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Intermedial Strategies in “The Lord of the Rings” by J.R.R. Tolkien, Novel and Film

This article is devoted to a short review of the research work, held in the last 2 years. The research is devoted to intermediality as a new stream of modern literature criticism and its role in “The Lord of the Rings” as a novel and a movie. The research includes four parts about intermedial functions of novel poetical inserts and their translation, and about poetic and prose inserts in the movie and their intermedial functions as well.

Keywords: intermediality, translation, “The Lord of the Rings”.

Intermediality is a new perspective stream of a modern philology. It considers the synthesis of various art forms: music and cinema, literature and cinema, etc. The term “intermediality” was introduced in 1812 by S. Coleridge, in 1965 Dick Higgins re-introduced it¹. Several intermedial typologies have been developed by now. The most respectful classifications are the literary and pictorial one by A. A. Hansen-Löve², and literary and musical one by S. P. Scher³.

Objects of the present study are:

- The trilogy by JRR Tolkien “Lord of the Rings”
- Film-trilogy by P. Jackson, bearing the same name.

Poetic fragments of Tolkien’s trilogy “The Lord of the Rings” are considered in the first part of the study, text fragments of cinema are considered in the second part. These works are a good source for studying because the author gave a detailed description of cultural and spiritual life of the peoples of Middle-earth. “The Lord of the Rings” contains 59 poems, including 29 in the first volume (“Fellowship of the Ring”), 16 in the second (“The Two Towers”) and 14 in the third one (“The Return of the King”).

The first part analyzes poetic inserts of the trilogy. Poetical substrate is characterized from the standpoint of the following criteria and attributes: genre, a kind of performing, author / performer of the text, prospective or actual addressee, function of intermedial insertion in the novel (functions such as magic, aesthetic, preserving of cultural memory, artistic, motivational, educational, philosophical and identifying were offered).

The analysis of intermedial functions of poetic inclusions showed that the most common are the function of cultural memory preserving, aesthetic function and a motivational one. Less common, but no less important are the providential, magic and identification functions presented by prophecies, spells and

those characteristic poems and songs, by which characters easily recognize the involvement of performer to a certain culture of Middle-earth.

In the second part, the analysis of translations of trilogy poetical fragments was carried out. Translations by A. Kistyakovskiy & V. Muraviev, I. Grinshpun and by V. Matorina were selected. The choice of poems for the analysis is “The Ring Verse”, “The Road Goes Ever On and On” and “I Sang of Leaves, of Leaves of Gold” due to their role in the trilogy text and their intermedial potential.

We selected the method of comparative analysis proposed by L. G. Porter. It is held by the way of counting the number of significant words and the analysis of their translations (if there are any omissions, additions, and so on). Then adequacy ratio of translation is output and written as a decimal fraction.

The translation adequacy ratio was extremely low among all the translators: the lowest level of 0.3 reached A. Kistyakovskiy translations “The Road Goes Ever On and On” and “I Sang of Leaves, of Leaves of Gold”. Translations by I. Grinshpun were more precise, but the ratio of translation adequacy in “The Road Goes Ever On and On” also is 0.3. Matorina did the most precise translations: adequacy ratio does not fall below 0.5 (“The Road Goes Ever On and On”), and is usually found at the level of 0.8.

In the third part of our research the movie was considered. Poetic code of Tolkien text was moved to the movie as musical inserts. Peter Jackson interprets Tolkien’s intertextual code, pursuing the same goals as Tolkien: to present intermedial potential of characters and to give to each Middle-earth’s folk its own “voice” that will characterise its properties and quality.

Representation of reality through music, song and poetry is a particularly important feature of J.R.R. Tolkien novels, so transferring it to the movie-trilogy has allowed the director to implement the text author’s intention. The first film contains 14 musical inserts, the second includes 11, and the third does 15. Its source is not only poetic texts by Tolkien, but also prose fragments of the novel itself.

The song material is divided into three categories according to the way of reproduction:

full: those fragments, which can be regarded as a literary text itself, it has beginning, middle and end;

partial: fragments, which are fragmentary and sketchy;

compensatory: fragments which are additional and compensate the lost data.

The hidden game with the audience is present in the trilogy. Additional meaning in the song fragments deepens the understanding of the scene. However, one can assume this code only when it has the lyrics, because the most often used language is Quenya. The average audience hardly perceives it by ear.

The fourth, final part of the paper is devoted to the translation of poetic fragments of trilogy. Here we came to the concept of audiovisual translation. It is “the translation of multimodal and multimedial texts to another language and their transfer to another culture”. According to the classification of Kozulyaev, there are the following types of audiovisual translation: voice-over, subtitling, dubbing.

The description of the translation strategy of the movie trilogy is one of the main objectives of this section. Movie trilogy “The Lord of the Rings” was translated several times, but the director’s version, which is the object of this study, has only one translation made by Positive Multimedia Studio. The translation of poems is performed by two strategies: borrowing of earlier translations and creating a new translation.

Foreign language fragments in the movie trilogy are presented by inserts in the fictional languages of Middle-earth. It corresponds with the genre of fantasy and objectives to show a fictional world in its fullness. The translation of foreign-language inserts in the Russian and English versions is performed by subtitling and, in some cases, voice-over.

The study of intermedial approaches that are applicable to literature and movie provides a glimpse into the work from a different standpoint. This approach allows us to investigate the interaction of different types of art, which implements a multidisciplinary approach in modern philology.

Endnotes

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University Mottoes: Style and Functions

University mottoes endowed generally with such stylistic feature as intertextuality, fail to function the way they should do. As opposed to the Latin mottoes, the English ones are more comprehensible and the communicative function is achieved by means of stylistic devices.

Keywords: intertextuality, motto, function, stylistic devices.

“What is a motto? I dunno, what is a motto with you!?” A joke from The Lion King excellently describes the attitude of a student towards his/her university’s motto. It is either in a foreign language, particularly Latin, or fails to function the way a real motto should.

Let us see what a motto is, in general, and what is the goal it pursues. First of all, note that a motto should not be confused with a slogan. A slogan is a catchy phrase used to attract members and clients by organizations, whether they are commercial or not, whereas a motto is a phrase containing a belief or an idea, either for an individual or an organization. The origin of mottoes goes back to the late 16th century and is generally attached to a heraldic design.