

## Localization of English-language films in the Russian linguistic and cultural area

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### Localization of English-language Films in the Russian Linguistic and Cultural Area

#### I. Introduction and Definition of Localization

- Thesis 1: The growing importance of localization: Cinema is an integral part of daily life, and with the prevalence of foreign films, accurate translation and cultural adaptation are crucial for audience comprehension and engagement, especially regarding humor and context.

- Thesis 2: Localization as "domestication": In the Russian linguistic and cultural area, localization is defined as the "domestication" of a foreign text, involving a complex interplay of phonetic lip synchronization, replacement of cultural peculiarities, and adaptation of humor.

#### II. Case Study: Shrek (A Masterpiece of Localization)

- Thesis 3: Cultural Transposition for Postmodern Parody: The Russian dubbing of Shrek is lauded as a localization masterpiece because it successfully performed "cultural transposition," replacing American postmodern parody of Western folklore and pop culture with Russian equivalents that evoked the same emotional response.

- Thesis 4: Phonetic and Archetypal Adaptation (Shrek's Voice): To localize Shrek's Scottish accent (symbolizing a "harsh outsider with a heart of gold"), Russian dubbing employed "Phonetic and Archetypal Adaptation." Instead of a regional accent, the voice actor used a deep, raspy, soulful baritone resonating with Russian folklore archetypes like the Leshy or a grumpy but kind-hearted villager, thus conveying personality rather than ethnicity.

- Thesis 5: Replacing Cultural Context (The Muffin Man Scene): Localization addresses culturally specific references (e.g., "The Muffin Man" nursery rhyme, unknown in Russia) by "Replacing Cultural Context." Translators shifted the focus to a universally understood act (baking) and used rhyming structures mimicking Russian nursery tales ("Ты знаешь пекаря? / Пекаря? Который печёт пряники?") to maintain comedy and narrative flow without confusing the audience.

#### III. Case Study: Zootopia (Innovative Localization Strategies)

- Thesis 6: Strategic Title Localization: The film's title was localized from "Zootopia" to "Zveropolis" for the Russian market. This was done because the suffix "-polis" (as in Megapolis) more readily associates with a bustling urban center in the Russian mind, while "Utopia" carries negative connotations.

- Thesis 7: Culturally and Geographically Relevant Character Replacement (News Anchor): Zootopia employs a consistent practice of localizing the news anchor character across different markets. In the Russian version, the anchor was replaced with a reindeer, serving as both a familiar cultural symbol (prominent in Russian folklore and New Year celebrations) and a geographic marker (native to Russian territory), thus functioning as "domestication" to align with target culture expectations.

- Thesis 8: Vocal Performance and Character Archetypes: Successful localization in animation heavily relies on the "Vocal Performance and Character Archetypes" of dubbing actors. Russian voice actors for characters like Judy Hopps and Nick Wilde don't merely translate words but "perform personalities," ensuring that the characters' passion, enthusiasm, quick wit,

and charisma are conveyed through tone and delivery, which is fundamental to animation localization.

#### IV. Conclusion

• Thesis 9: Localization as "Re-authorship" for Emotional Resonance: The transition of a film from the English to the Russian cultural area is a profound "cultural transformation," often achieved through "re-authorship." The primary goal is not just for the Russian viewer to understand the plot, but to experience the same emotions and comedy as the original audience, by replacing inaccessible foreign elements with familiar local structures and archetypes.

• Thesis 10: References

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