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**CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC FEATURES IN THE LOCALIZATION
OF CARTOON CHARACTERS****Kapezova G.K.^{1*}**^{1*} «*Maqsut Narikbayev University*», Astana, Kazakhstan*Corresponding author: kapezova.2001@mail.ru**Abstract**

This article examines the localization of animated films into Kazakh, with a particular focus on conveying character accents and stylistic features. The study analyzes the official dubbed version of *Cars 2*, produced by *Cinema Tone Production*. The research demonstrates that translators employ creative solutions, such as incorporating idiomatic expressions and elements of the southern Kazakh dialect, to ensure successful adaptation. The analysis also highlights how precise lip-syncing and carefully crafted speech patterns contribute to making the localized content feel as natural as the original. The findings emphasize the necessity of a creative approach in audiovisual translation, as well as the importance of individually assessing each dialogue to maintain both the stylistic integrity and semantic accuracy of the source material.

Keywords: audiovisual translation, localization, dubbing, culture, cartoon, creative adaptation.

**МУЛЬТФИЛЬМ КЕЙІПКЕРІН ЛОКАЛИЗАЦИЯЛАУ ҮРДІСІНДЕ КЕЗДЕСЕТІН
МӘДЕНИ-ТІЛДІК ЕРЕКШЕЛІКТЕР****Капезова Г.К.^{1*}**^{1*} «*Мақсұт Нәрікбаев атындағы университет*», Астана, Қазақстан*Хат-хабар үшін автор: kapezova.2001@mail.ru**Аңдатпа**

Мақалада анимациялық мультфильмдерді қазақ тіліне локализациялау ерекшеліктері қарастырылып, кейіпкерлердің диалегі мен сөйлеу стилінің ерекшеліктеріне назар аударылады. Мысал ретінде *Cinema Tone Production* студиясы аударған «Көліктер 2» мультфильмінің ресми дубляж нұсқасы талдалған. Зерттеу нәтижесінде аудармашылардың локализацияны сәтті орындау үшін шығармашылық шешімдерді, соның ішінде қазақ тілінің оңтүстік диалектісінің тұрақты сөз тіркестерін көп қолданғанын көрсетеді. Сондай-ақ, талдау липсинг және кейіпкерлердің сөйлеу мәнері берілуі кейіпкерді жергілікті ретінде, түпнұсқа жұмыс сияқты қабылдауға ықпал ететінін көрсетеді. Қорытындылар түпнұсқаның стилі мен мағыналық дәлдігін сақтау үшін аудиовизуалды аудармада шығармашылық көзқарас пен әрбір диалогты жеке қарастыру қажеттілігін көрсетеді.

Кілт сөздер: аудиовизуалды аударма, локализация, дубляж, мәдениет, мультфильм, креативті аудару тәсілі.

**КУЛЬТУРНЫЕ И ЯЗЫКОВЫЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ ПРИ ЛОКАЛИЗАЦИИ
ПЕРСОНАЖА МУЛЬТФИЛЬМА****Капезова Г.К.^{1*}**^{1*} «*Университет имени Максута Нарикбаева*», Астана, Казахстан*Автор для корреспонденции: kapezova.2001@mail.ru**Аннотация**

Статья рассматривает особенности локализации анимационных мультфильмов на казахский язык, уделяя особое внимание к передаче акцентов и стилистических особенностей персонажей. В качестве примера анализируется дублированная версия мультфильма «*Тачки 2*», выполненная студией *Cinema Tone*.

Production. Исследование демонстрирует, что для успешной адаптации переводчики используют творческие решения, включая такие, как введение устойчивых выражений и использование стиля южного диалекта казахского языка. Анализ также показывает, что точный липсинг и продуманная передача речевых особенностей персонажей способствуют восприятию локализованного контента как оригинального. Выводы подчеркивают необходимость креативного подхода при аудиовизуальном переводе и индивидуального рассмотрения каждого диалога для сохранения стилистики и смысловой точности оригинала.

Ключевые слова: аудиовизуальный перевод, локализация, дубляж, культура, мультфильм, творческий подход.

Introduction

According to Whitman-Linsen, in contemporary society, film translation is influencing international community more than translation of books [1, pp.80-82]. Over the past 15-20 years, audiovisual translation has become a key component of digital media, enabling audiences to enjoy content from many gadgets eliminating the linguistic and cultural barriers. This barrier is solved through translation, which is the process of transferring an intended meaning from source language (SL) to target language (TL) [2, p.19]. Translating films presents numerous challenges, as it involves more than merely converting words. It requires a deep comprehension of the underlying meanings and cultural values embedded within the narrative. Bassnet (2002) stated that language and culture are interconnected elements within a system that influence one another and cannot be separated [3, p.6]. For this reason, audiovisual translators, editors and filmmakers work hard as a team to ensure the effective transfer of culture-specific references from SL to target audience. This process is more challenging than translation, and named localization. Localization involves taking a product and making it linguistically and culturally appropriate to the target locale (country, region and language) where it will be used and distributed [4, p. 31-32]. While Esselink primarily addresses the localization in the context of software and websites, his definition is equally applicable to audiovisual media, particularly animated films [4, p. 32]. In the case of cartoons, localization is always achieved through dubbing, as the target audience is children who may lack the reading skills or speed necessary to follow subtitles effectively.

The aim of this study is to analyze localization of cartoon through dubbing and to examine how cultural difference impact translation strategies. We all are aware of popularity gained Disney cartoons all over the world, including Kazakhstan. Dubbing and localization have long been integral to Disney's content strategy, with the company producing approximately 30 localized versions of each film in different languages. According to Kahaber Abashidze, CEO of Disney for Central and Eastern Europe, the CIS, Georgia, and Mongolia: "It is very important and valuable for us that beloved characters from popular films will speak the same language as the viewers in Kazakhstan." Consequently, Kazakh language became the 39th language of Walt Disney and entered the top seven main languages in which Hollywood films are available online. In other words, the Kazakh language is integrated into the global community through dubbing. We completely agree with Vadim Golenko, CEO of Meloman (the official distributor of Disney films in Kazakhstan), who expressed confidence that high-quality dubbing will bring both pleasure and benefit to those who speak Kazakh fluently and those who started to learn the Kazakh language [5]. As a native Kazakh speaker, the author personally appreciate the growing presence of localized films. This is positive news for parents who want their children to speak Kazakh but have been disappointed by the lack of Kazakh language content in mainstream animated films This study aims to analyze the translation approaches used in the

localization of animated films. The primary objective is to examine how a character's speech style is adapted when the original dialogue includes slang, dialects, or humorous language.

Background and theoretical part

Audiovisual translation (AVT) is becoming one of the central themes in the field of translation studies [6, pp. 2-4]. Interest in AVT emerged after 1920s, when "talking movies" advanced and arose needs for translation. The first conference on dubbing and subtitling carried out in Stockholm in 1987 [7]. Before 2017, English dubbing was primarily used for the localization of animated content for children, as well as for advertisements and video games [8]. Dubbing presents numerous constraints, including synchronization between text and image, lip-syncing, and word length restrictions [6, p. 20-21]. Additionally, audiovisual translators work collaboratively with editors and production teams, meaning final translation decisions are influenced by multiple stakeholders. Despite these difficulties, cartoons are always dubbed. It ensures comfort for children during watching, as they do not need to read subtitles and watch film at the same time. In dubbing, translators must ensure that the translated dialogue aligns with on-screen visuals while conveying meaning within the available time and space constraints [9, 26–38]. It is not just the script, another semiotic codes should be revised and even prioritized than translation itself [8]. Unlike traditional printed texts, audiovisual texts rely on two types of signs and use two different communication channels. These include audio-verbal signs (spoken words), audio-nonverbal signs (other sounds), visual-verbal signs (written text), and visual-nonverbal signs (facial expressions, gestures, etc.).

Translators make decision according to target audience, therefore, they need to know cultural distance between SL and TL. Cultural differences, local customs, habits and values require attention in the process of localization. Since incorporating local cultural elements and relevant symbols helps to make cartoon more appealing to the target audience. In translation theory, Eugene Nida's distinction between **formal** and **dynamic** equivalence remains one of the most widely recognized approaches. The formal approach prioritizes linguistic accuracy and fidelity to the source text, preserving its original structure and content. In contrast, the dynamic equivalence underscores the significance of cultural adaptation and the target audience's reception, striving to elicit a response equivalent to that of the original audience [10]. Contemporary translation practices advocate for hybrid strategies that effectively integrate both accuracy and adaptability.

Methodology

For the practical component of this study, we selected *Cars 2*, which was released in 2011 and dubbed into Kazakh in the same year by the studio "Cinema Tone Production". As a sequel to the widely acclaimed Disney-Pixar animated film *Cars*, it follows the main characters on an international journey as they compete in the World Grand Prix, with race locations spanning Japan, Italy, and the United Kingdom. The film blends fast-paced racing sequences with elements of espionage and humor, resulting in a more dynamic and adventurous narrative. My choice of this animated film for analysis is not fortuitous. It is the first officially dubbed cartoon in Kazakh for cinema release. Localization played a crucial role in its commercial success and widespread popularity [11]. As one of the first and most successful Kazakh-language dubbing projects, it serves as an ideal example for developing localization guidelines.

First of all, to conduct the analysis, the author compiled a bilingual script in an Excel table, comparing the original English dialogue with the Kazakh translation. we then watched both versions multiple times to identify creative translation strategies. The data were categorized using Nida's formal and dynamic equivalence framework, alongside an additional classification for **creative adaptation**. For this article, we focus on analyzing the speech of one character. The relevance of this study arises from the growing number of films to be translated

to Kazakh language and underscores the importance of effective strategies for adapting animated content.

Findings. Now let us move on to a comparative analysis of the translation of each utterance. For more detailed understanding, we created the following table when comparing the script of the original and dubbed version:

Table 1. Comparative Analysis: Original vs Dubbed

1	2	3
English SL	Kazakh TL	Analysis
Mater – Tow Mater, that's who – is here to help you.	Мәтр. Эвакуатор. Көмектесуге қашанда дайын.	In English language “Tow Mater” sounds a bit similar to “Tomato”. Tow means the type of vehicle, so it is wordplay. In Kazakh language it turned to “Мәтр”, adding “Эвакуатор”, focusing on the character’s function rather than preserving the original pun. Dynamic equivalence
Hey, but look on the bright side. This is your tenth tow this month, so that means it's on the house!	Осымен он рет шақырдын. Бұл жолы тегін апарайын. Бір жамандықтан бір жақсылығы бар деген.	In TL proverb was added, which means: every cloud has a silver lining. Dynamic equivalence
Wow! I can't believe they renamed the Piston Cup after our very own Doc Hudson!	Мәссаған! Бұлар сонда Поршен кубогына біздің Док Хадсонның атын берген бе?	The word “ Мәссаған ” is used to show accent. Thus in SL there is southern accent. Creative adaptation, dynamic equivalence
Ha-ha! Boy, this was the best day ever! And my favorite souvenir, this new dent.	Ха-ха, бұл бір есте қалатын күн болды. Бүгін мен олжалы болдым. Тағы да майыстырдық.	In TL we see added words for better explanation. Direct translation from TL: It was a memorable day. Today I was lucky. We mashed me again. Dynamic equivalence
Hey, that's exactly what I was thinking.	Олай болса, ойымыз бір жерден шықты!	Replaced to more usable phrase in TL. Dynamic equivalence
OK.	Мақұл.	This word is mostly used in Southern Kazakhstan, so here to express the accent. Creative adaptation, dynamic equivalence
He's the bestest race car in the whole wide world.	Бұл әлемде одан озар жүйрік жоқ.	Replaced to more usable phrase in TL. Dynamic Equivalence
'Cause he knows what's important. Every now and then he prefers just to slow down, enjoy life.	Не істеу керектігін ол өзі біледі. Әзірге, ол тізгін тарта тұруды жөн санайды.	Transferred to TL using idiom “тізгін тарту”, which means to stop. Also first sentence’s back translation: He will decide what to do himself. But in original meaning “he has priority”. In cartoon we prioritized his friends and close people. This meaning is lost in localization. Dynamic Equivalence
McQueen could drive circles around you.	Маккуин қалпағынды әлі шыр айналдырады.	In TL common phrase was used to make it nearer for target audience.

		Creative adaptation, dynamic equivalence
I didn't taste it!	Аузыма алмадым.	Replaced to more usable phrase in TL. Dynamic Equivalence
Hey, what's that?	Эй, тоқтандар.	Back translation: Hey, wait for me. Creative adaptation, dynamic equivalence
Look at me! I'm helping you already.	Көрдің бе? Маған ерсен, жаман болмайсың.	Back translation: Did you see? If you follow me, you won't be bad. Creative adaptation, dynamic equivalence
Hey, do you mind if I borrow a few bucks for one of them drinks?	Маған тиын-тебен бере тұра аласың ба қарызға?	There is a culture-specific reference in SL. Monetary term “bucks”, conveyed as “тиын-тебен”. Creative adaptation, dynamic equivalence
Free? Well, shoot, what am I doing here?	Тегін? Қасқа, онда мен нәғып тұрмын мында.	The word “Қасқа” added here to express the accent. Creative adaptation, dynamic equivalence
AH! Somebody get me water! Aah! Oh, sweet relief! Sweet relief.	Су беріңдерші, өліп қала жаздадым ғой. Ащысын ай.	“Өліп қала жаздадым ғой” added here to show more emotion. Creative adaptation, dynamic equivalence
Well, believe it. My new girlfriend just said so. Hey, there she is. Hey! Hey, lady! See you tomorrow!	Нан ұрсын. Жана ғана қызым өзі айтты маған. Өне, ана қыз. Хэй! Эй, қарындас. Ертең көріскенше...	“Нан ұрсын” adds more familiar phrase for local audience, as it usually used in everyday conversation. Creative adaptation, dynamic equivalence
Dad-gum, did I miss our date?	Әттегең-ай. Кешігіп қалдым ба, не?	The word “Әттегең-ай” expresses his regret. Creative adaptation, dynamic equivalence

Mater is fictional character, a rusty but lovable tow truck known for his kind heart and sharp sense of humor. In this sequel, Mater takes on a leading role in an international espionage mission, inadvertently caught up in it. Despite his lack of experience in the world of espionage, his simplicity, wit, and loyalty help him unravel complex conspiracies. Mater embodies the values of friendship, loyalty, and unwavering support.

The table clearly illustrates that dynamic equivalence is used in all these examples. Additionally, it highlights the efforts of translators in conveying the character's personality and even accent. Character's unique Southern accent and folksy manner of speaking resulted in using creative approach to localize them. It is also important to consider that some equivalents were chosen to ensure more precise lip-syncing. Furthermore, translators employed simple sentence structures, as the film's target audience primarily consists of preschool and school-aged children.

Discussion

Creative techniques were applied by incorporating locally familiar phrases. These additions, absent in the original script, were intentionally introduced during translation to align the dialogue with the cultural and linguistic expectations of the target audience. Examples include expressions like “*тиын-тебен*”, “*қасқа*”, “*мақұл*”, “*мәссаған*”, “*әттегең -ай*”,

and “*өліп қала жаздадым*”, such additions helped enhance the local flavor and relatability of the characters’ speech.

The word “Мақұл”, commonly used in northern Kazakhstan to mean “yes” or “okay,” was another regional adaptation. Its inclusion adds linguistic depth and realism, subtly anchoring the dialogue in a specific dialect without alienating the broader audience. Another creative example is “Нан ұрсын”, a culturally rich expression meaning “*may misfortune strike me*”, usually said when someone is caught lying or exaggerating. It’s a phrase loaded with cultural nuance and was used in a self-referential way by a character, reinforcing the localized tone and emotional color of the moment. The approach struck a balance between preserving the film’s original identity and making certain aspects more accessible to the target audience.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the localization of *Cars 2* into Kazakh by *Cinema Tone Production* has been highly successful. The use of idiomatic expressions and precise lip-syncing contributes to the seamless integration of the dubbed version, making it feel as natural as the original. This study examined how a character’s unique speech style - characterized by accent and humor - was adapted in the translation process. To maintain these features, translators employed creative solutions rather than relying on a direct word-for-word translation. Expressions from the southern Kazakh dialect were incorporated to enhance authenticity and ensure cultural relevance.

Thus, audiovisual translators must cultivate creativity and approach each dialogue individually to preserve both the meaning and stylistic nuances of the source material. The findings of this study highlight the importance of striking a balance between linguistic accuracy and cultural adaptation in film localization. Limitations of the study include its narrow scope: the analysis focused solely on one animated film and primarily considered linguistic aspects of localization. Practical recommendations involve encouraging Kazakh dubbing teams to establish stylistic guidelines based on cultural nuance could further improve localization quality. For future research, it would be beneficial to examine whether similar strategies are applied across other animated films localized into Kazakh. Expanding the dataset could help validate the conclusions and offer a broader understanding of translation trends.

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