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**ОСОБЕННОСТИ БУКВАЛЬНОГО И ВОЛЬНОГО ПЕРЕВОДА
НАЗВАНИЙ АНГЛОЯЗЫЧНЫХ ФИЛЬМОВ НА КИТАЙСКИЙ И
РУССКИЙ ЯЗЫКИ**

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Аннотация: В статье рассматриваются особенности буквального и вольного перевода названий англоязычных фильмов. Названия фильмов могут переводиться на китайский и русский языки с помощью буквального и вольного перевода, или же их комбинирования. Значимость метода перевода видна в примерах, проанализированных в статье.

Ключевые слова: буквальный перевод, вольный перевод, название фильма, смысл

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LITERAL AND FREE TRANSLATION IN
ENGLISH MOVIE TITLE TRANSLATION TO CHINESE AND RUSSIAN
LANGUAGES**

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Abstract: This research handles with the influence of literal and free translation in English movie title translation. English movie titles are translated into Chinese and Russian languages by using literal and free translation or the combination of both of them. Through analysis of examples, the significance of translation technique is clarified.

Keywords: literal translation, free translation, movie title, significance.

Many movie titles are translated according to the names of the characters, the name of the place or the traits of the main characters. Like English movie *Amadeus* which is translated into Chinese 阿玛迪 and Russian *Амадеу*, and English movie *Forrest Gump* is translated into Chinese as 阿甘正传 and Russian as *Форрест Гамп*, and *Gladiator* is translated as 角斗士 and *Гладиатор*.

Title is the soul of the movie. One of the necessary aims of the title is to express the main characteristics of the movie. Some movie titles themselves are conveying cultural information. If they are over free translated, the spirit of the movies will get lost and sometimes it may cause misunderstanding and jokes. Literal translation is not going to change the opinions or style of the original text. It is faithful to the original rhetoric. Literal translation has great significance in movie title translation, and it is the most fundamental way of translation. It is the best and simplest way to achieve success when the target text and source text are equal to the form and meaning. For instance, *The Sound of the Music* is translated as 音乐

之声 and *Звуки музыки* and the *Golden Pond* — 金色池, *На золотом пруду*. *Wedding Plan* — 婚礼策划人, *План свадьбы* and *Jurassic Park* — 侏罗纪公园, *Парк юрского периода*.

With the cultural diversity between languages, the same conception may lead to different understandings. It requires a translator to take full understanding of cultural factors that different culture contains. If it is stressed a lot to keep the form of the movie title, as a result, the quality of the title translation will be influenced by the correctness of the information. Free translation is adapted in order to let the audiences grasp the spirit of the movie and achieve the informational and esthetic equivalence between a source movie title and a targeted movie. Free translation means that the form of the original title has to be changed so as to keep the meaning that the source text wants to convey. For instances, skills like amplification and omission and transformation and extension are usually used in translation. For example, by using amplification, the movie *Robots* is translated into Chinese as 机械公敌 and Russian as *Роботы* and other movies are the similar like *Hitch* — 全民情敌, *Метод Хитча*, *Spring* — 春天的女孩, *Весна*, *Toy story* — 玩具总动员, *История игрушек* and the use of extension like *French kiss* — 情定巴黎 *Французский поцелуй* and *Shrek* — 怪物史莱克, *Шрек* which makes the movie more attractive.

Both literal translation and free translation have their advantages and disadvantages. However, when they are combined with each other, it may have even better effect. When translating a movie title, it can be translated literally but the main idea of the movie may be not fully understood. In this occasion, the form or literal meaning of the original title can be ignored. Besides, small adjustment should be made based on the style or meaning of the title and some words should be added or omitted. It is the combination of literal and free translation. For example, at the first sight on the title *Ghost* which is translated into Chinese title 人鬼情未了 and Russian title *Привидение*, it gives impression of a ghost movie or horrible movie but in fact the movie is about touching love stories between a

human girl and a ghost rather than a horrible movie. When it combines both literal and free translation, it will attract attentions of the audiences and makes the plots and a title of the movie matches well with each other. Then the translation makes the movie successful. Another example is the English movie called *The Bridge in Madison County* which is translated into 魂断蓝桥 and Russian as *Мост Ватерлоо*. It tells a story of marital affairs and family ethics. Comparing the informational function, ascetic enjoyment, it is much better than the version 麦迪逊郡的桥. What's more, there are lots of successful examples about applying literal translation and free translation, for example the English movie title *Pretty Women* — 风月俏佳人, *Красотка* is literally translated into 漂亮女人 and *Speed* — 生死时速 has been translated into 速度 and Russian *Скорость*; English movie *The Net* which Chinese title is 网络情缘 and another Chinese version is 网络 and the Russian title is *Вам письмо*. *The First Knight* is called 第一武士 / *Первый рыцарь*. Therefore, we may see that if literal translation and free translation can be properly used, the movie title may have pleasant effects. There are similar movie titles like *Shoot First* — 先发制人, *Winter people* — 人间有情 and *Суровые люди*, *Shrek* — 怪物史莱克 and *Шрек*

“Transliteration is the representation of the characters of a given script by the characters of another.” (Baker.Monar,2004). It is a convenient and common way of translation. This kind of translation is often based on the background and places where the whole story takes places. As a well-known English writer said “when I reread after the book *David Copperfield* I was so excited about and my thoughts and inspiration soon all pour out just like the surge of the oceans” (Graham Storey, 1991) However, if some movies are translated in another way instead of transliteration they may be overshadowed. For example, the classical movie *Casablanca* — 卡萨布兰卡 was once translated as 北非谍影. And it is also known as Russian *Касабланка*.

Judging from the title, audiences can easily take it for granted that it is a story about a war and spy, but in fact it is all about a really romantic story of two young people. It can be seen that the use of strategy of transliteration is so obvious in the movie title translation and meanwhile the foreign features of the original movies are remained. Such as *Jane Eyre* 简爱/ *Джейн Эйр* and *Harry Potter* 哈利波特 / *Гарри Поттер* and *Troy* 特洛伊/ *Троя*. As it is said that each coin has two sides, transliteration has its overcoming. Chinese has more initial consonants than English and as a result, there will be deficiency and correspondence lacking between languages.

A movie title is translated differently according to different purposes and audiences. No matter how it is translated, it has its own advantages. Literal translation has a great proportion in the translation. It is used when it is about the name of someone or the place that author wants to stress or just some simple structure phrases. Following is the table from which translated movie titles are taken. There are, in total, ninety six examples.

For example when it is related to names, it is usually translated literally. An English movie *Jane Eyre* is translated into Chinese 简爱 and Russian version *Джейн Эйр* and *Hamlet* is translated as 哈姆雷特 and *Гамлет*, besides, *Macbeth* is translated as 麦克 and *Макбет*. Movie *Elizabeth* is translated as 伊丽莎白 and *Елизавета*. And other movies' literal translation is:

Cleopatra: Chinese version is 克里奥佩特拉

Russian version is *Клеопатра*

Cinderella: Chinese version is 灰姑娘

Russian version is *Золушка*

David Copperfield: Chinese version is 大卫科波菲尔

Russian version is *Дэвид Коннерфилд*

Harry Potter: Chinese version is 哈利波特

Russian version is *Гарри Поттер*

Above are movies whose names are about a person. In these cases, literal translation is applied to throw light upon to the audiences what the movie is going to be about. It is characterized by preciseness, clearness, and attractiveness.

Some movies have the strategies of both literal and free translation. For example, American movie *Home alone* is translated as Chinese title 小鬼当家. From the free translation we know that this movie is about a child who stays at home alone. What will happen to him or her? Is it a horrible movie? Of course, it is quite fascinating and sets suspense. While the Russian translation *Один Дома* is quite clear and is functionally equivalent to the source text.

Though literal translation is the most common method, it does not mean that it can be used in any cases. Too much use of the literal translation may cause inconvenience or make jokes. For instance, English movie *Shallow Hal* will be translated into 浅薄的哈尔 and Russian version *Любовь Зла*. The Chinese word 浅薄 is a derogatory term but in this movie it wants to point out that when the two hearts fall in love with each other their lover is the most beautiful in their eyes. Therefore, if it is translated as 浅薄, it will contradict to the original meaning. And the free translation 情人眼里出西施 or *Любовь Зла* will be a better choice as it expresses the hidden meaning of the movie title and it is more enjoyable for the audiences.

When literal translation is not suitable, free translation may compensate. Free translation is not about translating aimlessly but using rhetoric methods to modify language so as to achieve a better success. English movie *Blood and sand* is translated as Russian name *Кровь и Песок* which is both informational and functional equivalent with the movie title. However, Chinese language tends to use more modifiers to meet the needs of literary aesthetic. The translation 壁血黄沙 is faithful to the source movie title but more enjoyable. The English way of expression stresses simplicity, fluency, preciousness. There are many examples matching those characteristics like *The Hunted*, *Seven*, *The Mask*, *Bowfinger*, *Toy story*, *Shrek*, *Spring Hitch* and so on. The well-known film *The Matrix* is

translated as 黑客帝国 and Russian is *Матрица: Перезагрузка*. The world matrix means 矩阵 in Chinese which is a rectangular array of elements set out by rows and columns. However, the movie is about a man who happens to find out that world is controlled by a robot named matrix and finally tries to defeat the robot and saves the world. The choice of a free translation is better than a literal translation. The Russian version *Матрица: Перезагрузка* has added the word *Перезагрузка* in the mean of robot. The free translation helps the audiences to know that the movie may be about the robots. What's more, another example like English movie *Seven* translated as Russian number *Семь* which expresses nothing special and it is difficult for audiences to guess the movie but when it is translated as Chinese 七宗罪, the word 罪 soon is understood by audiences that the movie is about religion. Nevertheless, free translation is not about adding whatever you want. The form of the source text may be changed from time to time but the soul of the movie should be found out.

In conclusion, since there are not only differences but also similarities among Chinese and English and Russian. Different translation should be adapted. If it happens that there is no big difference between languages, a literal translation should be used but if it makes senses when adapted a free translation then it can be used. What's more, it is often the case that some movie titles should combine both literal and free translation. In a word, a translator should flexibly master all kinds of translation according to the real condition.

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