TRANSLATION TECHNIQUES IN BLUE SKY STUDIOS FEATURE FILM TITLES - A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF BULGARIAN AND RUSSIAN TRANSLATIONS

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Abstract: The crucial role of titles for introducing and marketing entertainment products such as feature films is undeniable and stems from the need to motivate potential audiences to make a specific effort and invest their time and money in order to see a movie. In the world of today with its comforts and availability of entertainment at people`s fingertips, it requires a specific effort on the part of entertainment creators to make people leave the comfort of their homes and commit to the process of "going to the movies". This places a specific expectation on feature films that they should be something special, there should be more to them than what other forms of entertainment (such as TV, social media content or streaming platforms) offer - a good movie is an experience. For the audience, the starting point of that entire experience is the title - it introduces, labels and brings together the entire production, it creates the first impression. The title is a pivoting point for the entire marketing campaign of the movie as a product and needs to fit appropriately with the rest of the production in order to have the desired strong impact - and to hopefully become a household name, or gain an "iconic" status and bring with it an entire franchise to further capitalize on the success of the initial product. Furthermore, in order to maximize profit, these entertainment products need to be marketed to as many markets as possible, to as many countries, cultures and languages as possible and for this purpose the title of the production needs to be rendered, translated into the target language of the receiving audiences. This process involves specific strategies, methods and techniques which are multifaceted and are not only linguistic in nature, but also stem from the theory and practice of marketing and advertising.

The purpose of the present study is to take a look into the specific ways in which these marketing and advertising strategies are reflected in the actual final product of the title`s translation - i.e., the actual translation techniques observable in the translated titles of these animated feature films. The article provides a descriptive analysis of the sets of translation techniques employed in the rendering of titles of animated feature films from the original English to the Bulgarian and Russian, respectively. More specifically, the study is dedicated to the titles of the animated films produced by Blue Sky Studios and attempts to delineate the specific techniques employed based on the actual existing translations of the titles. For this purpose a corpus has been created containing 39 units of analysis - all 13 original titles and their Bulgarian and Russian translations of films produced b the studio which have been marketed to Bulgarian and Russian theater audiences.

Keywords: translation techniques, Blue Sky Studios, animated feature films, movie titles, Bulgarian, Russian

1. INTRODUCTION
The present article focuses on the specific techniques utilized in the translation of animated movie titles from English into Bulgarian and Russian, respectively, as illustrated in animated feature films produced by Blue Sky Studios. For this purpose was created an ad hoc corpus containing the titles of all 13 feature movies of the studio and their Bulgarian and Russian equivalents, thus resulting in 39 units of analysis as of 2024. The information regarding the original titles and the promoted translated options is gathered from the respective Wikipedia pages dedicated to the Blue Sky Studio list of productions (Wikipedia US, Wikipedia Bulgaria and Wikipedia Russia) together with the available information on the TMDB website (The Movie Database).

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS
In terms of theoretical approach, the paper recognizes the lack of uniformity in the terminology and classifications among theoreticians and practicians of translation such as has been outlined in various sources - Sirakova and Michev (2015), Harmon (2019) and Gambier (2018), etc. Differences are observable along the Western- versus Easern-centered research axis, but is not uncommon within the same tradition as well, often with multiple coinciding terms carrying different meanings. The European and American schools are represented by researchers such as Vinay and Darbelnet, Urtado Albir and Molina Martinez, Nida, Newmark, Chesterman, etc., whereas the Russian-centered tradition is associated with the names of theoreticians such as Retsker, Barhudarov, Komissarov, Latishev, Alekseeva, among others.

For the purposes of the present article has been selected the terminological apparatus proposed by Albir and Molina with its clear distinction between translation strategies and translation techniques. Their framework posits that translation strategies are employed during the actual process of translation, which makes it impossible to observe

them in research based on corpus data, whereas translation techniques are the actual visible result of the translation process and can be identified and outlined in the very product of translation, i.e., in the titles comprising the corpus. As a result, there have been identified 18 translation techniques (as proposed by Albir and Molina, 2002, 509-511), which will be used in the analysis of the present corpus of animated feature film titles:

Table 1. Classification techniques proposed by Albir and Molina (2002, 509-511).

№	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

Source: Albir and Molina 2002, 509-511

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 below illustrates the results from the analysis in terms of translation techniques used within the Bulgarian and Russian translations of the 13 original titles:

Table 2. Movie titles with translation techniques employed.

#	ORIGINAL TITLE	BULGARIAN TITLE	RUSSIAN TITLE
1.	*Spies in Disguise (2019)*	"Шпионски бъркотии" - reduction, amplification, transposition, modulation, discursive creation	«Камуфляж и шпионаж» - modulation, transposition, discursive creation
2.	*Ferdinand (2017)*	"Бикът Фердинанд" - borrowing, amplification, linguistic amplification	«Фердинанд» - borrowing
3.	*Ice Age: Collision Course (2016)*	"Ледена епоха: Големият сблъсък" - established equivalent, modulation, discursive creation	«Ледниковый период 5: Столкновение неизбежно» - established equivalent, modulation, discursive creation
4.	*The Peanuts Movie (2015)*	"Фъстъчета: Филмът" - literal translation	«Снупи и мелочь пузатая в кино» - amplification, linguistic amplification, reduction, description, variation, discursive creation

5.	*Rio 2 (2014)*	"Рио 2" - borrowing	«Рио 2» - borrowing
6.	*Epic (2013)*	"Тайната на горските пазители" - reduction, amplification, linguistic amplification, discursive creation	«Эпик» - borrowing
7.	*Ice Age : Continental Drift (2012)*	"Ледена епоха 4: Континентален дрейф" - established equivalent (x2)	«Ледниковый период 4: Континентальный дрейф» - established equivalent (x2)
8.	*Rio (2011)*	"Рио" - borrowing	«Рио» - borrowing
9.	*Ice Age : Dawn of the Dinosaurs (2009)*	"Ледена епоха 3: Зората на динозаврите" - established equivalent, literal translation	«Ледниковый период 3: Эра динозавров» - established equivalent, modulation, discursive creation
10.	*Dr. Seuss` Horton Hears a Who! (2008)*	"Хортън" - linguistic compression, reduction, borrowing	«Хортон» - linguistic compression, reduction, borrowing
11.	*Ice Age: The Meltdown (2006)*	"Ледена епоха 2: Разтопяването" - established equivalent, literal translation	«Ледниковый период 2: Глобальное потепление» - established equivalent, discursive creation, modulation
12.	*Robots (2005)*	"Роботи" - established equivalent, borrowing, literal translation	«Роботы» - established equivalent, borrowing, literal translation
13.	*Ice Age (2002)*	"Ледена епоха" - established equivalent	«Ледниковый период» - established equivalent

Source: Iglikova 2024

The title of the most recent movie, *Spies in Disguise* (2019), provides an interesting example of employing multiple translation techniques. Instead of translating it literally via a phrase that is very similar in meaning and structure, such as "Шпиони под прикритие", for example, the Bulgarian title does away with the concept of "in disguise" entirely by employing reduction, adds a new concept via amplification and modulation - that of "бъркотии" ("mess", "confusion", "chaos", "mix-up"), and also transforms the structure of the phrase from one containing a noun and a prepositional phrase to a simple noun phrase containing an adjective functioning as an attribute to the newly introduced noun (transposition). The use of the "spies" element as an adjective instead of the original noun - "шпионски" ("spy" as an attribute to the noun "mess"/"бъркотии") signals the use of the technique of transposition and the transformation of the entire structure of the title constitutes modulation - a cognitive shift. The final result can thus be considered a case of discursive creation, as there is no obvious equivalence between "spies in disguise" and the resulting Bulgarian title "Шпионски бъркотии" (literally, "spy mess/chaos/mix-ups"). The Russian variant of the same title, "Камуфляж и шпионаж" (literally, "Camouflage and Espionage") retains more of the original semantic elements - there is both the idea of "spies" ("шпионаж"/ "espionage") and "in disguise" ("камуфляж"/ "camouflage"). The two notions are however restructured via modulation and transposition - there is no longer a prepositional phrase pertaining to the "spies" in the title and their quality of neing "in disguise", but instead there is a co-ordinated phrase containing two abstract nouns - "шпионаж" ("espionage") and "камуфляж" ("camouflage"). Additionally, the two elements are used in a different order - instead of first putting the element pertaining to "spies" and then the one pertaining to them being "in disguise", the Russian translation reverses the order. The resulting title can be considered, similarly to its Bulgarian-language counterpart, to be an example of discursive creation, although the semantic relationship of similarity between the original title and the tanslated one is more obvious than in the Bulgarian title.

The titles of the films "Robots", "Rio" and "Rio 2", and the first instalment of the "Ice Age" series have been approached in the same way in Bulgarian and Russian - by relying on established equivalent. In the case of "Ice Age", this results in the Bulgarian "Ледена епоха" and the Russian «Ледниковый период». "Robots" translates into "Роботи" and «Роботы» in Bulgarian and Russian respectively, which relies on the fact that the word "robot" is a borrowing in both target languages and is readily available for the translators, with the additional application of naturalization/transliteration which has already been established. "Rio" as a name is also a transliterated borrowing and both target language retain it in the titles of the respective movies, resulting in "Рио" and "Рио 2" in both Russian and Bulgarian. The fact that the numeral is expressed via a digit instead of a word also adds to the similar

approach to these titles - the difference between "две" (Bulgarian) и "два" (Russian) is only perceived when the title is pronounced, otherwise this difference is implicit.

The title of the movie "Epic" has somewhat of an interesting background which appears too have influenced the choice of title in Bulgarian. According to Wikipedia (Wikipedia, Epic, 2013 Film, 2024), the movie was based on the book *The Leaf Men and the Brave Good Bugs* by American author William Joyce and was originally supposed to be entitled "The Leaf Men" but was later renamed by the marketing department to "Epic" (to the director`s disappointment). In the Bulgarian title "Тайната на горските пазители" (literally, "The Secret of the Forest Protectors/Keepers") can be observed a number of techniques which result in a very different title from the original one. The reduction of "epic" signals an approach that is a rather descriptive one, relying on the plot of the movie itself, which tells the story of a secret world of fores creatures who fight to preserve their home and not on a mechanical rendering of the meaning or reference of the original title in English. The book on which the plot is based has sadly not been translated into Bulgarian, so there was no established equivalent to fall back on if the intention was to evoke the book`s title and created association with it. Hence, the Bulgarian title relies on amplification (adding the notions of a "secret" and "forest keepers"), linguistic amplification (offering a much longer version by adding elements where there were none) and discursive creation to render the idea of the movie. In Russian the situation is diametrically opposite - although there seems to be an official translation of the aforementioned book "Лифмены и добрые смелые жуки"/ Leafmen and the Good Brave Bugs(Wikipedia Russia William Joyce 2024)), it was not referenced in the Russian title. Instead, the title employs simple borrowing with transliteration and this results in «Эпик» - an interesting choice, as the dictionary meaning of the borrowed term ("an author, whose work has epic characteristics, as opposed to a lyricist") does not seem to fit the movie`s plot or reference in the least (see Wiktionary 2024). Apparently it is meant to be perceived as a borrowing with a very active foreign element, a sort of label that provides surface equivalence rather than meaning and association.

Another example of amplification and linguistic amplification in a Bulgarian title can be observed in the case of the movie "Ferdinand" (2017), where the Bulgarian title "Бикът Фердинанд" (literally, "The Bull Ferdinand") has the explanatory element "bull" added to the borrowed name Ferdinand, thus resulting in a longer title than the original one, whereas the Russian version keeps in line with the original and only employs borrowing with transliteration to render the resulting title, «Фердинанд». Borrowing with naturalization is also employed in the rendering of the title of the movie "*Dr. Seuss` Horton Hears a Who!" (2008)* in both Bulgarian ("Хортън") and Russian ("Хортон"), although, in this case, it is combined with reduction and linguistic compression in Bulgarian and Russian instead of amplification and linguistic amplification. Similarly to the case with *Epic,* the movie is based on a book and this time the title shows it clearly. The book, however, has once again not been translated into Bulgarian and there is no established equivalent for translators to rely on. In Russian, however, the story has been translated and printed under the title "Хортон слышит ктошку"(Bookyvedy 2024) and thus there is an established equivalent. Yet, the Russian team has chosen not to utilize this title which employs literal translation and calquing, relying on the shorter "Хортон".

The title of the movie "The Peanuts Movie" (2015) is rendered via literal translation in Bulgarian with a very slight variation in the adding of punctuation between the two elements - "Фъстъчета: Филмът" (Peanuts: The Movie") instead of "Филмът за Фъстъчетата", as the second option sounds unnatural in Bulgarian. In Russian, however, there are a number of techniques used and the resulting title «Снупи и мелочь пузатая в кино» (literally, "Snoopy and the big-bellied little ones in film") is quite a creative choice. After the reduction of the element "Peanuts", "Снупи" ("Snoopy") has been added along with the aforementioned "мелочь пузатая" ("big bellied little ones") through amplification, linguistic amplification and the additional variation as the original "Peanuts" does not have the obvious strongly colloquial and humorous-sounding tone of the descriptive Russian phrase "мелочь пузатая". In fact, the only element which is retained and translated in the established way is the "movie" - which in Russian is rendered via the accepted phrase "в кино" ("on film", literally "in the movies") in post-position.

The "Ice Age" franchise, consisting of five consecutive parts, shares a common first part in the titles of all parts - "Ice Age" and this element, once translated in a specific way, remains a constant in all consecutive installments. In both Bulgarian and Russian it is rendered via the established equivalent technique, respectively as "Ледена епоха" in Bulgarian and "Ледниковый период" in Russian. Another common technique between Bulgarian and Russian is the amplification via adding the number of the part through the use of a digit, which is not an explicit part of the original movie titles. Apart from using the established equivalent technique for the repetitive first part of the titles, however, the Bulgarian and Russian titles employ this technique in the fourth film of the series, *Ice Age : Continental Drift (2012)*, which is rendered via the established equivalent expressions "Континентален дрейф" and "Континентальный дрейф" in Bulgarian and Russian, respectively. The Bulgarian titles of the second and third films of the series combine the established equivalent from the first part of the title with a literal translation of the second part, thus resulting in rendering "*Dawn of the Dinosaurs"* as "Зората на динозаврите" and "*The Meltdown"*

as "Разтопяването". In the final, fifth movie title, however, the Bulgarian translation shares the approach of the Russian team, where can be observed a consistent use of modulation, an exchange or shift in terms, notions, instead of rendering them very closely to the original. Thus we have "Collision Course" in part 5 rendered as "Големият сблъсък" (literally, "The Big Bang") and "Столкновение неизбежно" ("Impact/ Collision inevitable/Imminent") in Bulgarian and Russian respectively. This use of modulation in fact results in discursive creation regarding the second part of these titles in both Bulgarian and Russian, although the Russian titles are indeed much more consistent in utilizing this technique - as is the case with the second and third part of the series. In part two, *The Meltdown* is rendered in Russian as "Глобальное потепление" (literally, "Global Warming") and "*Dawn of the Dinosaurs*" becomes "Эра динозавров" (literally, "Dinosaur Age").

4. CONCLUSIONS

The 13 productions of Blue Sky Studios can be grouped into six so-called "standalone" movies - these include *Spies in Disguise, Ferdinand, The Peanuts Movie, Epic, Dr. Seuss` Horton Hears a Who!* and *Robots*, and 2 franchise productions with more than one part or instalment - the all-time box-office hit *Ice Age* with its 5 separate films and *Rio* with its two parts. Unlike those of the standalone movies, the titles of the multi-part productions are intentionally designed in such a way that they retain the connection between the separate parts and within the entire franchise, often signaling the order of the movies - this leads to the practice of retaining the first part of the title and adding to it with each consecutive movie. As a result, after the title of the first instalment is translated in a specific way, we already have an established equivalent for that first repetitive part and it is used in each of the consecutive titles in order to signal belonging to the production - this is to be expected to raise the frequency of utilizing the "established equivalent" technique.

Table 3. Translation techniques by frequency of occurrence - in ascending order.

	Technique	Occurrences in Bulgarian titles	Occurrences in Russian titles
1.	adaptation	0	0
2.	generalization	0	0
3.	particularization	0	0
4.	substitution	0	0
5.	calque	0	0
6.	compensation	0	0
7.	description	0	0
8.	variation	0	1
9.	linguistic compression	1	1
10.	transposition	1	1
11.	linguistic amplification	2	1
12.	literal translation	3	1
13.	amplification	3	1
14.	reduction	3	2
15.	modulation	2	4
16.	discursive creation	3	5
17.	borrowing	5	6
18.	established equivalent	7	7

Source: Iglikova 2024

The qualitative analysis of the data in the table above exhibits a preference for the use of 11 out of the 18 techniques of translation, which leaves the techniques adaptation, generalization, particularization, substitution, calque, compensation and description with zero occurrences across the two target languages. Another very rarely used technique is variation with only one Russian title employing it as opposed to zero in Bulgarian. At the bottom of the frequency statistics are also linguistic compression and transposition with only one occurrence in each language - it is an interesting detail, however, that the usage of these techniques is symmetrical across Bulgarian and Russian, as they occur in the translation of the same original title. Also similar across the languages is the exhibited preference for the use of the most commonly utilized technique - established equivalent - with 7 occurrences per language. Also similarly popular across the target languages is the borrowing technique which is common in the rendering of names - here the difference is only one occurrence more in Russian with 6 compared to its 5 usages in Bulgarian. Literal

translation, the reduction-amplification pair and discursive creation appear to be equally productive in Bulgarian - 3 occurrences each, followed by linguistic amplification and modulation with 2 occurrences each. In contrast, Russian exhibits a much stronger preference for discursive creation (5 instances) and modulation (4 instances), whereas literal translation, linguistic amplification and amplification are only used once each, followed by reduction with two instances. The overall results thus show a marked similarity between the two target languages in terms of negative preference - i.e., the techniques which are not deemed appropriate or preferable, as well as a similar approach gauged towards consistency and repetitiveness in the case of strongly established and recognizable brands (as is the case with the "Ice Age" production) and in borrowing names. Apart from that, the choice of techniques in Bulgarian seems a lot more balanced with a marked reliance on literal translation and keeping close to the original (with very few exceptions, where the original is not strongly associatively established for the target audience and would not add value to the translation if retained). The Russian translation, on the other hand, exhibits a stronger preference for modulation and discursive creation, which results in more creative and target-oriented titles while also keeping "on brand".

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