Disney Animation Studios which have been presented in cinemas in Bulgaria and Russia since 2008.

Keywords: translation techniques, Walt Disney Animation Studios, animated feature films, movie titles, Bulgarian, Russian

1. INTRODUCTION

The article focuses on the identification of various techniques for translation of animated film titles from English as the source language into Bulgarian and Russian as target languages. The focus is on Walt Disney Animation Studio feature animated films, which amount to 15 original titles as of 2023. The original titles in English have been sourced from the official website of Walt Disney Animation Studios, while the translations into Bulgarian and Russian have been taken from the information available on the respective Wikipedia website. As a result, the corpus of the study consists of 45 titles (originals and translations) which correspond to the entire number of animated feature films created by Walt Disney Animation Studios for the big screen. These 15 titles have been selected for the comparative analysis since they are the ones which have been introduced to the Bulgarian- and Russian-speaking audiences respectively as part of official and centralized, studio-approved marketing campaigns and thus the translations offer adequate examples of the studio`s requirements and practices, rather than the result of the potentially subjective choices of individuals or companies which distribute the movies internationally (as may have been the case with home video productions or earlier movies, which were not presented in cinemas in Bulgaria and Russia due to a plethora of socio-political and historical reasons).

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study employs the classification of 18 translation techniques proposed by Albir and Molina (2002, 509-511), as illustrated in the table below:

№	Technique	Definition
1.	Adaptation	the substitution of realia from the source culture with ones from the target culture
2.	variation	a change in the tone, style dialect, sociolect etc.
3.	Generalization	the use of a more general or neutral term
4.	Particularization	the use of a more specific term, the opposite of generalization)
5.	literal translation	translation of an expression word for word
6.	linguistic compression	compressing/shortening linguistic elements as in simultaneous translation or subtitling
7.	linguistic amplification	the addition of linguistic elements, the opposite of compression
8.	borrowing	the introduction of a word or expression from a foreign language without change in the original spelling or through naturalization/transliteration
9.	Substitution	substituting linguistic elements with extra-linguistic ones and vice versa
10.	reduction	omitting information carrying elements from the source text
11.	amplification	the addition of explanatory details and specifications which are not present in the source text, such as explanatory paraphrase, translator`s notes - the opposite of reduction
12.	calque	the literal translation of a foreign word or expression
13.	compensation	introducing a stylistic or informative element in a different place in the translation to compensate for an element somewhere else in the original
14.	modulation	a change on the cognitive level
15.	description	the substitution of a term or expression with a description of its form/function
16.	discursive creation	setting up temporary equivalence which is not obvious outside of context)
17.	transposition	a shift in grammatical category
18.	established equivalent	the use of previously accepted and established terms and expressions for the translation of idioms or collocations

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The newest of the animated films in the corpus is "Wish" (2023), translated as "Желание" in Bulgarian and "Заветное желание" in Russian, respectively. The Bulgarian translation relies on using the available established equivalent for the original title, whereas the Russian title also employs amplification/linguistic ampification by adding the adjective "заветное"/"sacred". In turn, this addition is an application of the variation technique, as it changes the tone of the title and turns the neutral original "wish" into a more intense and special one, a "most cherished" or "sacred wish".

The title of the next movie, "Strange World" (2022), has been rendered into Bulgarian as "Чуден свят" and as "Странный мир" in Russian. While the Russian translation employs established equivalent (or potentially literal translation) as a technique, the Bulgarian one relies on variation via a different choice of equivalent for the adjective "strange", although in Bulgarian it is also possible to translate closer to the original by using the phrase "странен свят". It can be argued that the connotations of the word "strange" in Bulgarian are not necessarily positive and perhaps this may have led the translators to choose a more positive word which implies the notion of "wonder"/"чудо", instead of activating the connotative meaning of "strange" as potentially awkward or weird, as it would sound in Bulgarian if they had used "странен". Another potential translation which uses variation could be "Непознат свят", relying on the connotation of "strange" as "unknown, unfamiliar". This option, however, lacks the positive, adventure-implying tone of the selected option.

The movie "Encanto" (2021) uses a borrowing in the original title, as the noun "encanto" comes from Spanish and means both "charm, attractive quality" and "enchantment, spell" according to the Spanish dictionary (URL). The choice of not explaining or clarifying this foreign word has been retained in the Bulgarian ("Енканто") and the Russian ("Энканто") translation and they both employ borrowing as a technique with the only difference of Russian having to do this in a naturalized way in terms of spelling (the use of the letter "Э", as required by Russian spelling rules). This might be due to the fact that the name of the community where the movie takes place is Encanto and this gives the translators the opportunity to use it as simply a name without clarifying or hinting at the additional connotation. The choice of the foreign word without additional information also arguably adds to the idea of something mysterious, when retained in the title, which is fitting in such a movie.

The title of the movie "Raya and the Last Dragon" (2021) has been translated in both Bulgarian and Russian by employing literal translation and borrowing the name "Raya" in a naturalized manner. The result is "Рая и последния дракон" and "Райя и последний дракон" in Bulgarian and Russian, respectively.

The titles of the two movies, "Frozen" and "Frozen II", include an elliptical construction where the adjective "frozen" does not explicitly apply to any specific noun, although the plot of the movie is obviously an interpretation of the fairy tale "The Snow Queen" by Hans Christian Andersen. Therefore, the idea of "frozen" should refer on the one hand to the queen (Elsa) in a metaphorical sense, and on the other, literally, to her kingdom, the frozen land over which she reigns. This implicit information is made explicit in different ways and to different degrees in the two translated titles through the use of the techniques discursive creation, amplification and linguistic amplification in both translations, and the addition of variation in the Russian translation`s choice of the more naturally sounding and neutral combination of the adjective "холодное сердце" ("cold heart") instead of "замерзшее"/"замороженное (сердце)" ("frozen heart"). The Bulgarian translation "Замръзналото кралство" ("The Frozen Kingdom"), however, uses these techniques to explicate in the direction of the original adjective applying to the kingdom being frozen, whereas the Russian translation "Холодное сердце"("Cold/Frozen Heart") works in the direction of the Queen`s heart being cold or "frozen". Once established, these titles serve as established equivalents for the translation of the second movie in the series.

The movies "Ralph Breaks (2018) the Internet" and "Wreck-It Ralph" (2012) can also be analyzed in a relation to each other as they are part of the same franchise. The first movie, "Wreck-It Ralph" uses a compound adjective in its title which might be considered a challenge to translate due to a lack of an available established equivalent in Bulgarian or Russian. As a result, the Bulgarian translation employs a noun formed through the use of the established equivalent of the verb "wreck" ("разбивам") - "Разбивачът Ралф"("Ralph the Wrecker") instead of a compound adjective, which amounts to transposition and the result is discursive creation. The Russian translation, however, is more reductive in its approach and employs linguistic compression and reduction which results in the title consisting only of the name of the main character, "Ральф" ("Ralph"). The second movie, "Ralph Breaks the Internet" paraphrases the "wrecking" from the first one and introduces an idiomatic expression from the 2010s "[S]imilar to 'going viral', the slang usage refers to behavior that causes a dramatic increase in web traffic or social media commentary, especially when the behavior was ostentatious or controversial" (Wiktionary 2023). This expression does exist in the Bulgarian and Russian language use as " 'счупи' интернета" or "сломал интернет", although it is not as firmly established in the mainstream usage as in English - hence the quotations around the verb when it is used in this sense in Bulgarian. This being a slang expression, however, and potentially not very widely known to target audiences outside the US, the translated titles in both Bulgarian and Russian avoid using the expression with the verb "счупи"/"сломал" ("breaks") and instead use variation and discursive creation. In the Bulgarian translation this results in the title "Ралф разбива интернета" ("Ralph Wrecks the Internet") which alludes to the first movie through the use of the same verb, "разбивам" ("wreck"), whereas in the Russian translation there is no verb and instead there is a preposition - "Ральф против интернета" ("Ralph against the Internet"). This technique amounts to modulation and the result is once again discursive creation.

The next movie, "Moana" (2016), is interesting due to the variation of the title depending on the market for which the movie is intended. According to an article in Novagraaf (2017), one of the creators of the movie has confirmed that the change of the name of the movie (and what is more unique and important, of the name of the heroine) was due to "Moana" not being "legally available for use in most European countries and, given that 'Vai' means 'water' and 'Moana' means 'ocean', the sense is ultimately the same". As a result, in Bulgaria we have the title translated as "Смелата Ваяна" ("The Brave Vayana"), which involves the use of the techniques amplification/linguistic amplification in the additional adjective "смелата"("the brave") and discursive creation. In Russian, however, there is no such substitution of the name Moana with Vayana and the title is rendered as simply "Моана" ("Moana"), which is a direct borrowing from the original.

The characters in the movie "Zootopia" (2016) are all animals living in a fictional city, hence the title - the name of that city created by combining the words "zoo" and "topos" (meaning place). Both the Bulgarian and the Russian translations employ discursive creation and propose different combinations of words to retain the original idea of a place inhabited by animals. In Bulgarian this technique renders "Зоотрополис"("Zootropolis"), a combination of "zoo" ("animal") and "metropolis" (a very large or busy city), whereas in Russian there is also the addition of adaptation and variation, as the Russian version "Зверополис" uses "зверо"("beast, animal") instead of "zoo" to combine with the "polis" (a city/town), although the Russian language does have "zoo" as in "зоопарк" available.

The title of the movie "Big Hero 6" (2014) is also interesting in terms of reference with its unusual word order and phrasing. The movie is about the main character Hiro (pronounced the same as "hero"), the large robot created by his late brother and his brother`s four friends, all six of whom form a vigilante group to fight a villain. The two translated titles include references to elements in the original in different ways, although both employ discursive

creation, variation and adaptation. It is interesting that both translations seem to be paraphrases/variations of existing famous movie titles or at least allude to them, which potentially signals the use of adaptation of realia existing in the target culture. The Bulgarian translation, "Героичната шесторка" ("The Heroic Six"), seems to allude to "Великолепната седморка" ("The Magnificent Seven"), with the "седморка" ("seven") transformed into "шесторка" ("six") in accordance with the original title and the addition through transposition of "hero" as "героична" ("heroic"). The Russian translation, "Город героев" ("City of Heroes"), also employs transposition in the use of a different form of the word "hero" from the original and further potentially alludes to the movie "Город грехов" ("City of Sins"/"Sin City"). In both case there is also linguistic compression due to the omission of "big" and amplification in the adding of the element "город"("city") in the Russian translation.

In "Winnie the Pooh" (2011) we have an established equivalent but only the Bulgarian translation makes use of it with the title "Мечо Пух". The Russian translation, "Медвежонок Винни и его друзья" ("The Little Bear Winnie and His Friends"), is more complex in terms of technique as it uses discursive creation instead of the established equivalent ("Винни Пух") together with description ("медвежонок"/"little bear"), amplification and linguistic amplification (the additional elements "и его друзья"/ "and his friends") and reduction (the omission of "the Pooh").

The movie title "Tangled" also refers to a well-known tale, that of Rapuntsel, although copyright issues allegedly prevented Disney from using it in the title and as a result we have the word "tangled", associated with being entangled and messy, including with regards to hair (which Rapuntsel is famous for). In Bulgaria, however, the use of the established equivalent fairytale about Rapuntsel was apparently not considered problematic and through the use of adaptation of the established equivalent, linguistic compression (omission of "tangled"), linguistic amplification and amplification (addition of "и разбойникът"/"and the thief"), we have the final discursive creation "Рапунцел и разбойникът"("Rapuntsel and the rogue/thief"). The Russian translation "Рапунцель: Запутанная история" ("Rapuntsel: A Messy/Entangled Story") also uses discursive creation, adaptation, linguistic amplification and amplification ("запутанная история"), however without entirely omitting the element of "tangled" which gives the element "запутанная" ("messy, confused") that sounds similar to the adjective "спутанная" ("tangled and messy (hair)").

The movie "The Princess and the Frog" is also an interpretation of a classical fairytale, "The Frog Prince", by the Brothers Grimm. The two translations - "Принцесата и жабокът" ("The Princess and the Frog (masculine)") and "Принцесса и лягушка" ("The Princess and the Frog (feminine)") - also employ adapted variants of the underlying established equivalents, "Жабокът Принц" ("The Frog Prince") in Bulgarian and "Принц-Лягушка"/"Принц-Лягушонок" ("The Frog (feminine)-Prince"/"The Frog (masculine)-Prince") in Russian. The resulting titles can be seen as examples of literal translation (in both cases) and transposition (the choice of a masculine Bulgarian word to refer to the genderless "frog" in the original).

The final movie, Bolt (2008), is a story about a dog of the same name who believes he has superpowers. The name of the dog can be taken to refer to his speed, as in a "lightning bolt" that is associated with the speed of light. In Bulgarian the title is translated as "Гръм" ("Thunder"), which is an example of adaptation and discursive creation in terms of translation techniques. This choice is potentially a very appropriate one, as one of the dog`s "superpowers" is his "superbark" - i.e., it is associated with sound, which makes the use of "гръм" ("thunder") an even better choice. In Russian, the title is translated as "Вольт" ("Volt") as the unit of electromotive force, which signals the preference for the original allusion to (lightning) bolt and speed. The techniques used are the same as in Bulgarian, although they give a different result, with both translations being arguably very appropriate and adequate both in terms of connotation and form - they retain the graphic and auditory resemblance to the original with their length and sound properties.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The qualitative analysis of the data shows specific preferences in terms of translation technique usage both overall and in each of the two languages, Bulgarian and Russian. Overall, the most popular technique is discursive creation with 17 occurrences, followed by adaptation with 9, amplification with 7, linguistic amplification/variation with 6, borrowing with 5, transposition/established equivalent/literal translation with 3 and linguistic compression with 2, reduction/modulation/description with 1. The techniques generalization, particularization, substitution and compensation are not used. There are some differences in the frequency of use of these techniques which are language-specific, although both languages exhibit a strong preference for employing discursive creation (with 9 occurrences in Bulgarian and 8 in Russian) and adaptation (with 4 occurrences in Bulgarian and 5 in Russian). In third place in Bulgarian come amplification/linguistic amplification/variation with 3 instances of use, whereas in Russian the third place is held by amplification alone with 4 instances. In fourth place in Bulgarian we have borrowing/transposition/established equivalent with 2 instances, whereas in Russian we have linguistic

amplification/variation/borrowing with 3. In fifth place comes literal translation in Bulgarian with only one use, and litaral translation/linguistic compression in Russian with 2 instances. Finally, in sixth place in Russian we have the single-use techniques transposition, established equivalent, reduction, modulation and description.

It is also interesting to note that the Russian translators seem to employ a wider range of techniques - the techniques that they have not used even once are only three - generalization, particularization and substitution, whereas Bulgarian makes no use of 7 techniques - linguistic compression, reduction, modulation, description, generalization, particularization and substitution. In general, results point to the tendency of both languages to employ the same 2 or 3 prevalent techniques with the occasional addition of another set of less popular techniques, whereas the frequency differences are negligible. In this sense, translators in both languages seem to approach the translation of Disney Animation Studio movie titles in a very similar way in terms of techniques, although the results are often different and those differences are not linguistically determined and thus inevitable but are instead the result of the translator`s creative choices.

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