FILM TITLE AS UNIT OF TRANSLATION AND IMAGE-SENSE (BASED ON ENGLISH AND KOREAN)

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Purpose. The article focuses on the study of film titles that we consider an integral part of cinema text from the point of view of its special sign nature. A film title gives the key to the subject matter of the film storyline. The translator faces a number of challenges as it is essential to capture the semantic multidimensionality of the original title in order to transmit accurately the same vision, sense and tonality embodied in the original title.

Methodology. The study is done in the light of the synergetic approach to film translation that emphasizes the dominant role of the image-sense and its influences on translation solutions. The polysemiotic nature of a film text should be taken into account while dealing with film title translations.

Results. The image-sense is an integral unity that can be cognized only in the context of the whole as the essence of semiosis, unity of individual and general, creating an authentic image in a viewer’s mind. Image-sense is characterized by unpredictability and ambiguity that can be eliminated due to video image and the interaction of some semiotic systems in creating an integral entity. The research materials are film dialogues of Korean and American feature films.

Keywords: film translating; cinema text; image-sense; film title; synergetics

НАЗВАНИЕ ФИЛЬМА
КАК ЕДИНИЦА ПЕРЕВОДА И СОСТАВЛЯЮЩАЯ ОБРАЗА-СМЫСЛА (НА МАТЕРИАЛЕ АНГЛИЙСКОГО И КОРЕНСКОГО ЯЗЫКОВ)

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Цель. Настоящая статья посвящена проблеме изучения названия фильма как неотъемлемого элемента кинотекста с точки зрения его особого знакового статуса. В статье анализируется его специфика и роль при переводе названий фильма, что в конечном итоге позволяет выявить доминантную роль образа-смысла, влияющую на выбор того или иного переводческого решения.

Методология проведения работы. На основе синергетического подхода создана теоретическая модель, в рамках которой дано научное объяснение закономерностей синергетического взаимодействия семиотических систем фильма в процессе создания образа-смысла кинодиалога, функционирующего в пространстве кино-дискурса.

Результаты. Смысл исследуемого объекта формируется по принципу образования образа-смысла – единства индивидуального и общего, создающего оригинальную аутентичную картину в сознании реципиента. Образу-смыслу свойственна непрогнозируемость и неоднозначность, устраняемая благодаря наличию видеоряда и взаимному влиянию нескольких семиотических систем в процессе создания целого.

Материалом исследования послужили кинодиалоги художественных фильмов корейского, российского и американского производства, вышедших на экраны в период с 2000 по 2018 гг.

Ключевые слова: киноперевод; кинотекст; образ-смысл; название фильма; синергетика
Introduction

Being an integral part of modern society, cinema has strong influence on shaping personal and linguo-cognitive attitudes of an individual: “It is often films (irrespective their artistic merits or demerits) that are both the main source and a means of creating the image of a ‘foreign’ culture [13 p. 65]. Films are considered a complex media multimodal representation of the world, they are the object of a certain linguistic and cultural environment [15, p. 159]. The popularity of a particular film is largely determined by its title. The title usually complies with the story, idea, philosophy and style of the film, reflect the content and artistic conception. It implies, therefore, that titles should be comprehensible, succinct, intriguing, designing as soon as they should be attractive for the target audience [1, p. 1199]. It is worth noting that film titles are vivid representative materials for the study of modern translation practices in the light of the cultural transference concept taking into account their structural, semantic, and functional pragmatic features [2, p. 435]. It is well known that “The title begins its life long before the release of a film: gripping minds, giving rise to some associations and making potential spectators watch or reject it” [5, p. 227]. Thus, the film title is the key to its success and effective perception; it leads to viewers’/recipients’ positive reviews.

Theoretical framework

From a linguistic point of view, the film title or the “filmonim” (in terms of E.V. Knysh) is analyzed along with the text title. This means there is a functional similarity of the two above-mentioned notions. Being an integral element of the film text, it is important to emphasize that the film title has a particular sign status. Its linguistic nature reveals its unique sign theory: the reception of a film can be predicted before-
The relation that exists between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary, based on convention, or, to use the technical term, unmotivated. The sign becomes motivated after watching a film, the connection between the sign and its denotatum is conventional: “On the one hand, the title is a formal sign (it denotes the form, which content is unknown at first). On the other hand, it is motivated and has its unique meaning” [14, p. 8-9].

In other terms, the title used before the film text is a conventional sign “giving a clue” to the content of the film text. It is an indicator referring to the text as a physical object (seeing only a set of graphic signs, viewers don’t know about a film’s content).

The title informs consumers of a given text’s content after the film text when the latter is represented as a whole. Therefore, it is logical to conclude that the film title is a “metatext sign” since the viewer/recipient tries to understand the text by means of constant sense-giving (Hans-Georg Gadamer’s term). H.G. Gadamer points out that “a person who is trying to understand a text is always projecting.” He projects a meaning for the text as a whole as soon as some initial meaning emerges. Again, the initial meaning emerges only because he is reading the text with particular expectations. “Working out this fore-projection, which is constantly revised in terms of what emerges as he penetrates into the meaning, is understanding what is there” [3, p. 269].

Accoding to N.A. Kozhina, the title “has two categorical relationships with an artistic text: nomination (serves as the title of the text itself) and predication (makes the statement about the text)”. The title represents the main theme of a work in a summary form. Moreover, the understanding of the object-matter is retrospective for a reader; it arises after finding out more about the title and the text. The end of the text “makes the reader refer to the title again, this time implicitly, in order to interpret the nomination foundation of an artistic text” [10, p. 21].

Consequently, we find it appropriate to speak of image-sense formation because analyzing film titles has a high degree of complexity since it is connected to a few semiotic systems. Its detailed study facilitates defining denotative meaning of the text. In our view, it can be used for
translating film titles which are according to V.E. Gorshkova apt remark: “a kind of quintessence of the image-sense” [5, p. 246].

Based on the ideas of the prominent philosopher and theorist of cinema G. Deleuze, who considers this form of art to be the technology of creating image-senses, V.E. Gorshkova has introduced the term “image-sense”.

Considering them to be component parts of cinema as a system of images and signs, G. Delueze explores time-image and movement-image. The author concludes that “Cinema itself is a new practice of images and signs, whose theory philosophy must produce a conceptual practice” [8, p. 641]. Relying on the notions proposed by the philosopher G. Deleuze, V.E. Gorshkova attempts to expand the technology of film images by introducing the notion of “image sense.” Such interpretation makes it possible, on one hand, to create an integral representation of the cinematographic image, and, on the other hand, to take into consideration a verbal component of the film: the film dialogue, which is of great importance as subject matter of cinema translation [7].

V.E. Gorshkova gives a detailed analysis of image-sense’s dominant role in a film that determines both the translation and the choice of the title itself. The researcher classifies titles according to the principal of retaining the image-sense [6, p. 33-34]: translation of film titles based on the use of absolute equivalents along with retaining the image-sense; adequate film title translation into Russian; inadequate film title translation into Russian.

Statement of the problem and method

The purpose of our research is the use of image-sense within the framework of the translation process from the theory of self-organising systems’ point of view: synergy. We consider it possible to use postulates of the modern synergetic paradigm to analyze the object in our work. Since it puts forward an idea of dynamic process polyvariety, it suggests alternative ways to develop complicated systems. We believe that this approach will let us see the dynamic nature of image-sense formation. The choice of an appropriate translation is determined by a number of possible directions through the image-sense system.
There is still no theoretical basis for film analysis as a set of semiotic systems despite a huge influence of cinema on our life. This is mostly due to the fact that films are the most complicated semiotic objects of study. The research study is verbal and nonverbal means of cinema text, creating the sense of film dialogue that is revealed in the film discourse. Film dialogues play a key role in understanding the film as a whole therefore it is essential to determine what methods and approaches have certain specifics in film title translation.

In our opinion, it is essential to use this approach to analyze translation strategies within the framework of synergy. We will reveal the status of image-sense as the fundamental unit and this, in turn, can help the translator make the right decision and avoid mistakes working on film text.

The methodological basis for the research is the works devoted to the study of verbal and non-verbal in creolized/polycode texts, cinema language, current research based on the linguistic approach to cinema texts, film scripts and dialogues. The methodology of this study has a comprehensive nature and comprises traditional and time-proven research methods of linguistics. The paper utilizes general scientific methods of collection/selection, description, analysis and generalization of the empirical material and scientific data. The study employed the linguistic analysis method, the comparative and contrastive method, cognitive discourse analysis, a synergetic approach to linguistics to produce the chief study findings.

L.V. Kushnina gives a detailed analysis of the essence of translation as a synergetic process revealing the systematic nature of translation with regard to the theory of harmonization. Translation is understood as a continuous process of interlingual and intercultural communication consisting of synergetic communication of the meaning on continuum field structures [13, p. 111]. The energy field of translation space is the energy content of this process and the translator conveys it as emotive meaning. As noted by the researcher, the distinguishing characteristic of synergy is that this field is not the only one. The translator deals with many similar fields and each of them is the source of different meaning. Therefore, the translator must adjust these meanings taking into
consideration synergy’s collective effect or harmonization of meaning and leaving the principle of overall unity unattended (in terms of L.V. Kushnina) [11].

Discussion

We assume that image-sense can be this “collective effect”. It is “holistic, it is understood only after taking into account the whole context. Image-sense is the essence of semiosis. It is the unity of the individual the whole, which creates a unique, authentic image in the recipient’s mind” [9, p. 10].

Let us explain the previous paragraph by analyzing the title of the most popular South Korean film. It is a disaster film that attracted around 10 million viewers. The original name indicates health resort Haeundae located in the port city Busan. During its release in Russia, the film was titled Tsunami. Moreover, the year 2012 was on the film poster referring to the apocalypse. Therefore, we can consider this image-sense as a system of heterogenous codes to be interpreted and expressed in the target language by the translator.

The South Korean film Parasite by Bong Joon-ho is full of the codes that refer viewers to the “collective effect” transforming the image-sense into integral entity. This film won four awards at the 92nd Academy Awards, i.e., Best Picture, Best Director, Best Original Screenplay, and Best International Feature Film. Parasite is a social satire depicting class inequality and telling its viewers about two families, the poor Kim family and the rich Park family. The Kims live in a squalid basement flat, while the Parks lead an Instagram-perfect life. Capitalism, greed and class discrimination are the stand-out themes. Nowadays these problems are relevant and urgent than ever. This film is very interesting within the context of our study because its plot is rich in purely Korean moments, various hints, references and subtexts that refer to Korean reality, and therefore can clear to native speakers but Korean realities may be incomprehensible to people of different cultural backgrounds.

Firstly, let us turn to the names of the main characters. The father of the poor family Kim is called Ki-taek, his son is Ki-woo, and his daugh-
Character is Ki-jung. It should be recalled that, despite the fact that the Korean language is alphabetic-syllabic, all Korean names also have a hieroglyphic spelling, and in each case, the hieroglyph has a certain meaning. For example, according to the dictionary of the National Institute of the Korean language (국립국어원), the syllable 기 has several hieroglyphic analogues: 1) 기 氣 – power, energy; 2) 기 期 – class.

However, the Director Bong Joon-ho added the hieroglyph to the family names that in not used in people’s names: 寄: 1. 맹기다, 위임하다 2. 기대다, 의지하다 3. 붙여 삶다, 임시로 엿혀 삶다 “to join, to adhere, to adapt”. The same hieroglyph is used in the film’ name (기생충 寄生蟲). In fact, it consists of three hieroglyphs: “stick”, “life”, “insect”. In other words, it is “a living thing that sticks to others and lives at their expense”. Thus, it is logical to assume that the character’s names reveal their lifestyle, attitudes and of course, they all are clear to any Korean. The image-sense is formed on the basis of a common collective linguistic entity. The mother has a completely different name. According to the Korean tradition, a woman does not take her husband’s surname after the marriage, and the children belong to the father. However, the heroine also has an unusual name Mungwan consisting of two hieroglyphs in Korean that literally mean “gates, doors” and “stupidity, madness”.

Consequently, the approach presented allows us to use image-sense as a research tool to analyze patterns among film titles. Image-sense reveals similar approaches to the translation process and is often characterized by different substitutes and changes due to the peculiarities of various languages. Stylistic and axiological systems as well as the differences of cognitive processes connected with the particular nature of perception and translation of an “alien” culture-bound term, an (arte) fact, an event [13, p. 65]. The translator must provide a translation that correlates with each of the systems of image-sense.

Regarding image-sense as an actualizator of a cinema dialogue sense, [5, p. 247] we believe that the latter can be an invariant or a “target unit” that is essential to make sense of the source text and take the translator’s decision [4, p. 262-263]. The translator renders sense by considering image-sense as a whole and giving a relevant equivalent in the target
language. Thus, having finished the interpretation stage, the translator makes a decision concerning the choice of a speech unit. This stage aims at linking the lexical item in the target language with its equivalent in the mother one.

The following example considers Andrew Niccol’s film *In Time* released in the USA in 2011. The plot takes place in the future where the aging gene automatically stops at age 25. To extend one’s life, time must be bought in increments of days, hours, or even seconds. The rich “earn” decades at a time (remaining at age 25), which allows them to become essentially immortal, while the rest beg, borrow or steal enough hours to make it through the day. The main character is Will Salas (Justin Timberlake), who is a poor man with rarely more than one day’s worth of life on his life clock. When he saves Henry Hamilton (Matt Bomer) from time thieves, Will receives the gift of a century. He goes to the world of the wealth in New Greenwich to fight the system where time is a currency. The original title is *In Time*, but in the Russian release the film was under the name *Time* (Vremya / Vremja). We consider it to more adequate because it includes all the constituents of image-sense and appeals to Russian viewers’/recipients’ cognitive attitudes to try to value time in the fast-paced world. Consequently, the title *Time* is a hypernym and can form a holistic image-sense.

A wide range of meanings can be noticed when translating a film title into different languages. Let us take the film *Empty House* by Kim Ki Duk as an example. The main character, a young man, whose only possession is a motorcycle, spends his time riding around the city looking for empty apartments. After finding one, he spends time fixing himself something to eat, washing laundry and making small repairs in return for favors. The translation *Empty House* is a lexical transformation that holistically represents the image-sense. The film was released in the USA under the title *3-Iron*. It is worth mentioning that 3-Iron is a golf club used by the main character to punish the husband of an oppressed girl found in one of the empty houses. There are some transformations that indicate differences between the translation and the original. This example is essential for our research because it represents polyvareity when
choosing the most appropriate translation match by taking into account linguo-cognitive and ethnospecific peculiarities of the image-sense. However, in our opinion, this film title translation in not adequate because it does not reflect the main idea the film text. It can cause viewers’/recipients’ cognitive dissonance and it is unlikely to make an impact and could even prevent the literal perception of the plot.

It should be noted that in some cases, this polyvariance requires clarification when choosing a translation solution, since it may be important in a particular case. For example, in the film *Parasite* (2019), one of the main characters Ki-woo forges a diploma of Yonsei university in order to get a job in a rich house and shows it to the lady of a rich house. The choice of the University is not accidental: no other University would be suitable for the purposes of Ki-woo, because each University has its own image. The top three universities in the country are abbreviated SKY, each letter means one of the universities: Seoul State University (Seoul National University), Korea University and Yonsei University. But you need to know that, according to the Koreans, the graduates of Seoul State University have the image of nerds and geeks who are not adapted to social life. The graduates of Korea University have a reputation of being lady-killers and businessmen who drink a lot, party and have fun. Yonsei has a reputation as the University of “gilded youth”, it is a university for the elite, i.e., smart people with connections and position. Therefore, from the Korean point of view, the choice of the university is obvious. However, as we can see, there has not been made any remarks in the translation referring to this information, and therefore the image-sense in this case is not formed and is not fully foregrounded.

**Conclusion**

Thus, film name translation is a complex work, because to make a good name, the translator should have strong language foundation of basic knowledge, the strong cultural background information and translation exercise [6, p. 124]. The study of film title translations has shown that considering image-sense as a synergetic, whole unit
with all its components in the translation process allows the choice of the most adequate translation aimed at cognitive and linguo-cultural specifics of the original. Image-sense creates an authentic image in viewers’ minds, this integral entity can be cognized only in the context of the whole as the essence of semiosis, unity of individual and general.

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**Список литературы**


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Поступила 04.09.2023
После рецензирования 28.09.2023
Принята 30.09.2023