

TECHNIQUES OF TRANSLATION USED WHILE RENDERING SUBTITLES

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Lucrarea are scopul de a efectua un studiu în domeniul traducerii filmelor, și mai exact, studierea metodelor și tehnicilor de traducere utilizate în subtitrări.

Cercetarea se bazează pe studierea unor articole, analiza unor lucrări teoretice în domeniul subtitrărilor și teoriei traducerii. De asemenea, aspectul practic implică efectuarea unei analize contrastive a subtitrelor serialului televizat „House M.D.”

Subtitling is a quite new domain. The best informations about this subject appeared during the 1990's, when Y.Gambier [1994] and J.Diaz Cintas [1999] monitored and stated ten methods of translating audiovisual programs. Subtitling may be defined as a translation pattern, which consists of the presentation, generally and the bottom of the screen (but not always - e.g. in Japan subtitles are put on the right vertical side of the screen) a written text in order to render: 1) the original dialogue of the speakers who are shown in the screen; 2) discursive elements which appear in the image (letters, insertions, graffiti, posters); 3) other discursive elements which are a part of the sound tape (such as songs, voices that represent certain TV channels, radio stations, computers).

As all the programs of subtitling constitute three important elements, the discourse (dialogue), image and subtitles, it very important to have an

interaction of these three elements, the capacity of a spectator to read the text at a certain speed and the dimensions of the screen where the images are shown, in order to determine the basic characteristics of the audiovisual support.

In the Republic of Moldova, the situation of subtitles is rather difficult. There is adopted a law that the movies are rendered with a dubbed Russian translation, and in the same time are provided of subtitles in Romanian, a process which makes the comprehension of the target audience more unclear. Though, there is spoken that another law would be applied to render the motion picture with its original script and with Romanian subtitles, a process that might be more acceptable and that might help the target audience not only to understand the situation, thanks to the original soundtrack, but also to make differences among cultures, and to study the source language.

The television series *House M.D.* is full of translation challenges, as it is full of medical terms, slangs, sarcasm and irony. As the TV series is about a maverick doctor, that is appreciated for his brilliant ideas, but hated by the majority of his patients and his crew, it is rather difficult to render the pressure present in almost all the situations of each episode.

As the main character, Gregory House, is the one and only who uses sarcasm and irony as a linguistic weapon against his, how he thinks, mindless colleagues, his language is very interesting to be studied, as well as his manners and behavior.

There are a plenty of methods used for the translation of subtitles in the mentioned TV show, the main ones being omission, addition, faithful translation, adaptation, amelioration, and neutralization, some of them being combined while rendering the target language script.

Omission is the shortage of some linguistic elements not necessary for the target text, also as the diminution from the content of replies in order to make the subtitling path accessible. A good example of the application of this technique might be noticed in the following lines, when doctor House uses his brilliant mind in order to attract the prison's doctor attention by describing her. There are noticed many sarcastic features, such as in line at 00:13:36 "You're a smart./ old-money, trust-fund girl", by adding at 00:13:57 "Antique locket-/ it's unpolished gold./ Not some hipster thing.", which in Romanian language where translated through omission and adequate substitution, but diminishing the sarcasm: "Ești o fată inteligentă,/ de modă veche" and "Medalion vechi din aur neprelucrat. Nu îl porți pentru că e la modă".

Another technique used while rendering subtitles is the one of transposition, which means the logical translation of a text, by changing the grammatical pattern from the source language into the target one. In the following example, when House was asked violently by one of the "leaders"

of the prison to smuggle Vicodin for him, and House refused to do that, he was beaten. The “leader” said at 15:44 “You’re a creative guy”, which sounded very sarcastic in the context of the situation, and it was rendered through the mentioned technique, by leaving away the adjective and using instead the noun: “Ai imaginație”.

Faithful translation is the process of producing the precise contextual meaning of the original within the constraints of the target language grammatical structures. A good example of applying this procedure is at the lines at 00:33:14 “I have polycystic/ kidney disease.”, where the text was translated adequately as “Am boală renală polichistică.”, by providing faithful translation with adaptation, as well as by using the method of equivalence for the medical term used.

Getting back to work, he saw a new painting on the wall, and by using as usual his sarcastic manner, he made a throughout analysis of the chef-d’oeuvre. In the line at 00:02:48: “Nice painting./ Blues and Greens./ Calming./ but with a hint of nurturing./ Totally offsets the stench/ of suffering and death.”. Into Romanian, it has a more sarcastic meaning, thanks to the functional replacement of words, by logically developing and ameliorating the idea: “Frumos tablou./ Verde și albastru./ Calmant, dar cu o ușoară/ tentă educativă./ Compensează în totalitate/ duhoarea suferinței și morții.”

In the same episode, another funny moment is the situation, when House, sitting in the bathroom, was pretending that he is in his own office. The audience, watching the whole episode, knows that House, when getting back to work, was lacked of his office, and during the episode he is making a kind of sabotage by sitting everywhere and doing everything is possible, of course in the legal limits. So, in the time at lines 00:28:56- 00:29:02 “-Enter!” /

“-It’s a bathroom”/ “-It explains the hole/ in the chair.”, when Wilson, another doctor, tried to talk with House while he was sitting in the bathroom and reading some medical journals, House again answered in a sarcastic manner to point out how bad is that he has not his own office. The final translation into Romanian was rendered as “Intră!” / “Este o baie.” “Se explică/ gaura din scaun”. This is a word-for-word translation, which is not quite adequate. Translating the sarcastic attitude of House could be done better, in order to keep this manner of him, by first, keeping the imperative structure of the first line, second, by applying modulation and the change of the verb *to be* in Romanian into *a (se) afla*, and third, translating the last lines as rhetorical questions, by applying modulation and the change of word order, and then the final variant would be “Intră!”/ “Te afli în baie.”/ “Iată de ce scaunul are gaură?”.

Among some technical measures there were used two lines maximum for each reply, but the only minus of the translation and of the source language

itself is that the script was rolling too fast, and there were images where the subtitles were kept one or two seconds

As a conclusion, it is understood that subtitles are a logical way of rendering the information, sometimes in a very shortened manner, with omissions, sometimes with additions or explicitations of the implicit information. Anyway, their purpose is to help the target audience understand what exactly happens on the screen. The texts, rendered on the TV screens, are like songs that sing along the road and help the reader to reach the destination. They should be clear and easy to see, lacked of frustration, and very friendly.

References:

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