

REPLACING A TITLE AS AN IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTIC WHILE TRANSLATING BOOK TITLES

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Rezumat: *Titlul cărții poate fi considerat cea mai importantă parte a oricărei lucrări, care are drept scop atragerea atenției cititorilor dezvăluind problemele-cheie ale operei. Acest articol discută tehnica înlocuirii titlului cărții la traducerea lui în altă limbă prin compararea titlului original și a traducerii acestuia.*

Cuvinte-cheie: *titluri, traducere, text, înlocuire, context, tehnică de traducere.*

Meditating on the idea of the essential components of a literary text, its title should be mentioned particularly. The key reason lies in the functions that a title implement, as it presents the shortest and, at the same time, the most précised version

of the literal text. It goes without saying that a title serves as a guide to a text for readers since it is the first thing people see on the cover of the book. Therefore, the title of the book is the most crucial part of any literal masterpiece that has the power to catch the readers' attention and reveal the key issues of the written work [7].

It is clear that the genre of the book has a great influence on the way of choosing its title. While titling a novel, for instance, the author has right to select any possible variant, while titles of non-fiction books have to be accurate and precise. It is not surprising, for these books have the aim to educate, to enrich our knowledge and to give us a prospect for the future development. This idea is supported by Kellie McGann in her article *The Ultimate Guide to Titles: Book Titles, Article Titles, and More*. Thus, books in psychology teach people to work on their inner state and therefore, the instructions have to be clear. It follows that only reading the title of the book the readers should understand what the contents of the book is about. For example, the book *The Willpower Instinct* by Kelly McGonigal is a perfect choice for those, who are determined to nurture self-control [4].

Expanding the idea that non-fiction book titles may be complicated, subtitles can solve this problem. According to the article *Book Titles: When Are Subtitles Necessary?* by Molly Blaisdell subtitles will help to reveal the book's vision providing additional information. For example, the book title *Hyperspace: A Scientific Odyssey Through Parallel Universes, Time Warps and the 10th Dimension* by Michio Kaku consists of two parts, namely the main title and the subtitle. Specifically, the subtitle gives the readers a clue, that the book refers to nonfiction literature and is focused primarily on studies of higher dimensions [1].

It should be kept in mind that a book acts as a facilitator of discovering a new culture due to the realia it contains, a particular way of lifestyle and special features of the speech. Consequently, the translation of the text should be done accurately and faithfully without distortions, and at the same time it should be adapted to target readers, whose culture might be different. It is not surprising, that in this regard a translator has such a great responsibility and plays a key role in transferring the text. Making a conclusion, it is worth mentioning the paramount idea that Korney Chukovsky, the Russian translator and literary critic expressed in his book «Искусство перевода», namely that a translator does not just copy a source text but uses it as a material to create a target text. Thus, a translator has to replicate the author's style, rhythm, system of images and ideas in such a way that the readers do not even suppose that a translator stands between them and the author of the text [2, pp. 56-57].

Accordingly, special attention should be paid to the translation of book titles. Pondering on this idea, N. A. Nikolina, the author of the methodological guide «Филологический анализ текста» stresses that even authors face obstacles while choosing a title for their work. For example, the great Russian author Leo Tolstoy had various versions how to name his epic novel *War and Peace*, namely *Three Seasons, Since 1805 until 1814, War* and finally *All is Well that Ends Well*. In other words, this gives the translators the possibility to replace the book title while translating it in order to make it easily perceived by the target readers [5, p. 121].

It is significant to note that translators are expected to provide such a variant of the translated book title that will have the same effect as the original one. Therefore,

replacing a book title in the translation process is a good strategy because the target audience belongs to a different culture and has background knowledge that, for sure, has specific characteristics. Here are examples when translators resorted to such a technique as *replacing a book title* while translating the following books:

His Dark Materials by Philip Pullman = «Тёмные начала» Филипа Пулмана;

The Catcher in the Rye by J. D. Salinger = «Над пропастью во ржи» Джерома Сэлинджера;

Watership Down by Richard Adams = «Обитатели холмов» Ричарда Адамса;

And Quiet Flows the Don by Mikhail Sholokhov = «Тихий Дон» Михаила Шолохова;

Diamonds to Sit on by Ilf and Petrov = «Двенадцать стульев» Ильи Ильфа и Евгения Петрова;

A Walk to Remember by Nicholas Sparks = «Спиши любить» Николаса Спаркса.

Even though, the book *His Dark Materials* by Philip Pullman refers to children's literature, the author's target was to show the myth about how the universe was made. Consequently, the word *His* is related to the *Creator*. However, the Russian title «Тёмные начала» does not convey the same meaning and lacks the allusion to supreme power of a God.

Another case of interest is the classical translation of the novel *The Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger. Rita Right-Kovaleva translated it into Russian in 1960 and used a fully free method of translation in order to make it be accepted better by the readers and therefore, the Russian audience knows this book as «Над пропастью во ржи».

Considering the following example, we can note that the title *Watership Down* by Richard Adams was translated as «Обитатели холмов» into Russian. For the English reader *Watership Down* is a *hill*, or *down*, in the English county of Hampshire, as part of the Hampshire Downs. Thus, this geographical name does not mean anything to the Russian people and eventually, the translator appealed to the plot of the adventure novel to find the appropriate solution. As rabbits have started an adventure in order to find a safe place for their home, they really can be considered as inhabitants of hills.

Analyzing the title of the Russian book «Тихий Дон» one can admit that some explanations have been added in the English variant. Since for the English reader the word *don* means “*a teacher at a university, especially Oxford or Cambridge*” as the Oxford Learner's Dictionary states [3], Stephen Garry has made changes while translating the title. Due to the verb *flow* and the definite article *the* the word *don* does not refer to a teacher anymore and denotes a natural flowing watercourse.

Examining how the book title «Двенадцать стульев» was translated from Russian into English one can notice a difference. Translator Elizabeth Hill, put emphasis on the plot of the book and therefore, the American publishing house *Harper* launched this book with the following title *Diamonds to Sit on* in 1930. It is possible that this solution is linked with the Great Depression in the USA in 1929-1933 and consequently, Elizabeth Hill used such a vivid translation of the book title on purpose to attract more readers.

Finally, the book title *A Walk to Remember* by Nicholas Sparks was translated into Russian as «Спиши любить». As the translator from the previous example, V.

Sergeeva was guided by the plot of the book as the main character Jamie Sullivan was terminally ill and still, she fell in love. Presumably, the translator wanted to stress that time is a valuable thing and the Latin statement *carpe diem* fits here perfectly.

Summarizing it up, replacing a title while translating book titles is one of the techniques that can be widely applied taking into account that the translated title will have the same strong connection with the text as the original one. According to the article *Coming Up With the Perfect Title for Your Novel* by online website NY book editors, a title is considered to be the best way to distribute the book through all the world and to increase the demand [6].

Book titles are the synonym of the first impression that the readers get having a look at a cover and that is one of the main reasons, why they should be picked up carefully. Consequently, every book title should sound attractive, be evocative and be the talk of the town.

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