

МИНИСТЕРСТВО НАУКИ И ВЫСШЕГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ
РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ
НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ ИССЛЕДОВАТЕЛЬСКИЙ
ТОМСКИЙ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ

ЯЗЫК И КУЛЬТУРА

**Сборник статей
XXXIII Международной научной конференции
(16–17 ноября 2023 г.)**

*Ответственный редактор
доктор педагогических наук, профессор С.К. Гураль*

Томск
Издательство Томского государственного университета
2024

УДК 410/378.147

ББК 81.1

Я41

Редакционная коллегия:

канд. филол. наук, проф. *Л.Т. Леушина* (зам. главного редактора);
канд. филол. наук, доцент *Л.Б. Прокопьева* (отв. секретарь); доктор филол. наук *О.В. Нагель*;
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Язык и культура : сборник статей XXXIII Международной научной конференции (16–17 ноября 2023 г.) / отв. ред. С.К. Гураль. – Томск : Издательство Томского государственного университета, 2024. – 284 с.

ISBN 978-5-907722-64-4

Настоящий сборник составлен на основе докладов участников XXXIII Международной научной конференции «Язык и культура», посвященной 145-летию Томского государственного университета и Году педагога и наставника. Представленные в издании материалы посвящены актуальным вопросам теоретического и прикладного языкознания и литературоведения, психолого-педагогическим и социокультурным аспектам преподавания иностранных языков, важным проблемам перевода и межкультурной коммуникации.

Для преподавателей высших учебных заведений, студентов, учителей школ, лицеев, гимназий и колледжей.

УДК 410/378.147

ББК 81.1

ISBN 978-5-907722-64-4

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WORDPLAY IN THE *SPONGEBOB* MOVIE AND ITS TRANSLATION IN RUSSIAN

Abstract. This research dealt with three objectives to describe: 1) the types of wordplay, 2) the translation techniques used for wordplay, and 3) the degree of translation equivalence in *SpongeBob* movie. The findings of the research showed that the translators primarily focused on conveying the intended meaning of the wordplays, while accommodating the unique characteristics and preferences of the Russian language and culture.

Introduction

Language and humor are intricately intertwined, and one fascinating aspect of language humor is wordplay. Wordplay relies on the manipulation of words, in which the multiple meanings, sounds, or structures of words are cleverly employed to create comedic or playful effects. The animated television series *SpongeBob SquarePants*, known for its whimsical and entertaining characters, has captivated audiences of all ages with its unique sense of humor, which often utilizes wordplay.

SpongeBob is not only famous among children but also among adults. While the stories of this movie are generally simple and child-friendly, adults can also enjoy the series due to occasional references and humor that are more geared towards an adult audience. Furthermore, *SpongeBob*

SquarePants has gained international popularity and has been translated into numerous languages, including Russian. However, the translation of wordplay poses a significant challenge for translators.

The aim of this research paper is to analyze the English wordplay found in the *SpongeBob* movie and to explore the various strategies employed in translating these linguistic elements into Russian, taking into account the cultural nuances and language-specific differences of both languages.

Previous research on the translation of wordplay in audiovisual media highlights the complexity and significance of this task. As Khazaei and Koosha emphasize, “translating wordplay requires not only linguistic competence but also creativity and cultural sensitivity” [1. P. 215]. This sentiment is echoed by Nida, who stresses that “translating humor and wordplay poses significant challenges as one must consider not only the linguistic aspects but also the cultural nuances and intended effect on the target audience” [2. P. 78]. These insights highlight the multifaceted nature of translating wordplay, particularly within the context of animated series where humor and linguistic playfulness are integral components of the narrative.

In the specific case of translating wordplay in *SpongeBob SquarePants* into Russian, experts have observed the need for dynamic adaptation while staying true to the comedic essence. According to Zhdanova and Ivanova, “the challenge lies in finding equivalent expressions in Russian that capture the playfulness and humor of the original English, while taking into account cultural references and linguistic constraints” [3. P. 122]. This sentiment is supported by Petrovsky, who suggests that “translating wordplay requires a fine balance between fidelity to the original and adaptability to the target language, ensuring that the comedic effect resonates with the Russian audience” [4. P. 56]. These perspectives underscore the delicate interplay between linguistic, cultural, and artistic considerations in the translation of wordplay in the context of *SpongeBob SquarePants*.

Related Literature Review

According to Nida, the essence of translation lies in producing the closest natural equivalent in the target language while preserving both meaning and style [5. P. 33]. This principle applies to the translation of wordplays in movies. However, translating wordplays can pose challenges as maintaining both meaning and style may not always be feasible. To overcome these challenges, the translator must employ appropriate techniques.

Given the unique nature of wordplay, the researcher had chosen Delabastita’s translation technique specifically designed for wordplay. When translating texts, equivalence in meaning and style should be achieved within the same contextual framework [6]. Bell highlights the various degrees and levels of equivalence that can exist in translation, emphasizing that the concept of complete equivalence is elusive [7. P. 6].

To address the first research question namely what types of wordplay exist, we utilized Delabastita’s four basic categories of wordplay: 1) phonological structure encompassing homonymy, homography, homophony, and paronymy, 2) lexical development including polysemy and idioms, 3) syntactic structure, and 4) morphological development [6. P. 102].

The second research question is what techniques can be used for the translation of wordplay. We applied Delabastita’s techniques, such as wordplay to wordplay, wordplay to non-wordplay, using rhetorical devices, wordplay to zero, wordplay where the target text equals the source text, and editorial techniques. In addition to the six techniques mentioned, there may be instances where wordplay is translated using a combination of techniques, which is referred to as multiple techniques [6].

The final research question revolves around determining the level of equivalence. To address this, we rely on Bell’s theory of equivalence [7], which classifies equivalence into four categories

(modified): 1) fully equivalent; 2) partially equivalent; 3) non-equivalent; and 4) unrealized. By applying these concepts, the researcher aims to evaluate the level of equivalence achieved in translating wordplays within the *SpongeBob* series into Russian.

Thus, the research paper aimed to explore the challenges involved in translating wordplays in the *SpongeBob* movie into Russian. By analyzing wordplays through Delabastita's four categories and employing his translation techniques, we sought to achieve equivalence in meaning and style. Through the application of Bell's theory of equivalence, the level of equivalence attained in the translated wordplays would be identified, contributing to our understanding of translation strategies and the complexities in preserving wordplay in audiovisual translation.

Research Method

This research used a qualitative method to describe the ways of translating wordplays and determine the degree of meaning equivalence. According to Baker [8], qualitative research allows for a detailed examination of translation strategies and the exploration of the cultural and linguistic implications involved in conveying wordplays. Supporting this, Pym highlights that qualitative research offers rich insights into the complexities of translating wordplays, such as the considerations of culture, context, and audience reception [9].

In line with these perspectives, the qualitative approach employed in this research enables a comprehensive analysis of the techniques utilized in translating wordplays and the assessment of the achieved meaning equivalence.

The research data consisted of spoken words, phrases, and sentences containing wordplays found in the *SpongeBob* movie and its Russian dubbed translation. The context of the data pertains to the dialogues among the characters in the *SpongeBob* movie (2015).

We acted as the primary instrument for data collection, measurement, and analysis. By employing a combined qualitative and quantitative approach, this research aimed to provide insights into the translation of wordplays, including their occurrence, translation techniques employed, and the level of equivalence achieved. The findings contribute to our understanding of the intricacies involved in translating wordplays in audiovisual media and offer valuable insights for translation practice and research.

Finding and Discussion

Let us consider some examples first.

(1) *Spongebob: Get him, The Rodent! Sandy: Consider him roasted! Aw, nuts! I'm all out of nuts!*

Губка Боб: Взять его, Грызунья! Сэнди: Считаю, что он испёкся. Кошмар, орехи кончились.

(2) *Plankton: Where do you think you're going? Burger Beard: Why don't you get going, little fella, before you hurt yourself? Spongebob: Plankton? Plankton: It's Plank-Ton!*

Планктон: Интересно знать, куда ты собрался? Бургерабород: А ты куда лезешь, мелюзга? Смотри растопчу! Губка Боб: Планктон? Планктон: Нет, Планк-Тонна.

(3) *Mr. Krabs: Knock, knock. Plankton: Oh, boy. Who's there? Mr. Krabs: Jimmy. Plankton: Jimmy who? Mr. Krabs: Jimmy back my formula, Plankton!*

Мистер Краб: Тук-тук. Планктон: Кто там? Мистер Краб: А ну. Планктон: Какой А ну? Мистер Краб: А ну, давай мой рецепт Планктон!

(4) *Spongebob: Wait a minute, Patrick, look! He's got a tank! Plankton: Well, Krabs, you're certainly in a pickle now!*

Губка Боб: Минуточку Патрик, у него танк! Планктон: Но краб, сейчас я тебя точно замариную.

(5) *Mr Krabs: Spongebob! Oh. You were like an underpaid son to me. I would've expected Squidward to stab me in the back.*

Мистер Краб: Ты был мне как сын, а я тебе мало платил. Я мог бы предположить, что Сквидвард нанесет мне удар в спину.

(6) *Fish: Hey, it's raining pickles! Now it's raining... tanks. Plankton: You're welcome.*

Рыба: Хэй, огурчики небесные, а теперь небесные... танки. Планктон: Аллилуйя!

(7) *Spongebob: Get ready for the Invinci-Bubble!*

Губка боб: Сейчас ты познакомишься с Неиспугуримым!

(8) *Spongebob: I'm ready. Promotion. Cleanliness is next to manager-liness. I'm ready. Promotion. I'm ready. Promotion.*

Губка Боб: Я готов. Промоуин. Чистота находится рядом с должностью менеджера. Я готов. Промоуин. Я готов. Промоуин.

(9) *Patrick: We're not kids. Spongebob: Open your eyes, Patrick! We blow bubbles, we eat ice cream. We worship a dancing peanut, for corn's sake! We don't belong out here!*

Патрик: Мы не дети. Губка Боб: Открой глаза, Патрик! Мы пускаем пузыри, едим мороженое. Ради бога, мы поклоняемся танцующему арахису! Нам здесь не место!

The research yielded three key findings. Firstly, six categories of wordplay were identified in the original movie text, including homonymy (1), homograph (2), paronym (3), idiom (4), syntactic structure (1), and morphological development (2), (7). Among these, it seems that the translation of the *SpongeBob* movie dialogue in Russian does not involve extensive morphological development.

Secondly, five techniques for translating wordplay were identified: wordplay to wordplay (5), wordplay to non-wordplay (6), the utilization of rhetorical devices, wordplay reduction, and maintaining wordplay equivalence between the source and target texts. Furthermore, the research identified the occurrence of multiple techniques being employed in some cases, indicating the utilization of more than one technique within a single instance of wordplay.

Lastly, the study categorized the degree of equivalence in translating wordplay into four levels: fully equivalent (5), partially equivalent (8), non-equivalent (4), and unrealized (9). Among the translated wordplays in the *SpongeBob* movies, there were a significant number of instances classified as partially equivalent.

These findings shed light on the various categories, techniques, and degrees of equivalence encountered in the translation of wordplay within the context of the *SpongeBob* movie.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussions, the following conclusions can be drawn. The first objective of this research was to identify the types of wordplays in the *SpongeBob* movies. The analysis revealed that morphological development was the most prominent type of wordplay in the movie yet not in the translation.

The second objective was to identify the strategies used to translate the wordplays into Russian dubbed. The most frequently employed strategy was translating wordplay into non-wordplay. This approach prioritized maintaining the meaning of the wordplay rather than strictly adhering to the stylistic elements.

The third objective was to examine the degree of equivalence in the translation of wordplays in *SpongeBob* movies into Russian dubbed text. The majority of the translated wordplays were classified

as partially equivalent. This indicates that the focus of the translator was primarily on conveying the intended meaning of the wordplays while adapting them to the Russian language and cultural context.

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СПЕЦИФИКА ПЕРЕДАЧИ STAND-UP ВЫСТУПЛЕНИЙ В АУДИОВИЗУАЛЬНОМ ПЕРЕВОДЕ TRANSLATION PECULIARITIES OF STAND-UP COMEDIES IN AVT

Аннотация. Рассматриваются понятия stand-up выступлений и аудиовизуального перевода, особенности жанра и сложности, которые могут возникнуть во время его перевода с учетом технических моментов.

Abstract. This paper proposes the definitions of the terms such as stand-up comedy and audio-visual translation. Moreover, the features of stand-up and difficulties due to technical requirements while translating.

Пару десятилетий назад такое понятие, как stand-up комедия, было известно лишь тем людям, чья сфера интересов была связана с лингвистикой, историей или психологией. В настоящее время многие определенно имеют представление об этом жанре, даже если им не интересуются: артист на сцене с микрофоном стоит перед аудиторией и рассказывает шутки. В целом это действительно так. *Stand-up* – это стиль комедийного представления разговорного жанра, в котором один исполнитель выступает перед живой аудиторией, но на само выступление стоит смотреть