Translation of English Film Titles in Croatian: a Corpus-based Analysis

Kopjar, Viktorija

Master's thesis / Diplomski rad

2020

Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj: **University of Rijeka, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences / Sveučilište u Rijeci, Filozofski fakultet**

Permanent link / Trajna poveznica: https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:186:386620

Rights / Prava: In copyright/Zaštićeno autorskim pravom.

Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2024-08-04**

UNIVERSITY OF RIJEKA

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Viktorija Kopjar

Translation of English film titles in Croatian: A corpus-based analysis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the M.A. in English Language and
Literature and Pedagogy at the University of Rijeka

Supervisor:

Mirjana Borucinsky, Ph. D.

Rijeka, September 2020

Abstract

The study focuses on an unfairly neglected area of research: the analysis of film title translations. A corpus of 606 titles was analyzed to identify the most commonly used translation strategy for translating film titles in Croatia and the reasons behind the strategies employed, with a special emphasis on the role of the film genre. Contrary to what was expected, free translation was found to be the most employed translation strategy, whereas the motivation for changing titles was attributed to linguistic and cultural differences, commercial interests and genre explication.

Key words: translation, Croatian, English, corpus, film title, film genre

Table of Contents:

1. Introduction

Film titles play a vital role in film's representation and marketing. The title needs to attract the audience's attention, provide viewers with just enough information about the plot and the genre to spark interest, and remain mysterious at the same time. The translation of a film title from one language to another is even more challenging considering linguistic and cultural differences and the constraints that local film distributors face.

The main role of a film title is to attract the audience's attention, however, translated film titles also attract their fair share of criticism usually appearing in forum discussions and newspaper articles. The critics most often find fault with mistranslations and free translations that do not resemble the original titles, yet they are often unaware of the challenges that the translators face and the reasons behind these translations.

Studies that focus on translations of film titles in Croatia remain scarce to this day, so one of the few valuable insights are the ones offered by Jutronić and Karabatić (2016) and Gabrić et al. (2017). This study aims to offer a small contribution to this area of research by focusing on dominant translation strategies and procedures employed in the translation of film titles in Croatia, with a special focus on the possible reasons behind the strategies and genre differences.

2. Film title

Jutronić and Karabatić (2016) define the title simply as "the name by means of which a work can be identified (pg. 86)". This simple definition emphasizes the relationship between the title and the work represented. Surdyk and Urban (2016) view this relationship as subordinate because they define film titles as paratexts, meaning that the title depends on the work that it identifies and as such it should not be analyzed independently. Hence, in the context of film title analysis, the film title is inevitably shaped by the film since it represents its content and/or genre and should not be analyzed apart from the film itself.

Liu (2019) compares a film title with a dish name saying that the "quality of the dish name affects the appetite of diners (pg. 139)". Likewise, Bai (2018) notes that the title represents a film's eyes, "having double effect of art appreciation and commercial advertisements, and directly playing the role of guidance and promotion (pg. 119)". These metaphors are supported by Bae and Kim's (2019) study on the importance of informative film titles which showed that informative titles that reveal film's plot and/or storyline positively affect its box office performance.

2.1. Film title functions

The importance of the film title is supported by the various functions it performs. Yu and Yushan (2019) identify informative, vocative and aesthetic functions of film titles. The informative function means that the title should provide viewers with the information about the plot and the genre. The role of the vocative function is to attract the viewer's attention and the aesthetic function promotes the film as a fine art. Nord (1995, cited in Surdyk and Urban, 2016) devised a more detailed classification of title functions which she grouped into essential (distinctive, metatextual and phatic) and optional functions (referential, expressive, appellative):

- Distinctive function: the title has to be distinct from other titles in the culture

- Metatextual function: the title has to reflect the genre to which it belongs

- Phatic function: the title should attract the audience's attention

- Referential function: the target audience should be familiar with the information in the title

- Expressive function: expressed emotions should be in line with the belief system of the target culture

- Appellative function: appellative intention should take into account the target audience's expectations

3. Film title translation process

The process of film title translation is not as simple as one may think and it is important to be aware of it to avoid incorrect conclusions or criticism. Armagan (2011, cited in Ross, 2013) claims that global distributors request titles while films are still in production. Consequently, local distributors have to base their title on "the proposed US title, other promotional titles, taglines, trailers, teasers, poster drafts, character descriptions and sometimes a full-copy of the script (pg. 259)". The proposed local title and its back-translation are sent to the relevant headquarters that approve or reject the title. Limon (2012) confirms that the film company demands a back-translation to have control over the film's marketing.

A Slovene director of a distribution and marketing company, Andrej Novak, identified important factors that guide their film title decision (Novak, 2011, cited in Ross, 2013, pg. 253).

- Is the translation literal enough (when needed)?

- Does it capture the meaning of the original title?

- Is the title cinematic (fresh, bigger than life)?

- Is it commercial?

- Is it in the language of the target audience?

- Does it leave options for sequels?

- Does it fit in with the graphics on the poster and other materials?

- Is it offensive (trying to avoid it)?

- Is it provocative (when the target audience is appropriate)?

- Is it the same as the local translation of the book?

Ross (2013) notes that out of these 10 criteria, only the first two focus on the relationship between the source and the target title, while the other criteria are more oriented towards the commercial success of the film, the target audience and new context in general. It is important

to note that the criteria mentioned are in line with the film title functions previously described. Creating a cinematic, provocative and commercial title indicates a thoughtful consideration of phatic and appellative functions whereas referential and expressive functions can be recognized in thought given to the use of the language of the target audience and avoidance of offensive language.

Gabrić et al. (2017) offer valuable information for the Croatian context. Their calls to Croatian film distributors were not returned, but they managed to get in touch with Branimira Borčić Nemec, head of the Translation Department at the Croatian Radio and Television (HRT). Borčić Nemec says that translators suggest the title, but that it has to be approved by the editor of the film department. "Borčić Nemec notes that there are specific rules at the Croatian Radio and Television limiting possible translations. For example, foreign words are avoided when possible, normative accuracy is praised, while puns and wordplay are encouraged (Gabrić et al, 2017, pg. 5)".

3.1. The importance of film genre in title translation

Another important factor that is considered in title translation is the genre (Limon, 2012). Genre characteristics differentiate one genre from another, but each genre can incorporate subgenres as a result of genre complexity determined by target audience, plot, characters, aim and setting (Popović, 2012). Undeniably, the following genres are not the only ones, but are most commonly recognized:

Action films cover several subgenres including war, crime and historical films where the social laws are governed by conflict that needs to be resolved in a violent way (Gilić, 2007). Fans of this genre get their thrills from battle and racing scenes that are typical for action films.

The main goal of the comedy genre is to make the audience laugh by "exaggerating situations, the way of speaking, the action and characters (…) and it covers subgenres such as

romantic comedy, action comedy, crime comedy, comedy-drama, black comedy and musical comedy" (Surdyk and Urban, 2016, pg. 155). Happy endings, irrational events, characters from different social backgrounds and plot twists are often associated with the comedy genre.

In stark contrast to comedy, drama is mostly linked with existential problems, inner and mutual conflict, intense emotions, and social problems that mirror the problems of the real world (Gilić, 2007).

As comedy aims to elicit laugher, horror aims to elicit fear. Horror, panic, jump scares and oftentimes gothic motifs guide the plot and attract specific audience in search for adrenaline rush (Gilić, 2007).

The genre of animated films is unlike other genres as it targets a very specific audience, namely children. As a result, the heroes are oftentimes children, the adults are playful and childlike and the social laws are quite simplified (Gilić, 2007).

Limon (2012) notes that Slovenian film distributors confirm that literary films and dramas are mostly translated directly while comedies, action and crime films are more likely to be translated indirectly. The study conducted by Šidiškytė and Tamulaitienė (2013) only partially supports Limon's (2012) claim. They compared translations of comedy and thriller titles in Lithuanian and Russian and literal translation was found to be the most commonly used translation procedure of comedy titles in Lithuanian and thriller titles into Lithuanian and Russian. Still, it must be noted that literal translation was closely followed by transcreation that was even identified as the most frequently used procedure in translation of comedy titles into Russian (Šidiškytė and Tamulaitienė, 2013).

4. Translation procedures

The categorization of translation procedures proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet in 1958 is one of the most cited categorizations. Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) proposed seven translation procedures which they grouped into two main translation methods, direct and oblique translation. Direct or literal translation is employed when it is possible to render "the source language message element by element into the target language (pg. 84)" and the procedures belonging to this category are borrowing, calque and literal translation. However, when direct translation results in an unacceptable translation, translators turn to transposition, modulation, equivalence and adaptation, i.e., oblique translation procedures. A translation is deemed unacceptable if literal translation "gives another meaning, has no meaning, is structurally impossible, does not have a corresponding expression within the metalinguistic experience of the TL or has a corresponding expression, but not within the same register" (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1958, pg. 87).

- Borrowing: use of the source language word or expression in the translated text (e.g. lockdown, party)

- Calque: type of borrowing in which a term is borrowed from the source language, but its constituting elements are literally translated in the target language (e.g. skyscraper translated as *neboder* [skyscraper])

- Literal translation: word for word transfer from the source language into the target language in which the adaptation to the target language structure is justified (e.g. She is a doctor. – *Ona je doktorica.* [She is a (female) doctor.] – adaptation to the target language structure is visible both in the omission of indefinite article and the use of cases in Croatian)

- Transposition: replacement of one word class with another that does not affect the meaning (e.g. You are lying. – Ti si lažljivac. [You are a liar])

7

- Modulation: change of the form which is achieved by changing the point of view (e.g. The test was not difficult. – *Ispit je bio lagan*. [The test was easy] - from negative to positive viewpoint)

- Equivalence: the expression in the source language is replaced with its equivalent in meaning in the target language (e.g. It's raining cats and dogs. – *Lije kao iz kabla*. [Like it is pouring from a bucket.])

- Adaptation: replacement of the source language situation that is not familiar to the target language culture with a familiar equivalent in the target culture (e.g. the brand name Kleenex replaced with Croatian brand name *Violeta*)

There is no doubt that the presented typology is a valuable asset in the translation process, however, bearing in mind the nature of film title translation and the aim of this thesis, some of the procedures are more applicable than others. To illustrate, Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) note that adaptation is often used in the translation of book and film titles. Baker and Saldanha (2009) support that view and note that adaptation is associated with advertising, audiovisual translation and children's literature. They define adaptation in slightly broader terms as "a set of translative interventions which result in a text that is not generally accepted as a translation but is nevertheless recognized as representing a source text (Baker and Saldanha, 2009, pg. 3)".

Newmark's (1988) classification borrows some of the procedures introduced by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) such as transposition, modulation and calque that he renames into through-translation, but Newmark (1988) proposes new procedures that offer more nuanced differences:

- Transference: similar to the previously mentioned borrowing (e.g. party), but it also includes transliteration, i.e., conversion to different alphabet (e.g. Chinese or Cyrillic)

- Naturalization: adaptation of SL expression to TL pronunciation and morphology (e.g. performance as *performans*)

- Cultural equivalent: SL cultural expression translated by TL cultural expression (e.g. I got an A. – *Dobio sam 5.* [I got a 5]).

- Functional equivalent: use of a culture-free TL expression that neutralizes SL expression (e.g. MoMA – *muzej* [museum])

- Descriptive equivalent: short description of an unfamiliar SL expression (e.g. brunch – *obrok između doručka i ručka* [the meal between breakfast and lunch])

- Synonymy: use of a TL expression similar in meaning to the SL expression (e.g. She was happy with the result. – *Bila je zadovoljna rezultatom.* [She was satisfied with the result.])

- Recognized translations: use of established expression in TL (e.g. Breaking Bad series as *Na putu prema dolje.* [On the way down.])

- Compensation: compensating for a loss of meaning or effect in one part of the sentence in another (e.g. a pun added in the next sentence)

- Reduction and expansion: Newmark (1988) does not precisely define these procedures, but Delisle et al. (1999) define expansion as the use of more words to reinforce or re-express the idea (e.g. That's it! – *To je baš to!* [That's exactly it]). Similarly, reduction can be defined as the use of less words to create concise and economical expressions (e.g. I usually have breakfast around 9. – *Doručkujem oko 9.* [I have breakfast around 9.])

- Paraphrase: amplification or explanation of meaning or text (e.g. She is a flake. – *Ona nije pouzdana, ne može joj se vjerovati.* [She is not reliable, she cannot be trusted.])

Like Vinay and Darbelnet (1958), Newmark (1988) is also oriented more towards the text itself and as such it is not entirely suitable for the purposes of film title translation that has its own rules. Nonetheless, Newmark's typology is certainly detailed and takes into consideration several cultural factors important for film title translation. Therefore, in combination with Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958) typology, it serves as a basis for new typologies that are oriented more towards the film title translation which will be presented in the next section.

4.1. Film title translation typologies

Film title translation is a recognized area of research in China (Yin, 2009; Shi, 2014; Bai, 2018; Yu and Yushan, 2019; Liu, 2019) and many Chinese researchers focused on the strategies used to translate film titles from English into Chinese. In that process, they devised different typologies for film title translation. Liu's (2019) typology includes literal translation, free translation, transliteration and mixed translation as a combination of previously mentioned strategies. Even though this typology covers the main categories, it is too broad as it only focuses on the dominant methods while the specific procedures remain overlooked. Bai's (2019) typology is quite similar as it comprises literal translation, free translation, transliteration and other translation strategies where incorrectly translated and expanded titles were placed. However, placing incorrectly translated titles and expanded titles in the same category seems confusing. Yin's typology (2009) is more elaborate as it includes explication (adding details about the story), adaptation (adapting cultural references) and providing a new title, in addition to literal translation and transliteration. The presence of literal translation and transliteration in all typologies indicates that these are the dominant procedures in Chinese film title translation,

whereas the category of free translation covers several translation procedures which were only acknowledged in several typologies.

Asian researchers dominate in the area of film title translation, but European researchers have offered valuable contributions as well. For their study of Lithuanian and Russian corpus of titles, Šidiškytė and Tamulaitienė (2013) used Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958) classification, but they added an additional category of transcreation to which they assigned titles where "the translator's choice was not to translate, but to create (pg. 73)". Using an established typology is certainly acceptable, still, the typology proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) is not necessarily appropriate for film titles that have distinct functions and are translated in a different way. Surdyk and Urban (2016), who analyzed Polish title translations, based their typology on Newmark's (1988) procedures, with certain modifications. Their typology includes transference, naturalization, literal translation, functional equivalent, expansion, reduction and free (creative) formulation. This typology is more in line with the nature of film title translation as it covers the dominant trends in film title translation. Nonetheless, it must be noted that each typology reflects the aim of the study and consequently includes more or less categories.

Gabrić et al. (2017), who analyzed translations of Croatian titles, suggested a comprehensive typology that was based on Schubert's (2004), but slightly modified. Their typology comprises direct translation, free translation (addition, subtraction, shift, substitution), transcreation and transcription (complete transcription, addition, subtraction and substitution). The four main categories cover the dominant trends in translation of film titles while the subcategories show more nuanced differences in the main categories. Another advantage of the proposed typology manifests itself in the possibility to compare the same procedure, for instance addition, in two main categories of free translation and transcription. Moreover, as Gabrić et al. (2017) already used this typology for the analysis of Croatian film titles, it seems to be the most appropriate one for this study. Nevertheless, upon analyzing the typology and

after the preliminary analysis, functional equivalent was recognized as a missing category that would point to cultural difficulties in film title translation. Consequently, it was added to the category of free translation resulting in the final version of the typology that will be used in this study (the examples were taken from the preliminary analysis):

1. Direct translation: (e.g. Red Sparrow (2018) – *Crveni vrabac* [Red Sparrow]) or literal translation was identified as the most frequently employed translation strategy in title translation (Limon, 2012; Ross, 2013; Šidiškytė and Tamulaitienė, 2013; Gabrić et al. 2017; Jiang, 2018). It is used when it is possible to render a semantically similar message, although "certain connotations have been known to get lost in a direct translation due to cultural and/or linguistic differences (Gabrić et al., 2017, pg. 9)". To illustrate, Phantom Thread (2017) was translated into Croatian directly as *Fantomska nit* [Phantom Thread], but the link with the word threat was lost in the process.

2. Free translation: a translation with a semantic connection to the original that went through certain modifications, including addition, subtraction, substitution (Gabrić et al., 2017) and functional equivalent.

> **2.1. Addition**: (e.g. Bad Times at the El Royale (2018) – *Teška vremena u motelu El Royale* [Bad Times at the El Royale motel]) - expansion of the original title by adding new lexical-semantic structures.
>
> **2.2. Subtraction**: (e.g. My Big Fat Greek Wedding 2 – *Moje grčko vjenčanje 2* [My Greek Wedding 2]) – is defined as "a partial removal of lexical-semantic structures during the translation process (Gabrić et al., 2017, pg. 10)"
>
> **2.3. Shift**: (e.g. Jurrasic World: Fallen Kingdom (2018) – *Jurski svijet: Pad kraljevstva* [Jurrasic World: The Fall of the Kingdom]) or transposition involves a change in the

grammar from SL to TL, for instance, from singular to plural or from one word class to another (Newmark, 1988)

2.4. Substitution: (e.g. Den of Thieves (2018) – *Bratstvo lopova* [Brotherhood of Thieves]) "includes a swap of lexical-semantic structures (Gabrić et al., 2017, pg. 10)"

2.5. Functional equivalent: (e.g. The Post (2017) – *Novine* [Newspapers]) is defined as the use of a culture-free TL expression that neutralizes SL expression (Newmark, 1988). For instance, The Post is a reference to The Washington Post, American daily newspapers, which was translated as *Novine* [Newspapers]. Surdyk and Urban (2016) define this category more loosely as "the substitution of a culturally obscure word (known to the source culture) with an equivalent known to the target culture (e.g. Halloween (2018) – Noć vještica [Night of Witches]. Both definitions will be used as criteria for this category.

3. Transcreation: (e.g. Call Me By Your Name (2017) – *Skrivena ljubav* [Hidden love]) – results in a translation that has no linguistic equivalence with the original title, owing to the fact that "the translator's choice was not to translate, but to create (Šidiškytė and Tamulaitienė, 2013, pg. 73)".

4. Transcription: "a strategy whereby exact lexical-semantic structures from the original title are retained, with possible modifications including addition, subtraction and substitution" (Gabrić et al., 2017, pg. 11).

4.1. Complete transcription: e.g. Black Panther (2018) – Black Panther

4.2. Addition: e.g. Rampage (2018) – Rampage: *Totalni kaos* [Rampage: Total chaos]

4.3. Subtraction: e.g. Dr. Seuss' The Grinch (2018) – Grinch

4.4. Substitution: e.g. Sicario: Day of the Soldado – Sicario 2: *Rat bez pravila* [Sicario 2: The war without rules]

13

5. The present study

5.1. Aims and hypotheses

The aim of the present study is to identify the most commonly used translation strategy for translating film titles in Croatia, as well as to determine if film genre influences the choice of the strategy employed. In relation to that, the following hypotheses were formed:

H1: Direct translation is the most commonly used translation strategy in the translation of film titles in Croatia.

H2: The genre influences the choice of the strategy employed.

H3: Comedies, action, horror and animated films are most likely to be translated indirectly.

5.2. Corpus

A corpus of 606 titles in English and their corresponding translations in Croatian was compiled for the purpose of the research. The titles were taken from the cinplexx.hr archive for a time frame from 2015 to 2020 to focus on the most recent trends in title translation in Croatia. The corpus comprised a variety of genres including drama, comedy, action, horror, mystery, thriller, adventure and animation.

5.3. Procedures:

The corpus was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The titles were analyzed and grouped according to the translation strategy employed and the percentages for each category and subcategory were calculated. The titles that were found to belong to two main categories (e.g. transcription and direct translation;transcription and free translation) were placed in a separate category entitled combinations. With respect to genre, drama, comedy, action, animation and horror films were identified as the dominant genres appearing in all categories

in significant number. All films belonging to the same genre were grouped together and the percentages for each translation strategy were calculated.

6. Results and analysis

6.1 Quantitative analysis

6.1.1. Translation strategies

As it was previously described, the data were classified in one of the five translation strategies and the percentages for each category were calculated, resulting in the following:

Table 1. Representation of translation strategies

Translation strategy	%
Direct translation	24.4 %
Free translation	28.4 %
Transcreation	14.5 %
Transcription	23.3 %
Combinations	9.4 %

As the table shows, free translation is the most employed strategy in title translation (28.4 %), followed by direct translation (24.4 %), transcription (23.3 %), transcreation (14.5 %) and combinations (9.4 %). Although free translation was identified as the most employed strategy, it must be noted that the differences between direct translation, free translation and transcription are fairly small.

The percentages were calculated not only for the main categories, but also for the subcategories of free translation and transcription, yielding the following results:

Table 2. Subcategories of free translation

Free translation	%
Addition	20.1 %
Subtraction	9.2 %
Shift	17.2 %
Substitution	41 %
Functional equivalent	12.6 %

Table 3. Subcategories of transcription

Transcription	%
Complete	69.5 %
Addition	13.5 %
Subtraction	6.4 %
Substitution	10.6 %

Table 2 shows the representation of subcategories within the free translation strategy where substitution stands out as the most commonly employed procedure (41 %), followed by addition (20.1 %), shift (17.2 %), functional equivalent (12.6 %) and subtraction (9.2 %). Table 3 illustrates the representation of subcategories within the transcription strategy where complete transcription is without doubt the most common transcription procedure (69.5 %), followed by addition (13.5 %), substitution (10.6 %) and subtraction (6.4 %). If we compare the subcategories of addition, subtraction and substitution that can be found in both categories, the numbers imply that addition is more often employed than subtraction in both categories, whereas substitution is more often used in free translation than in transcription. Addition mostly includes the insertion of words that explicate plot and/or genre or indicate that the film is part of the series, whereas subtraction often includes removal of series markers and shortening of overly long titles (Gabrić et al., 2017). The findings imply that there are more cases of genre and plot explication than title shortening. However, qualitative analysis will provide us with more information on this matter.

6.1.2. Genre differences

Table 4. Genre representation in the main translation strategies

Strategy Genre	Direct translation	Free translation	Transcreation	Transcription	Combinations
Drama	35.5 %	22 %	14.9 %	21.3 %	6.4 %
Comedy	21 %	26.7 %	24.8 %	21 %	6.6 %
Action	15.5 %	29.6 %	7 %	33.8 %	14 %
Animation	19 %	36.9 %	19 %	15.5 %	9.5 %
Horror	23.7 %	30.5 %	20.3 %	18.6 %	6.8 %

Table 4 shows genre representation in the main translation strategies. The titles belonging to the drama genre are mostly translated directly (35.5 %), followed by free translation (22 %), transcription (21.3 %), transcreation (14.9 %) and combinations (6.4 %). The dominant strategies of the comedy genre are free translation (26.7 %) and transcreation (24.8 %), followed by transcription and direct translation (21 % both), and combinations (14 %). The genre of action films prevails in the transcription category (33.8 %), followed by free translation (29.6 %), direct translation (15.5 %), combinations (14 %) and transcreation (7 %). These findings support Limon's (2012) claim that drama films are mostly translated directly while comedy and action films are more likely to be translated indirectly. Direct translation is indeed the prevailing strategy of the drama genre, while free translation and transcreation are the two dominant strategies for the comedy genre. Meanwhile, the dominant strategy in the action genre is transcription, although free translation is represented in large numbers as well. The high percentage of transcription in the action genre could be due to the numerous superhero action movies whose names are often left untranslated (e.g. Spider-Man, Batman) (Jutronić and Karabatić, 2016).

Animated films attract a very specific audience, namely children. For this reason, it was hypothesized that these titles will mostly be translated indirectly, to ensure that the parents and children recognize the animated film titles instantly. The findings do support these expectations as free translation was identified as the leading strategy of this genre (36.9 %), followed by direct translation and transcreation (both 19 %), transcription (15.5 %) and combinations (9.5 %).

Likewise, the horror genre attracts a specific audience too, lovers of jump scares in search of an adrenaline rush. For the same reason, it was expected that these titles will be translated indirectly to explicate the film genre. The findings are in line with these expectations, as free translation proves to be the most employed strategy (30.5 %), followed by direct translation (23.7 %), transcreation (20.3 %), transcription (18.6 %) and combinations (6.8%).

6.2. Qualitative analysis - Translation strategies

With regard to qualitative analysis, out of 606 titles that were analyzed, the examples that were chosen are viewed as the most interesting or the best representatives of the category.

6.2.1. Direct translation

Direct translation is used when it is possible to render linguistically and semantically similar message, although certain connotations could be lost in the process (Gabrić et al., 2017). It was often neglected in film title translation research because studies mostly dealt with difficulties in film title translation (Gabrić et al., 2017). It is unfortunate that this was the case as direct translation has much to offer, especially when the languages belong to different families resulting in linguistic adaptations. There are, of course, examples of direct translation that result in a full equivalent. To illustrate:

(1)   Truth or Dare (2018) – *Istina ili izazov* [Truth or dare]

 Not only is this translation fully equivalent linguistically, but it also successfully conveys the cultural connotation, as the game of truth and dare exists and is widely known in Croatia. Nevertheless, certain connotations have been known to get lost along the way as the following examples illustrate:

(2)   Fifty Shades of Grey (2015) – *Pedeset nijansi sive* [Fifty shades of grey]

In the English title, Grey does not only denote the color, but it also serves as a reference to Christian Grey, the main character of the movie. Preserving both meanings would not be possible in Croatian, so the allusion to the main character was lost.

(3)   Hot Pursuit (2015) – *Vruća potjera* [Hot pursuit]

Although translated directly, the Croatian title does not have the same effect. Hot pursuit is defined as "close continuous pursuit of a fleeing suspected lawbreaker"[1]. The exact equivalent of the term hot pursuit does not exist in Croatian, but both titles could be viewed as a reference to the main characters, two attractive women. *Vruća žena* [hot woman] is a collocation in Croatian that describes a passionate and beautiful woman[2].

(4)   Like a Boss (2020) – *Kao šefica* [Like (a female) Boss]

The title is both a reference to the story as the main characters need to learn to act like a boss, and at the same time it is an allusion to the expression like a boss that is "used to say that someone does something very well"[3]. This popular expression is often used in memes in a variety of contexts and as such it is familiar to Croatian audiences, at least to the younger audience. The Croatian translation does not convey the allusion to the popular expression. On the contrary, it even has a negative connotation as *kao šefica* could be interpreted in a derogatory way as someone who is just acting like a person in charge, despite having no real power or responsibility.

Naturally, language differences affect the translation process. One such difference is the one between natural gender languages such as English and grammatical gender languages like Croatian. The nouns in Croatian are gender marked which is not the case in English:

(5)   Spy (2015) – *Špijunka* [Spy (female)]

---

[1] hot pursuit. 2020. In Merriam-Webster.com. Retrieved from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hot%20pursuit
[2] vruć. 2020. In Hrvatski jezični portal. Retrieved from http://hjp.znanje.hr/index.php?show=search
[3] like a boss. 2020. In Cambridge Dictionary. Retrieved from https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/like-a-boss

The title in English is gender neutral, as spy could denote both a male and a female spy whereas the Croatian title makes it clear that the main character is a woman. The Croatian title has an additional connotation meaning spyhole which could confuse the Croatian audience.

(6) The Danish Girl (2015) – *Dankinja* [The Danish Girl]

The Croatian title *Dankinja* is already gender marked and there is no need for a gender specific noun *girl* that can be found in the English title.

Overall, the source language titles in the direct translation category predominantly consisted of one or two-word expressions that did not pose significant challenges to translators. Puns, rhyme, proper names, humor or culture-specific content that could cause problems (Surdyk and Urban, 2016) were not present. Therefore, title simplicity partially explains the strategy employed. An additional explanation could be the significant representation of the drama genre in the direct translation category, which is more likely to be translated directly (Limon, 2012).

6.2.2. Free translation

Free translation is a translation with a semantic connection to the original that went through certain modifications, including addition, subtraction, shift and substitution (Gabrić et al., 2017). An additional category, functional equivalent, was added to identify changes in translation that were caused by cultural differences.

Addition

Titles are usually as short as possible, for this reason, addition of information is expected to have a clear purpose, for instance, indicating that a film is a part of a series:

(7) Furious 7 (2015) – *Brzi i žestoki 7* [Fast and Furious 7]

The original title of the series was Fast and Furious, so the Croatian version preserved the established title to ensure film recognizability. Gabrić et al. (2017) claim that most additions include series markers, which is not entirely in line with the findings of this study, as only several examples of series markers were found. A more common reason for addition was explication, either of genre, plot or unknown concepts:

(8)   Hereditary (2018) – *Naslijeđeno zlo* [Hereditary evil].

The case in point supports the aforementioned genre explication by means of addition of the emotionally salient word *zlo* [evil]*,* that indicates that the movie belongs to the horror genre.

(9)   The House (2017) – *Kuća sreće* [House of happiness]

Similarly, the addition of *sreća* [happiness] in this case serves as genre and plot explication. The plot of this comedy revolves around a couple who cannot afford their daughter's tuition so they start up a casino in their neighbor's house.

Emphasis, i.e., creating a more dramatic title in the target language was another reason for addition. The addition of *baš* (just, really, precisely) was used for this purpose:

(10)   Why Him? (2016) – *Zašto baš on?* [Why precisely him?]

(11)   Everything, Everything (2017) – *Sve, baš sve* [Everything, really everything]

For the most part, the motivations for addition can be discerned. Creating a more dramatic expression, alluding to the genre or the story and indicating that a movie is a part of the series are reasons that were identified in this study. Motivation for other additions remains unclear at the moment.

Subtraction

Subtraction is mostly used to create a more economical expression, but it is interesting to see which parts of the source language title were excluded:

(12)   Mike and Dave Need Wedding Dates (2016) – *Traže se pratilje za vjenčanje*

         [Searching for Wedding Dates]

In this case, the reference to the main characters was not preserved in the Croatian translation. This could be due to the Croatian version of wedding dates, *pratilje za vjenčanje,* which is already longer than the expression in the original title. Another explanation could be creation of a more neutral expression that does not allude to American names, thus bringing the movie closer to the target audience.

Redundant series markers were identified as the prevailing reason for subtraction by Gabrić at al. (2017), examples of which were identified in the present study as well:

(13)   Fifty Shades of Grey 2: Fifty Shades Darker (2017) – *Pedeset nijansi mračniji*

         [Fifty shades darker]

The Fifty Shades trilogy is popular enough that it does not require additional clarification in terms of series markers. The Croatian title is the same as the local translation of the book title, which could explain this subtraction, as distributors tend to use the same title (Ross, 2013).

In some cases, the reason behind subtraction is avoidance of negative connotations (Jutronić and Karabatić, 2016) as could be the case in the title:

(14)   American Sniper (2014) – *Snajperist* [The Sniper]

Marsella (2011) describes the culture of the USA as a culture of war, saying that the results of such a policy reduced the USA's moral authority. The Croatian title loses the association with American culture, possibly because of the negative association with the American pursuit of

war. Jutronić and Karabatić (2016) mention a similar example of Captain America: The First Avenger that was released only as The First Avenger in some countries.

Motivation for subtraction was successfully identified in all cases. It was mainly used for creation of economical expressions, either because the title was too long or it included redundant series markers, or in some cases for avoidance of negative connotations or cultural elements that are not relevant for the target culture.

Shift

Shifts involve a change in grammar and as such it was expected that the differences in translation will be attributed to language differences. A typical case is replacement of verbs with nouns:

(15)   Digging for fire (2015) – *U potrazi za vatrom* [In quest for fire]

(16)   Jupiter Ascending (2015) – *Jupiter u usponu* [Jupiter in Ascent]

(17)   Playing with Fire (2019) – *Igra s vatrom* [A game with fire]

Literal translation would not necessarily result in incorrect translation in these examples but the use of nouns creates a more natural expression in Croatian.

Another recurring example was noticed regarding the replacement of *fallen* with *the fall*:

(18)   London has Fallen (2016) – *Pad Londona* [The Fall of London]

(19)   Angel has Fallen (2019) – *Pad anđela* [The Fall of an Angel]

(20)   Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom (2018) – *Jurski svijet: Pad kraljevstva* [The Fall of the   Kingdom]

The present perfect, a tense that does not exist in the Croatian language, was used in the examples 18 and 19, which could explain the use of nouns in these examples. Also, the chosen

translation is shorter and more dramatic than the direct translation would be. In the example 20, *fallen* is an adjective and it could have been translated directly as *palo* [fallen], but the noun was still a preferred choice. Creating a more natural and dramatic effect was identified as the prevailing reason for the employment of shifts.

Substitution

Translators resort to substitution if they encounter difficulties when translating directly. For instance, puns are often viewed as difficult to translate:

(21)   The Wedding Ringer (2015) – *Gospodar vjenčanja* [Master of Weddings]

The title is a pun on wedding ring, only the ring was adapted into ringer which means "imposter or fake[4]". The title acts as a clue for the story as the groom, Doug, hires strangers to be his groomsmen. The Croatian title refers to the hired best-man, Jimmy, who is the owner of the company that provides attendants for weddings.

(22)   A Cure for Wellness (2016) – *Lijek za život* [A cure for life]

The title is a reference to the mysterious wellness center which uses strange treatments that make people sick to keep them in the resort. The title is ironic as wellness is used to describe "the state of being in good health [5]". Neither of the references is preserved in the Croatian title that substituted wellness with *život* [life].

In some cases, a reason for replacement was the absence of the right equivalent in the Croatian language:

(23)   Mission: Impossible: Fallout (2018) – *Nemoguća misija: Raspad Sistema*

              [Impossible Mission: System Breakdown]

---

[4] ringer. In Merriam-Webster.com. Retrieved from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ringer
[5] wellness. In Merriam-Webster.com. Retrieved from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/wellness

Fallout is "the radioactive dust in the air after a nuclear explosion[6]" which is certainly a reference to the terrorist nuclear attack that needs to be prevented. Fallout could also stand for "the unpleasant results or effects of an action or event[7]" which is partially linked to the Croatian substitute *raspad sistema* [system breakdown].

As a rule, the titles belonging to this category posed a significant challenge for the translator. Translating a title directly would not have been possible because of puns and rhyme, culture specific context and lack of semantic equivalents.

Functional equivalent

Functional equivalent is the use of a culture-free target language expression that neutralizes source language expression (Newmark, 1988) or substitution of the source language specific expression with the one known to the target audience (Surdyk and Urban, 2016). Instances of neutralization of culturally specific expressions are presented below:

(24)   Central Intelligence (2016) – *Tajna služba* [Secret service]

The reference to CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) was neutralized with the expression secret service which is more common in the Croatian context.

Culturally specific expressions are not necessarily linked only to cultural references, they could be of linguistic nature, as in the case in point:

(25)   The Commuter (2018) – *Putnik* [Passenger]

---

[6] fallout. In Cambridge dictionary. Rerieved from https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/fallout

[7] fallout. In Cambridge dictionary. Rerieved from https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/fallout

The commuter is "someone who regularly travels between work and home"[8]. Such a specific expression does not have its equivalent in Croatian, so the translator opted for the neutral expression *putnik* [passenger].

In a number of cases, source language expression was substituted with the corresponding target language equivalent either of cultural or linguistic nature:

(26)   The Great Wall (2016) – *Kineski zid* [Chinese Wall]

The Great Wall is an allusion to The Great Wall of China, an expression known in the English-speaking culture. That allusion was explicated in Croatian by using the established equivalent in Croatia *Kineski zid* [Chinese Wall].

(27)   Love, Simon (2018) – *S ljubavlju, Simon* [With love, Simon]

S ljubavlju [with love] is a farewell phrase commonly used in Croatia that hints at an intimate relationship between a sender and a reader.

As an added category, functional equivalent offered valuable insight into cultural differences. It was observed that functional equivalence could be both cultural and linguistic and that it is an important procedure within free translation.

6.2.3 Transcreation

Transcreation results in a translation that has no linguistic equivalence with the original title. Source language specific expressions and idioms were identified as one of the main reasons for transcreation, as the examples show:

(28)   Trainwreck (2015) – *Kaos u glavi* [Chaos in the head]

---

[8] *commuter*. In Cambridge dictionary. Retrieved from
https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/commuter

The trainwreck in the film does not refer to a crash that involves a train, but it is used to describe "someone or something that is a complete failure or very bad [9]", i.e., it describes the life of the main character Amy and her train wreck lifestyle of drinking, partying and casual sex. The Croatian translation opted for a title that describes her state of mind that is as chaotic as her lifestyle.

(29)   Skiptrace (2016) – *Spašavaj se tko može* [Save yourself if you can]

Skip tracer is "a person whose job is to find people who have disappeared, especially people who owe money [10]" whereas skiptrace would be the process of finding a person which is indicative of the plot of the film. The Croatian translation did not preserve that reference, although the title hints at the story as it implies that the film includes dangerous situations typical for the action genre.

(30)   Blockers (2018) – *Neće moći ove noći* [It's not going to happen this night]

The plot revolves around parents who want to prevent their daughters from losing their virginities on their prom night. *Neće moći ove noći* [It's not going to happen this night] is a Croatian saying that serves both as a reference to the story (prom night) and something that is going to be prevented.

(31)   Long Shot (2019) – *Zavedi me ako možeš* [Seduce me if you can]

Long shot is used to describe that there are slim chances for something to happen. To illustrate, it is not likely that the US Secretary of State would date a journalist which is the main storyline

---

[9] *trainwreck*. In Longman dictionary. Retrieved from:
https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/trainwreck#:~:text=From%20Longman%20Dictionary%20of%20Contemporary,My%20life%20is%20a%20trainwreck.
[10] *skip tracer*. In Cambridge dictionary. Retrieved from: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/skip-tracer

of the film. The Croatian translation is more explicit, as it hints that the plot revolves around a love story (seduce me), but the notion of improbability is preserved (if you can).

The one or two-word source language expressions had to be extended to preserve at least some reference to the original title or to the plot and/or genre. As a result, the Croatian titles are longer, but more informative.

Except for the source language expressions for which the exact lexical equivalent could not be found in Croatian, some of the transcribed titles do have a Croatian equivalent, but the one that is not often used and as such would not be known to a wider audience or would not cause the same effect, to illustrate:

(32)   The Water Diviner (2014) – *Izvor nade* [The source of hope]

A water diviner is "a person able to locate the presence of water with a divining rod [11]", the equivalent of which would be *rašljar* in Croatian, expression that would not be known to a wider audience. The Croatian title, *Izvor nade* [The source of hope] preserves the reference to water, yet it focuses more on the plot itself as the main character hopes to find his lost sons who never returned from the war.

(33)   Boyhood (2014) – *Odrastanje* [Growing Up]

Boyhood is defined as "the period when a person is a boy, and not yet a man, or the state of being a boy" [12]. *Dječaštvo* would be the Croatian equivalent which is once again not often used, so the translator opted for a more common and more neutral term *odrastanje* (growing up).

---

[11] *water diviner*. In Collins dictionary. Retrieved from:
https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/water-diviner

[12] *boyhood*. In Cambridge dictionary. Retrived from:
https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/boyhood

Another source of difficulties were titles with onomatopoeic allusions, more precisely:

(34)   Ribbit (2014) – *Žabac Regi* [The Frog Regi (proper name)]

Ribbit represents a frog's croak and is the name of the main character. In the Croatian title, a new name was introduced and the clarification that the main character is a frog was added.

(35)   Quackerz (2016) – *Patke za nemoguće zadatke* [Ducks for Impossible Tasks]

The quacking sound that the ducks make inspired the title of this animated film. Croatian translators decided to clarify that the main characters are ducks on a special mission. The loss of onomatopoeic sound was compensated with rhyme in the Croatian translation.

Considerable changes in transcreation category are justified by the significant linguistic and cultural challenges that translators face, which is overlooked by frequent critics of titles that lack linguistic similarities to the originals.

6.2.4. Transcription

Complete

Complete transcription was found to be the dominant transcription procedure (69.5 %), the vast majority of which was attributed to proper names:

(36)   Steve Jobs (2015)

(37)   Brooklyn (2015)

Among proper names, a significant number of superhero action movies was identified:

(38)   Ant-Man (2015)

(39)   Wonder Woman (2017)

Some of the titles were transcribed to preserve the allusions to well-known cultural references. To name a few:

(40)   Yesterday (2019)

A reference to the Beatles' song Yesterday, as the film follows the life of Jack Malik who wakes up in world where the Beatles never existed and becomes famous for singing their songs.

(41)   Last Christmas (2019)

One of the most popular Christmas songs of all time, Last Christmas (Wham!), inspired the title while the whole movie was inspired by George Michael's music.

(42)   Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again (2018)

This title of the famous musical serves both as a reference to ABBA's song Mamma Mia, while the second part indicates that it is a sequel of the 2008 musical Mamma Mia!

(43)   Bohemian Rhapsody (2018)

The widely acclaimed film about the life and legacy of Freddie Mercury and the rock band Queen carries a title of their well-known song, Bohemian Rhapsody.

(44)   Straight Outta Compton (2015)

Straight Outta Compton is a biographical film about a hip-hop group N.W.A. that presumably targets fans of the group who would be familiar with the album name Straight Outta Compton.

In these examples, when the allusion is preserved only in English, the translator did not really have much choice since the titles could either be transcribed or changed altogether to explicate the reference.

Some of the titles were transcribed for stylistic reasons, for instance to preserve the characteristics of Black English:

(45)   Ma (2019)

Ma is defined as an "informal way of saying mother"[13]. Without the supporting material (e.g. the poster that shows a black woman), it is not likely that the target audience would understand the reference.

The motivation for transcription of some titles remains unclear:

(46)   The Boss (2016)

(47)   Moonlight (2016)

Marti and Zapater (1993) claim that titles are sometimes left untranslated because they "are believed to sound more commercial than any target language version" (pg. 81) while Jutronić and Karabatić (2016) attribute this trend to the prestige of the English language. The two explanations are actually intertwined as the prestige of the English language can be linked to commerciality and vice versa.

Addition

Additions to transcribed titles could serve a purpose of clarifying the transcribed concept, attracting the audience or pointing to a particular genre.

(48)   Foxcatcher (2014) – Foxcatcher: *Priča koja je šokirala svijet* [Foxcatcher: The
             story that shocked the world]

---

[13] ma. In your dictionary. Retrived from:
https://www.yourdictionary.com/ma#:~:text=This%20child%20might%20call%20his%20mother%20%22ma%22.&text=Ma%20is%20defined%20as%20a,teenager%20might%20call%20his%20mother.

This addition is semantically relatively empty as it does not point to any part of the story and it does not clarify what Foxcatcher is.

(49)   Loving Vincent (2017) – Loving Vincent: *Van Goghov misterij* [Loving

Vincent: Van Gogh's mistery]

(50)   All Eyez on Me (2017) – All Eyez on Me: *Legenda o Tupacu Shakuru* [All Eyez

on Me: The legend of Tupac Shakur]

Contrary to the previous example, these additions do clarify the transcribed title. In the example 49, addition of Van Gogh explicates that the film is about the famous painter. In the example 50, All Eyez on Me is a reference to Tupac's album, but it is further clarified by addition of his name.

Subtraction

Within the transcription strategy, subtraction was rarely used and it was mostly identified in sequels. In the source language titles, lexical structures were used to identify that a film is a part of a series (chapter two, second best). These references were lost in the target language where numbers replaced the lexical structures.

(51)   John Wick: Chapter Two (2017) – John Wick 2

(52)   The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel (2015) – Marigold Hotel 2

Substitution

Similar to the use of substitution in free translation, substitution in transcription was also employed when the right equivalent could not be found in Croatian due to source language specific expressions or use of puns.

(53)   Johnny English Strikes Again (2018) – Johnny English: *Ponovno na zadatku*

[Johnny English: Back on a mission]

(54)   Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse (2018) – Spider-Man: *Novi svijet* [Spider-

Man: The New World]

6.2.5. Combinations

The titles that were placed in this category were a combination of transcription and translation, mostly direct translation (81 %).

(55)   Resident Evil: The Final Chapter (2016) – Resident Evil: Konačno poglavlje

[Resident Evil: The Final Chapter]

(56)   Alien: Covenant (2017) – Alien: Savez [Alien: Covenant]

6.3. Qualitative analysis – Genre differences

With respect to the metatextual function, the title needs to reflect the genre to which it belongs (Nord 1995, cited in Surdyk and Urban, 2016). Genre explication will be the primary focus of the analysis to identify strategies and expressions that are used for this purpose.

6.3.1 Drama

Human psyche, interpersonal relations, social problems and intense emotions are some of the key features of the drama genre that covers a variety of subgenres including psychological, social, romance, political, crime and biographical drama (Gilić, 2007).

Quantitative analysis showed that the film's belonging to the drama genre were mostly translated directly (35.5 %). This was the case when cultural or linguistic difficulties were not present in the source language title, meaning that puns, SL specific expressions and cultural references were not found. The titles were mostly one to two-word expressions that had a corresponding equivalent in the target language:

(57)   The Judge (2014) – *Sudac* [The Judge]

(58)   A Family Man (2016) – *Obiteljski čovjek* [A family man]

The second most employed strategy (22 %), free translation strategy, was mostly used to account for cultural references, as is the case in the following examples:

(59)   Hacksaw Ridge (2016) – *Greben spašenih* [Ridge of the saved]

Hacksaw Ridge tells the story about Desmond Doss who risked his life to save 75 soldiers. The Croatian title replaced the location of the battle with the emphasis on the lives saved.

(60)   Molly's Game (2017) – *Velika igra* [The big game]

Molly Bloom, known for running illegal high-stakes poker games, inspired the story of the film. Her name would not be familiar to the Croatian audience so the reference was replaced by a more neutral expression.

With reference to the metatextual function, it was found that the transcreation strategy (21.3 %) was used to explicate the subgenre:

(61)   Call Me By Your Name (2017) – *Skrivena ljubav* [Hidden love]

The Croatian title makes it clear that the film is a love story, and a controversial one as the protagonists are a 17-year old boy and his father's research assistant.

(62)   The Kitchen (2019) – *Kraljice zločina* [Queens of Crime]

Wives of Irish mobsters take over their business when they end up in jail. The Kitchen stands for Hell's Kitchen, which represents the west side of Manhattan where the story takes place.

6.3.2. Comedy

The primary goal of the comedy genre is to entertain the audience by "exaggerating situations, the way of speaking, the action and characters" (Surdyk and Urban, 2016, pg. 155). Happy endings, irrational events, characters from different social backgrounds and plot twists are often associated with the comedy genre which covers subgenres such as romantic comedy, action comedy, crime comedy, comedy-drama and musical comedy (Surdyk and Urban, 2016).

The two most employed strategies of the comedy genre are free translation (26.7 %) and transcription (24.8 %). Both strategies were used for genre explication, most commonly by addition of the key word *ludo* [*crazy*]:

(63)   Office Christmas Party (2016) – *Ludi Božić u uredu* [Crazy Christmas in the
                  office]

(64)   Everybody Wants Some (2016) – *Te lude 80-e* [The crazy 80s]

(65)   Rough Night (2017) – *Luda djevojačka* [сrazy bachelorette party]

Like the drama genre, the comedy genre covers a variety of subgenres. The one that was identified as the most commonly explicated was the subgenre romantic comedy:

(66)   Tumbledown (2015) – *Ponovno ljubav* [Again love]

(67)   Overboard (2018) – *Moj lažni muž* [My fake husband]

6.3.3. Action

Action films are known for their thrilling fight, racing and battle scenes [14]. They also cover several subgenres including war, crime and historical films where the social laws are governed by conflict that needs to be resolved in a violent way (Gilić, 2007).

Transcription, as the most commonly employed strategy of the action genre (33.8 %), could primarily be attributed to the large number of superhero action films:

(68)   X-Men: Apocalypse (2016)

(69)   Black Panther (2018)

Even if the main character is not a superhero, the title still often carries his/her name:

(70)   Jason Bourne (2016)

(71)   John Wick: Chapter Two (2017) – John Wick 2

Conforming to the identified pattern of genre explication, lexical units that represent motifs of the action genre were added in the target language titles including *potjera* [chase], *prijetnja* [threat], *opasnost* [danger], *bitka* [battle]:

(72)   Run All Night (2015) - *Noćna potjera* [Night Chase]

---

[14] Akcioni film. *Filmska enciklopedija, mrežno izdanje.* Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2019.

(73)   Independence Day: Resurgence (2016) – *Dan nezavisnosti: Nova prijetnja* [Day
            of Independence: New threat]

(74)   Men in Black: International (2019) – *Ljudi u crnom: Globalna prijetnja* [Men in
            black: Global threat]

(75)   Unlocked (2017) – *U opasnosti* [In danger]

(76)   Pacific Rim: Uprising (2018) – *Bitka za Pacifik: Ustanak* [A Battle for Pacific:
            Uprising]

6.3.4. Animation

The genre of animated films is unlike other genres as it targets a very specific audience, namely children. As a result, the heroes are oftentimes children, the adults are playful and childlike and the social laws are quite simplified (Gilić, 2007). Characteristics of films intended for children are excitement, action, simplified characters (mostly children and animals) and humor[15].

Free translation (36.9 %) and transcreation (19 %), the two main translation strategies of animated films are employed for the same reason, namely coming up with an attractive title that is appropriate for children. Substitution of the English names with the Croatian ones is a step in that direction:

(77)   Shaun the Sheep Movie (2015) – *Janko Strižić film* [Janko Strižić (proper name)
            Movie]

(78)   Peter Rabbit (2018) – *Petar Zecimir* [Peter Rabbit-suffix denoting that it is a last
            name]

---

[15] Dječji film. *Filmska enciklopedija, mrežno izdanje.* Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2019.

(79)   Wheely (2018) – *Vili Kočnica* [Vili Brake]

Names of the main characters are typically found in the titles of animated films, but the tendency to add names of the main characters, even when they are not present in the source language, was identified in Croatian translations:

(80)   Ballerina (2016) – *Balerina i Viktor* [Ballerina and Viktor]

(81)   Despicable Me 3 (2017) – *Kako je Gru postao dobar* [How Gru became nice]

(82)   Early Man (2018) – *Dugi iz kamenog doba* [Dugi (proper name) from the Stone Age]

Puns and rhyme were found to be more often used in titles of animated films than in other genres. Preserving the same effect in the target language is a challenging task, but the examples show that translators have successfully completed the task. They even used puns or rhyme when it was not present in the original title:

(83)   Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Road Chip (2015) – *Alvin i vjeverice: Velika*

            Alvintura [Alvin and the Chimpmunks: The Great Alvinture]

(84)   Bling (2016) – *Prste(n) k sebi* [Fingers (Ring) to yourself]

(85)   Spies in Disguise (2019) – *Špijunaža i kamuflaža* [Espionage and Camouflage]

Animated films are rarely transcribed (15.5 %), but mostly when the brand was established prior to the creation of the film:

(86)   Angry Birds (2016)

(87)   UglyDolls (2019)

6.3.5 Horror

Horror films mostly follow a simple storyline that revolves around the battle between good and evil and life and death. The characters in horror films are usually vampires, werewolves, mummies, witches, zombies and other types of monsters trapped in confined spaces, namely basements, old castles, haunted houses and other dark places.[16]

Most common genre markers added to Croatian titles to evoke the idea of fear and to stress that the film belongs to the horror genre are *užas, strava* [horror] and *ukleto* [cursed].

(88)   The Forest (2016) – *Šuma užasa* [The forest of horror]

(89)   Jigsaw (2017) – *Slagalica strave* 8 [Jigsaw of horror 8]

(90)   Marrowbone (2017) – *Ukleta kuća* [A haunted house]

(91)   The Crucifixion (2017) – *Ukleta redovnica* [Cursed nun]

---

[16] Film strave. Filmska enciklopedija, mrežno izdanje. Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2019.

7. Discussion

The aim of the study was to identify the most commonly used translation strategy in the translation of film titles in Croatia and to closely investigate the relationship between the translation strategy and the film genre. In relation to that, it was hypothesized that direct translation will be the most commonly used translation strategy as was the case in the previous studies (cf. Limon, 2012; Ross, 2013; Šidiškytė and Tamulaitienė, 2013; Gabrić et al. 2017; Jiang, 2018). Contrary to what was expected, quantitative analysis revealed free translation as the most employed translation strategy (28.4 %), although closely followed by direct translation (24.4 %) and transcription (23.3 %).

The results are rather surprising as direct translation was most commonly identified as the dominant strategy in title translation research (Limon, 2012; Ross, 2013; Šidiškytė and Tamulaitienė, 2013; Gabrić et al. 2017; Jiang, 2018). What is more, the results of Gabrić et al. (2017), who analyzed Croatian titles, differ significantly from the results of this study. Direct translation was convincingly identified as the dominant strategy in their study (60.1 %), followed by free translation (17 %), transcription (15.5. %), transcreation (6.7 %) and combinations (0.8 %).

Various reasons could account for this significant difference. Firstly, the selected time frame differs in this study, since Gabrić et al. (2017) focused on a much wider time frame ranging from 1923 to 2017 which was then segmented in 10-year periods for diachronic analysis. In the 1950s, English as a global language was just a theoretical possibility, but the changes in the late 20th century when the electronic revolution of 70s and 80s took place, as well as international travel and rise of the USA helped to establish English as a global language (Crystal, 2003). Hence, the timeframe selected by Gabrić et al. (2017) mostly covers the time when English did not yet emerge as a global language, which explains the high percentage of

direct translation and low numbers of transcription, free translation and combinations. Their diachronic analysis supports this claim, seeing that in the first analyzed decade direct translation was the most employed translation strategy (78.5 %), followed by free translation (8.6 %) and transcription (7.5 %) whereas transcreation was barely even present and combinations were non-existent until 2006 (Gabrić et al., 2017). A sudden drop in the use of direct translation was noticed in the 1980s (from 73.7 % in the previous decade to 49 %), which is in line with the rise of English as a global language (cf. Crystal, 2003), whereas the use of free translation and transcription increased (from 6.3 % to 22.4 %; from 15.8 % to 21.4 %). The last analyzed decade, which partially covers the time frame of this corpus, showed that direct translation is the most employed strategy (46.5 %), followed by transcription (21.8 %), free translation (18.8 %), transcreation (8.9 %) and combinations (4 %) (Gabrić et al., 2017). As these numbers still considerably differ from the numbers of the present study, it is important to look for other explanations that could have influenced the results.

Focus of the study and sampling bias could additionally clarify these differences. As Gabrić et al. (2017) focused on appellative effect transfer, they included only 10 most popular film titles per year. This was not the case in the present study considering that all the English titles were included, regardless of their popularity level, amounting to approximately 120 titles per year. Another distinction between the two studies can be found in the source language as Gabrić et al. (2017) included languages other than English. Consequently, the aforementioned differences of the selected time frame, focus of the study, sampling bias and variations in the source language offer a plausible explanation for the considerable differences in findings. In light of the most recent trends in translation of Croatian film titles, this study seems to be more representative considering the sample size and time frame in focus.

. In comparison with stark differences in the main categories, the differences in subcategories are not as pronounced. Substitution, addition and shift were recognized as the

dominant procedures in both studies, only in different order. Gabrić et al. (2017), identified shift as the leading free translation procedure (29.9 %), followed by substitution (26.8 %), addition (21.7 %) and subtraction (13.4 %). Combinations of the procedures were scarce in both studies. Regarding transcription, the findings of Gabrić et al. (2017) support the claim that complete transcription is the dominant transcription procedure (88.1 %), followed by subtraction (9.8 %) and addition (2.1 %), while substitution was not found in their data. These differences could again be attributed to the previously described study differences.

Limon's (2012) analysis of 1000 Slovene titles also identified direct translation as the dominant strategy (67 %). But then again, transcribed titles were placed in the direct translation category, which could explain the high percentage. Separating transcribed titles from direct translation is important to gain insight into the extent to which American culture and English as a global language influence the translation of film titles in a language. In addition to differences in typology, this corpus was composed of film titles appearing on Slovene television during a 10-month period, so the films' release dates remain unknown to us. Nonetheless, comparing Slovene and Croatian translations of film titles would certainly be a fruitful area for future research on account of the fact that some titles that were transcribed in Croatian were translated in Slovenian (e.g. The Boss (2016) – Šefica [The Boss]; Moonlight (2016) – Mesečina [Moonlight]; La La Land (2016) – Dežela La La [Land La La]).

Qualitative analysis of Croatian titles revealed the possible explanations for frequent employment of free translation. For instance, it brought the characteristics of the English titles to the forefront. Surdyk and Urban (2016) claim that the English titles "are founded on ambiguity, and they often leave potential meanings to the imagination and the associative skills of the viewer" (pg. 164). The examples presented in the qualitative analysis support this claim, seeing that even the titles that were translated directly lost the additional components of meaning present in the English title (e.g. Fifty Shades of Grey, Phantom Thread). Moreover,

the reason for free translation was often tied to semantic connotations that were difficult to transfer, resulting in a more literal or changed title (e.g. A Cure for Wellness).

Other than ambiguity that could not be preserved, language differences explain the prevalence of free translation, since the exact lexical equivalent could not be found in Croatian in some cases (e.g. fallout, long shot). In these situations, Croatian translators turned to commercial interests in an attempt to compensate for the linguistic inadequacy, which resulted in creation of longer, but more informative titles (e.g. Long Shot – *Zavedi me ako možeš* [Seduce me if you can]). Bae and Kim's (2019) study on the importance of informative film titles showed that informative titles that reveal a film's plot and/or storyline positively affect its box office performance, which justifies the translators' decision. Marti and Zapater (1993) claim that commerciality guides film title translation, which is in line with the findings of this study, since the translated titles often focused on phatic and appellative functions, i.e., on creating a cinematic title that successfully attracts the audience's attention. For instance, local cultural references such as sayings are introduced to attract the audience's attention (e.g. *Neće moći ove noći* [It's not going to happen this night]). Surdyk and Urban (2016) noticed the same pattern in the translation of Polish titles.

Cultural differences, identified with the help of the introduced category functional equivalent, further clarify the high percentage of free translations. Target language references were mostly neutralized to bring the movie closer to the target audience (e.g. Central Intelligence (2016) – *Tajna služba* [Secret service]). Neutralizing unknown references reflects the consideration of referential function, meaning that the information in the title should be familiar to the target audience. The means of resolving previously mentioned challenges point to the conclusion that translators follow specific guidelines when translating film titles, with special attention to film title functions, in particular phatic, appellative, referential and metatextual functions.

The link between the metatextual function, i.e., genre explication, and the strategy employed was given additional attention in the study. It was assumed that the film genre influences the choice of the strategy employed. More specifically, comedies, action, horror and animated films are most likely to be translated indirectly. The results partially confirmed this presumption. Direct translation was the most employed strategy only in the drama genre (35.5. %), free translation in comedy (26. 7%), animation (36.9 %), and horror (30.5 %) while action movies were predominantly transcribed (33.8 %). The results show a connection between the film genre and the employed translation strategy. It appears that this might be linked to the dominant perception of these genres, viewing dramas as more profound and highbrow. Likewise, comedies, action, animation and crime films are perceived as more commercial which is then reflected in the titles that are more likely to focus on the appellative and/or metatextual function.

Explication of genre was mostly achieved by the addition of key words related to genre characteristics. For instance, in the comedy genre, *ludo* [*crazy*] was most commonly inserted. In titles of action movies, lexical units that represent motifs of the action genre were added including *potjera* [chase], *prijetnja* [threat], *opasnost* [danger] and *bitka* [battle]. To stress that the film belongs to the horror genre and to evoke the idea of fear, the key words *užas, strava* [horror] and *ukleto* [cursed] were added. The same key terms were identified in other studies that focused on genre explication (Limon, 2012; Surdyk and Urban, 2016; Ross, 2013). Surdyk and Urban (2016) argue that the addition of key words creates a generic cliché. Attitudes of the audience towards this type of addition could be in focus of future research.

The addition of key words was not found in the drama genre, since it covers a variety of subgenres and different topics. For this reason, the dominant motifs of the drama genre cannot be identified, but the subgenres were explicated (e.g. Call Me By Your Name (2017) – *Skrivena ljubav* [Hidden love]).

Titles of animated films, as a neglected area of research, deserve special attention. Qualitative analysis revealed the importance of characters' names in animation films that were either replaced with Croatian names or even introduced when they were not present in the source language titles. Literary devices such as puns and rhymes were transferred from the source language titles (e.g. Spies in Disguise (2019) – *Špijunaža i kamuflaža* [Espionage and Camouflage]) and introduced when they were not present (Bling (2016) – *Prste(n) k sebi* [Fingers (Ring) to yourself]). It can be concluded that animation titles reflect that animation is a genre in which emphasis is laid on the main characters, namely children and animals. Furtheremore, playful notions are commonly introduced in this genre.

8. Conclusion

Translations of film titles are oftentimes subject to criticism, primarily because of free translations that do not resemble the original titles. However, critics are often unaware of the challenges that translators face and the reasons behind these translations. The results of the study show that the motivation or need for change can be discerned and justified in the majority of analyzed cases, as a result of linguistic and cultural differences, commercial interests and creation of more informative titles.

Limitations of the study are mainly linked to the choice of the typology and title placement. Hence, it is possible that some titles could have been placed in a different category or subcategory, depending on my subjective judgement. Likewise, genre complexity was quite simplified, as the movies that belonged to several genres were classified as belonging to one primary genre, i.e. the genre that was mentioned first.

The results of this study revealed the most recent trends in translation of film titles in Croatia and can serve as a basis for future research that could address open questions raised in this study, such as the comparison of Croatian titles with other languages, particularly Slavic languages. Moreover, it could serve as a basis for marketing research that would explore the audiences' attitudes toward translated titles and possibly influence the translation of film titles in the future.

References:

1. Bae, G., Kim, H. J. (2019). The impact of movie titles on box office success. *Journal of Business Research*, 103, 100-109.

2. Bai, Z. (2018). On Translation Strategies of English Movie Titles. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 9 (1), 119-124.

3. Baker, M., Saldanha, G. (Eds.). (2009). *Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies*. Routledge.

4. Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language*. Cambridge University Press.

5. Delisle, J., Lee-Jahnke, H., Cormier, M. C. (Eds.). (1999). *Translation Terminology: Terminologie de la Traduction/Terminologia de la Traduccion/Terminologie Der Ubersetzung*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.

6. Gabrić, P., Brajković, I., Licchetta, L., Bezuh, J., Ključarić, D. K. (2017). A comparative and diachronic analysis of film title translations and appellative effect transfer into Croatian and German. *Hieronymus*, 4 (1), 1-27.

7. Gilić, N. (2007). *Filmske vrste i rodovi*. Zagreb: AGM d.o.o.

8. Jiang, X. (2018). A Descriptive Study of Film Title Translation Based on a Small Self-built Parallel Corpus. *International Conference on Education Science and Economic Management (ICESEM 2018)*. Atlantis Press.

9. Jutronić, D., Karabatić, T. (2016). Translation of English feature film titles in Croatian. *Zbornik radova Filozofskog fakulteta u Splitu*, 8, 85-103.

10. Limon, D. (2012). *Film titles and cultural transfer*. Cultus.

11. Liu, S. (2019). *On the Translation of English Film Titles from the Perspective of Cross-cultural Translation*. AISALLC.

12. Marsella, A. J. (2011). The United States of America: "A culture of war". *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35(6), 714-728.

13. Marti, R., Zapater, M. (1993): Translation of Titles of Film. A Critical Approach, *Sintagma,* 5, 81-87.

14. Newmark, P. (1988). *A textbook of translation* (Vol. 66). New York: Prentice hall.

15. Popović, H. (2012). Popularni televizijski žanrovi kao refleksija suvremenog društva. *Holon*, 2 (3), 18-43.

16. Ross, J. (2013). 'No Revolutionary Roads please, we're Turkish': The translation of film titles as an object of translation research. *Across Languages and Cultures*, 14(2), 245-266.

17. Shi, X. (2014). The English Film Title Translation Strategies. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research,* 5(3). 606-610.

18. Šidiškytė, D., Tamulaitienė, D. (2013). The contrastive analysis of the translation of English film titles into Lithuanian and Russian. *Kalbų studijos*, (22), 71-77.

19. Surdyk, A., Urban, A. (2016). *Mistranslations of film titles: Between fidelity and advertising*. Adam Mickiewicz University Press Poznan.

20. Vinay, J. P., Darbelnet, J. (1958). *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais*. Paris: Didier.

21. Yin, L. (2009). On the translation of English movie titles. *Asian social science*, *5*(3), 171-173.

22. Yu, L. E. I., Yushan, Z. H. A. O. (2019). EC Translation of Hollywood Film Titles. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 19(2), 89-93.

Web sources:

1. hot pursuit. In Merriam-Webster.com. Retrieved from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hot%20pursuit

2. vruć. In Hrvatski jezični portal. Retrieved from http://hjp.znanje.hr/index.php?show=search

3. like a boss. In Cambridge Dictionary. Retrieved from https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/like-a-boss

4. ringer. In Merriam-Webster.com. Retrieved from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ringer

5. wellness. In Merriam-Webster.com. Retrieved from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/wellness

6. fallout. In Cambridge dictionary. Rerieved from https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/fallout

7. commuter. In Cambridge dictionary. Retrieved from https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/commuter

8. trainwreck. In Longman dictionary. Retrieved from: https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/trainwreck#:~:text=From%20Longman%20Dictionary%20of%20Contemporary,My%20life%20is%20a%20trainwreck.

9. skip tracer. In Cambridge dictionary. Retrieved from: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/skip-tracer

10. water diviner. In Collins dictionary. Retrieved from: https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/water-diviner

11. boyhood. In Cambridge dictionary. Retrived from: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/boyhood

12. ma. In your dictionary. Retrived from: https://www.yourdictionary.com/ma#:~:text=This%20child%20might%20call%20his%20mother%20%22ma%22.&text=Ma%20is%20defined%20as%20a,teenager%20might%20call%20his%20mother.

13. Akcioni film. *Filmska enciklopedija, mrežno izdanje.* Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2019.

14. Dječji film. *Filmska enciklopedija, mrežno izdanje.* Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2019.

15. Film strave. *Filmska enciklopedija, mrežno izdanje*. Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2019.