



SÉRIE “Filologie”

[https://doi.org/10.52058/2695-1592-2023-11\(30\)-348-358](https://doi.org/10.52058/2695-1592-2023-11(30)-348-358)

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CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN ENGLISH CINEMATIC TEXT TRANSLATION

Abstract. The article deals with the domain of cinematic text translation, highlighting the unique challenges and special characteristics that arise in the process of rendering into Ukrainian. Unlike artistic translation, cinematic texts necessitate an exceptional grasp of language, culture and genre. Considering such an intricate interplay between these elements, the complexities of preserving cultural authenticity while ensuring simultaneous understanding by foreign audience is emphasized.

The article examines the peculiarities of translating the English cinematic text into Ukrainian based on the Netflix series *The Crown*. The analysis and study of the subtleties of reproducing such expressions will be considered in the context of translation transformations and strategies.

Through the case studies and examples from the English series, the article underlines the significance of adaptability, creativity, and cultural competence in cinematic translation.

Keywords: cinematic text, cinematic text translation, pragmatic adaptation, translation transformations, translation strategies.

Problem statement. The study of the translation of English cinematic texts delves into a multifaceted area where linguistic accuracy, cultural peculiarities and



pragmatic adaptation converge. The process of rendering such materials requires specialized skills and an in-depth understanding of the specific attributes of each genre. Thus, by exploring the cultural sensitivity and contextual adaptability of the source language in the target language, translators can facilitate deeper comprehension by applying a range of translation methods.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The peculiarities of cinematic text translation have been analyzed in the works of many domestic and foreign scholars. Namely cinematic text translation as a type of audiovisual translation is considered in the works of A. Melnyk [1] and A. Remael [2], the study of cinematic text adaptation is described in the works of T. Lukianova [3] and N. Holubenko [4], and the main approaches to understanding film discourse are studied by T. Krysanova [5]. Zh. Bai focuses on the peculiarities of translating English film titles [6].

The **purpose** of this study is to explore and analyze the difficulties and methods associated with the translation of cinematic text to provide insights into how the unique characteristics of such content can be effectively conveyed while preserving the original author's intent and cultural authenticity.

Results and Discussions. The art of cinematic text translation occupies a significant and unique space within the domain of translation studies [1, 7, 8]. As the global entertainment industry continues to thrive, the demand for accurate and adequate translations of cinematic texts has never been greater.

The emergence of cinematography has significantly expanded the range of methods of socio-cultural exchange. In the era of silent films, the role of translation was virtually non-existent, as cinema itself was a mediator in intercultural communication. The foreign audience could easily recognize cultural markers just by the appearance of the characters or based on background knowledge about the country where the film was produced. However, as cinema advanced and sound movies emerged, the translation of such films into foreign languages has become relevant. Since cinema has been commercialized, the need arose to bring it to an increasing number of viewers.

One of the main components of the film's success is its adequate translation. Translators continue to study cinematic text translation in the paradigm of linguistics, translation studies and as a means of intercultural communication.

From a linguistic perspective, cinematic text translation involves choices related to vocabulary, syntax, and linguistic style to ensure that dialogues and scripts flow naturally in the target language. Additionally, the adaptation of cultural references, idiomatic expressions, and wordplay add layers of complexity to the process.

Translation studies provide valuable frameworks and insight into the techniques employed by translators to preserve the accuracy of the original while making it accessible to diverse audiences. These theories guide translators in navigating the fine balance between source text faithfulness and target viewers' comprehension.



Moreover, cinematic text translation serves as a powerful tool for intercultural communication, promoting cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. It allows viewers from different countries to connect with the stories, characters, and messages portrayed on screen.

This multifaceted field demands a comprehensive understanding of the key concepts such as “cinematic text” and “translation transformations” to lay the foundation for further research.

A film is a work of cinematic art created by a specific culture that reflects the customs, traditions, ideas, values, and views of a foreign culture. It consists of a sequence of events, each of which determines the character’s choice, reveals their temperament, behavior in different situations and their attitude to life circumstances [9, p. 257]. This polysemiotic phenomenon is capable of conveying meaning through images, speech and music. In technological terms, a film is a sequence of photographic images (shots) linked by a single plot and contains a soundtrack [3, p. 310].

According to the Oxford Dictionary of Film Studies, the cinematic text is the internal structure and organization of any film; or simply a movie when it is considered as a system of meanings [10, p. 179]. It is characterized by universal textual categories: integrity, coherence, modality, systematicity, informativeness, narrative, intertextuality, and pragmatic orientation [11, p. 337].

When rendering a cinematic text, the translator works with the text of the film script (literary dramatic work on the basis of which the film is created) and directly with the video material [8, p. 78]. Since translation involves at least two languages and two cultural traditions, the translator should make a lot of effort to show the culture of the source language in the target language in such a way that the viewer or reader can understand the pragmatics the author conveys in the original.

In the context of cinematic translation, it is essential to acknowledge the inseparability of linguistic and extralinguistic elements. The cinematic text does not exist in isolation; it is a reflection of traditions, emotions, history and social norms. Therefore, translating it effectively goes beyond linguistic proficiency alone. It requires navigating the subtleties of character interactions, understanding cultural references, and conveying the emotional depth of scenes. Achieving this balance requires a holistic approach, considering both language and the broader context in which the film unfolds.

The linguistic system is presented by written (titles, inscriptions) and oral (actors’ lines, voiceover text, etc.) components. Generally, the way the written and oral components of the linguistic system of a cinematic text interact is determined by the translation of the original cinematic text into another language. For instance, such elements of the written component as captions that indicate certain key points of the film (dates, names of cities, time periods, etc.) are usually not voiced in the original film, but in the process of translation, a voice-over is added to sound out a certain text in the target language [12, p. 50-51].



To attain the desired level of adequacy, translators require more than just a strong grasp of both foreign and native languages but also a deep understanding of extralinguistic elements.

The extralinguistic system includes sound and video sequences. Among the extralinguistic features that can have an impact on translation are the following:

- a. place of events;
- b. time and period;
- c. addresser and addressee of the text;
- d. means or channel of communication (verbal and non-verbal);
- e. reason for the production of the text;
- f. situational influence on the final effect of the message;
- g. context [13, p. 46];

Some linguists also include phonetic factors (intonation, tempo, pitch range, etc.) [14] and time constraints, the length of a line, synchronization with the image, etc. [7, p. 28].

Thus, understanding of these linguistic and extralinguistic systems are very important when translating cinematic texts. They form the basis for the further process of pragmatic adaptation when the translation not only transfers the meaning of linguistic units from one language to another but also takes into account what is happening in the film at the moment.

Pragmatic adaptation in cinematic text translation embodies a complex process that extends beyond the mere conversion of words and phrases. It encompasses the meticulous craft of overcoming linguistic and cultural gaps to ensure that the translated content is fully understood by the target audience. This complex process involves comprehension of the subtle details of humor, slang and dialects while staying true to the original intent.

According to A. Schweitzer, pragmatic adaptation is the transformation of the original statement in view of the transmission of its pragmatic meaning, i.e. the specific perception of information contained in the statement by different recipients. To produce a communicative effect on the recipients of the target cinematic text that is equivalent to the original, the translator uses a variety of strategies and transformations. Before that, the translator uses pragmatic analysis to determine what information can be removed or modified in the translation. Since the receiver of the source cinematic text and the receiver of the target cinematic text usually have different linguistic backgrounds, different ethnic mentality, and different background knowledge, achieving the communicative goal in translation requires pragmatic adaptation to the specifics of the target audience's language, mentality, and background knowledge [15, p. 52].

One of the key components of the cinematic text translation process is translation transformations. These technical means of translation cover various strategies and methods that involve replacing regular equivalents with contextual



ones [16, p. 40] to adequately reproduce the content and emotional depth of the original text in the target language. It is important to note that film translation differs from regular written or oral translation as it must capture not only the words but also the atmosphere, style, intonation, and other aspects of the film. Translators need to be creative, and aware of at least the culture of the source and target languages to adapt the text and find expressive solutions to reproduce each line. To illustrate the practical application of these transformations, *The Crown* series is used as the basis for the study.

The Crown unveils the captivating world of the British royal dynasty and the history of Great Britain to its viewers. Its exquisite direction, meticulous portrayal of historical events, and remarkable performances by the cast have made it one of the most acclaimed series of our time. The analysis of translation transformations will be conducted based on the lines of the main characters of the series, namely Queen Elizabeth II, Princess Diana, Prince Charles, Prince Philip, Princess Anna and Princess Margaret.

Queen Elizabeth II

1. In terms of diet and behavior, I've not changed a thing. – Miŭ paŭion i cnociŭ žutтя takі samі (Episode 1, 9 November 2022, The Crown).

In the given sentence translation transformations are employed, which can be described as concretization, generalization, antonymic translation and omission.

In particular, the concretization relates to the rendering of the abstract phrase “*In terms of*” into a possessive pronoun “*Miŭ*” in Ukrainian. Thus, translation narrows the meaning, shifting from a more general concept to a specific one. It effectively focuses the statement on the speaker’s diet and behavior, eliminating any additional contextual exposition present in the English version.

The rationale behind this transformation is to enhance clarity, align the translation with the linguistic structure and expression of the Ukrainian language, and provide a more concise and unambiguous rendition of the original English sentence.

The English phrase “*diet and behavior*” is more specific, whereas the Ukrainian translation “*paŭion i cnociŭ žutтя*” uses broader terms, emphasizing ration and lifestyle. The transformation of generalization is applied here, which broadens the scope of the concepts in the Ukrainian language compared to the original English phrase. It switches the focus from these particular elements to more general categories, encompassing a wider range of factors related to lifestyle and dietary choices. The translator opts to convey the basic idea of maintaining the same lifestyle and dietary habits without providing an intricate breakdown of specific aspects. This approach aims to ensure the translation’s universal applicability and comprehensibility to a broader audience, considering that the specifics of one’s “*diet and behavior*” may vary across individuals and cultures. By using “*paŭion i cnociŭ žutтя*” the translation becomes less restrictive and more inclusive, permitting a broader interpretation dependent on context and individual perspective.



The transformation of “*I’ve not changed a thing*” into “*макі самі*” can be characterized as a modulation. The literal translation would be “нічого не змінилося”. However, in the Ukrainian translation, the cause is replaced by the result “*такі самі*”.

Additionally, a notable transformation occurs due to the omission of the phrase “*I have*”. The English phrase contains “*I have*”, while the Ukrainian version omits it. This omission is applied for brevity and to avoid redundancy, as the context already implies the presence of a possessive pronoun (“*Мій*”) in the Ukrainian sentence.

2. *The youngest prime minister since Lord Liverpool in 1812.* – *Наймолодший з часів лорда Ліверпуля у 1812 (Episode 10, 9 November 2022, The Crown).*

The omission of the word “*prime minister*” in the target language sentence is strategically implemented to enhance the clarity and conciseness of the translation. Given the contextual cues, such as the mention of Lord Liverpool and the year 1812, it is evident that the discussion pertains to the age of the prime minister. Removing the term “*prime minister*” simplifies the translation, making it more laconic and straightforward in Ukrainian. This transformation serves a dual purpose: it maintains the accuracy of the translation while simultaneously improving its understandability in the target language. The omission minimizes redundancy and ensures that the Ukrainian viewer easily grasps the intended meaning without unnecessary elaboration.

The sentence also contains words that were translated into Ukrainian using the transcoding strategy, namely *lord* – *лорд* (transcription) and *Liverpool* – *Ліверпуль* (adaptive transcoding). It is essential to retain the name as it is, preserving its historical and cultural reference.

Princess Diana

1. *Can I have a squash?* – *Обіймему?* (Episode 1, season 5, *The Crown*)

The sentence structure in the target language is slightly different from the English original.

In English dictionaries, the verb “*squash*” is interpreted as “*to push yourself, a person, or thing into a small space*” (*Cambridge dictionary, 1999*) to compress or squeeze something and as a noun is a situation when there is not much room [17, 18]. When translating from English into Ukrainian, modulation was applied. This translation transformation in this case arose from the need to transform the English question “*Can I have a squash?*” into Ukrainian form that would express the semantics of a firm hug. This change in structure helped to achieve the most accurate expression of the meaning, adapt it to the Ukrainian language and avoid possible misunderstandings in the context of cultural differences between the languages. Such a strategy helps to preserve the integrity of the communicative purpose of the original expression during rendering into the target language.



2. *Charles barely looked at me...I felt like a fish out of water.* – *Чарльз на мене не дивився... я була не у своїй тарілці* (Episode 2, season 5, *The Crown*).

In the process of translation of the sentence into Ukrainian, the translator used several transformations to effectively convey the source language meaning and connotations by means of the target language.

The antonymic translation of the English phrase “*barely looked at me*” into Ukrainian “*на мене не дивився*” employs the term “*barely*” signifying restricted or almost nonexistent action. This transformation hinges on the distinction that the original English phrase conveys limited attention, minimal contact, or disinterest, whereas the Ukrainian translation articulates this contrast as an antonym. It involves the use of opposites to convey the intended meaning while preserving the original intention and idea of the speaker.

Regarding “*a fish out of water*”, the Ukrainian translation “*не у своїй тарілці*” is used to convey a similar expression without a literal translation of the English idiom. This adaptation is made to ensure that the Ukrainian translation effectively captures the essence of the idiom and is more natural for the target language viewer. A literal translation of “*вийнята з води риба*” would be inappropriate, as it could distort the intended meaning and be would be irrelevant according to the linguistic norms of the Ukrainian language. Instead, the translator employs a culturally and contextually relevant Ukrainian idiom, applying a holistic transformation to convey the same concept of feeling unhappy or uncomfortable in a particular situation.

The transformation in the use of the name “*Charles*” in the translation from English into Ukrainian as “*Чарльз*” primarily reflects an adaptive transcoding. There is often no need for further transformation, as proper names are usually transcribed or transliterated according to their pronunciation and recognized spelling. This ensures that the name is recognizable and maintains its original identity while being represented in the target language alphabet (Cyrillic in this instance). The objective is to preserve the name’s authenticity and pronunciation while making it legible and understandable for the Ukrainian audience.

Prince Charles

1. *What an old fogey.* – *Який зашкарублйй* (Episode 1, season 5, *The Crown*).

To adequately translate the sentence into Ukrainian, the omission transformation was used. It involves the removal of the word “*old*” from the Ukrainian version while effectively conveying the essence of the original term “*old fogey*”.

In the original English phrase “*old fogey*” is a colloquial term used to describe a person who is overly conservative, traditional, or old-fashioned in their views and habits [17]. The adjective “*old*” emphasizes the person’s traditional ways of doing things and the adherence to old-fashioned customs. In the Ukrainian translation, the omission of this adjective simplifies the expression while still capturing the core



meaning of someone who is outdated and somewhat too conservative in their beliefs and behavior.

This omission transformation streamlines the translation, making it more concise and natural in Ukrainian, aligning with the principles of adaptation between languages while preserving the essential meaning and tone of the original expression. It involves effectively conveying the essence of the original term with the target language word “*заішкарублий*”, which retains the negative connotation of being marked by ancient and long-term habits.

2. *Prince Harming, they're calling me now.* – *Злощасний принц.* Так мене тепер називають (Episode 4, season 5, *The Crown*).

The pragmatic adaptation employed in the translation of the phrase “*Prince Harming*” to “*Злощасний принц*” involves a creative approach to convey the wordplay present in the original. In the English version, “*Prince Harming*” is a clever wordplay on “*Prince Charming*” suggesting a character who does the opposite of what a typical prince would do, causing harm instead of happiness.

This pragmatic adaptation relies on the idea that the word “*злощасний*” in the target language emphasizes the concept of misfortune, in line with the irony in the original phrase. Such translation showcases the translator’s creativity and skills in adequately conveying the original wordplay in a new cultural and linguistic environment.

Omission can be observed in the second half of the sentence. In Ukrainian, it is not necessary to explicitly include the pronoun “*вони*” because the verb form can indicate the person and number, making it clear who is involved in the action. By skipping the pronoun, the Ukrainian translation achieves conciseness and adheres to the language's inherent structure, which can convey the same information without additional words. This transformation ensures that the translation is not only linguistically accurate but also more in line with the linguistic norms of the Ukrainian language.

Prince Philip

1. *She never stops. She never complains. She never puts a foot wrong.* – *Вона працює. Не бідкається. Все робить ідеально* (Episode 1, season 5, *The Crown*).

Several transformations are applied to translate this line into Ukrainian.

The application of omission is evident in the translation from English into Ukrainian in the repetition of the subject “*she*” in each clause. In the source language, sentences begin with the pronoun and this repetition is common in English, but in Ukrainian, the subject in the following sentences can be inferred from the previous one, making the translation more concise and usual.

Antonymic transformation is applied to the phrase “*never stops*”. In the original line, it conveys the idea of continuous action (she never stops working), while the Ukrainian translation “*працює*” denotes active work without the negative connotation of “*ніколи не зупиняється*”. This transformation simplifies the sentence in the target language without distorting the author’s main message.



The translation employs a holistic transformation when rendering the idiom “never puts a foot wrong” as “*все робить ідеально*”, which means “not to make any mistakes”. This approach captures the essential meaning of the original expression without resorting to a literal translation. This fixed expression in English lacks a direct equivalent in Ukrainian. Thus, the holistic transformation is applied to English cinematic text into Ukrainian, mainly when there is no equivalent in the target language or the translation is inappropriate from the point of view of the text pragmatics.

Princess Anna

1. *So many other riveting things to read too.* – *Скільки ще цікавинок чекає nonepeдy* (Episode 4, season 5, *The Crown*).

In the target language line the English phrase “*riveting things*” is translated as “*цікавинок*”, retaining the same meaning as in the original, but using a different word that is more common to the Ukrainian audience. This suggests that the translator applied generalization.

The Ukrainian translation employs the phrase “*чекає nonepeдy*” to convey the meaning of “*too*” and “*things to read*”, which constitutes a form of modulation. This translation transformation is carried out to emphasize the general idea that there are numerous intriguing things yet to come while still maintaining the essential structure of the original expression “*to read too*”. This transformation effectively facilitates the communication of the intended content in the target language.

Princess Margaret

1. *You don't think I have reason to burn down my sister's home?* – *Ти задаєш, у мене не має причин спалити дім моєї сестри?* (Episode 4, season 5, *The Crown*).

The primary transformation in this sentence is antonymic translation.

- “*You don't think*” is transformed into “*Ти задаєш*” in Ukrainian. The shift from negative to affirmative semantics is typical of antonymic translation and reflects the contrasting linguistic approach.

- “*I have reason*” undergoes antonymic translation as well, becoming “*у мене не має причин*”. The transformation replaces the affirmative “have” with the negation “не має”, effectively conveying the opposite sense of possessing or lacking reasons.

In this context, antonymic translation is utilized to highlight the transition from the absence of reasons or disbelief (“*You don't think*”) to the presence of grounds or convictions (“*Ти задаєш*”). It mirrors the nuanced differences between the two languages while preserving the essential meaning of the sentence. This strategy of antonymic translation highlights the skillful adaptation of the original English expression into Ukrainian, conveying the subtleties of the speaker's doubt and belief, despite the apparent linguistic opposition.

Conclusions. The article examines the concept of “cinematic text translation”, highlighting its significant role in the field of translation, particularly within the



context of contemporary multimedia. The translation of cinematic materials requires specialized skills and an in-depth understanding of the specific attributes of this genre.

Within film translation, pragmatic adaptation emerges as a cornerstone, firmly dedicated to upholding the authenticity of the source material while seamlessly tailoring it to new cultural and linguistic nuances. The challenges inherent in translating films are manifested in the subtle reproduction of characters' cultural characteristics covering such aspects as proper names, idioms, humour and slang.

The study conducted in this article has revealed several translation transformations and strategies that ensure the adequacy of the target text while preserving the original intention of the author and the cultural essence of the cinematic content. In the process of studying the peculiarities of translation strategies and transformations, it was found that the translator applied several techniques to render lines from the TV series *The Crown* from English into Ukrainian. The result is a seamless interaction between linguistic and extralinguistic factors so that the target audience not only understands the words but also perceives the real message of the series.

As the film industry continues to evolve, further study and analysis of the translation of cinematic texts remains promising, and the skill of translators remains crucial in bridging the gap between languages and cultures, enabling the cinematic experience to transcend borders and reach diverse audiences.

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