Linguocultural adaptation in TV series translation

The article considers common challenges of translating culture-bound vocabulary in popular American TV series. The article is aimed to determine basic techniques of linguocultural adaptation in Russian translation of “Friends” TV series. Traditional comparative and statistical analysis methods are applied to examine culture-bound elements of the original text of the above-mentioned sitcom, and therefore, to identify adequate techniques of linguocultural adaptation in its Russian translation. Moreover, “Friends” TV series contains a huge number of phraseological units, puns and jokes adequately conveyed in its Russian translation, and therefore, keeping the target audience interested in the sitcom. Scientific novelty of the research is determined by the author’s attempt to compile some essential tips for linguocultural adaptation while translating TV series from English into Russian. Further, “Friends” TV series contains a huge number of phraseological units, puns and jokes adequately conveyed in its Russian translation, and therefore, keeping the target audience interested in the sitcom. Scientific novelty of the research is determined by the author’s attempt to compile some essential tips for linguocultural adaptation while translating TV series from English into Russian. Moreover, “Friends” TV series contains a huge number of phraseological units, puns and jokes adequately conveyed in its Russian translation, and therefore, keeping the target audience interested in the sitcom. Scientific novelty of the research is determined by the author’s attempt to compile some essential tips for linguocultural adaptation while translating TV series from English into Russian.

Keywords: TV series translation, linguocultural adaptation, foreignization, domestication, source culture, target culture, bicultural competence, adequacy.

Introduction

The motivation for investigating the issues related to TV series translation is explained by the fact that foreign TV series have recently become popular with the Kazakhstan audience. On the other hand, TV series translation is a common type of translation. On the other hand, it is quite difficult to translate TV series of different genres, which therefore requires detailed study.

First of all, let us consider the term “TV series translation” which usually means the translation of sitcoms, drama and soap operas [1]. It is aimed to transform the target text preserving the peculiarities of the original language. The process of TV series translation is closely related to cultural phenomena since it implies the interaction between languages and cultures. Thus, a translator has to overcome the cultural barriers, i.e., he or she needs to adapt the culture of native language speakers to the one of target audience.

TV series translation, being a type of audiovisual translation, serves to make a connection between the following systems: video sequence, linguistic and sound systems [2]. Thus, the choice of the mode of linguocultural adaptation of the TV text largely depends on the following factors of an audiovisual text: situational context, speech intonation, visual support, gestures and facial expressions used by actors, etc.

Transfer of culture-bound lexical elements from one language into another is made by using basic translation strategies and techniques aimed at overcoming the difficulties that a translator faces in the process of intercultural communication. It should be pointed out that the implementation of linguocultural adaptation in TV series translation directly depends on the cultural norms and conditions of communicative act: situation, communicative aim and the speaker’s intention [3; 23].

Consequently, the linguocultural adaptation of the TV text during translation is considered as its new interpretation and requires a translator to have a bicultural competence.

Materials and Methods

Our research is based on the works of Russian, English and American authors — G.L. Bastin, R.A. Matassov, F. Schleiermacher, I.V. Voynich, A.P. Chuzhakin, A.A. Dovolnova, etc. — devoted to linguocultural aspects of film and TV series translation.

* Corresponding author’s e-mail: akmaral.1990@mail.ru
The aim of the article is achieved by using traditional research methods. The comparative analysis is applied to investigate culture-bound elements of the original text of a popular American sitcom “Friends”. The statistical analysis makes it possible to identify the most common adequate modes of linguocultural adaptation of “Friends” sitcom in its Russian translations. The original sitcom “Friends” and its Russian translation served as the actual material for the study. Its Russian translation is presented by two different channels — RTR and Paramount Comedy. The translation of “Friends” sitcom from English into Russian was first released by RTR TV channel in 1998. That is why it is considered the most widespread among Russian audience. The translation made by Paramount Comedy TV channel is presumed to be contemporary (2016). The choice of the above-mentioned TV series to be analyzed in the research is due to its wide and continued popularity, both in our country and abroad, as well as the availability of its several versions of translation.

Linguocultural adaptation of the TV text implies the translator’s choice between two translation strategies — foreignization or domestication [4]. According to Friedrich Schleiermacher, “foreignization means moving the reader to the author, and domestication, on the contrary, presumes moving the author to the reader” [4; 43]. In other words, foreignization (word-for-word translation) is preservation of cultural features of the source text and their careful reproduction in translation. Domestication (semantic translation) is considered as “making the text as convenient as possible for the target receptor including partial smoothing or complete elimination of cultural features of the original text” [4; 45].

The choice of the appropriate strategy will depend on the following factors (i.e. conditions):

1) cross-code discrepancy: the lack of lexical equivalents in the target language;
2) situational or cultural inadequacy: the context or ideas of the source text do not exist or do not apply to the target culture;
3) genre change: the transition from one type of discourse to another, usually causing a global recreation of the source text;
4) communication process disruption: the arrival of a new era or the need to appeal to a different type of readership, which often requires stylistic or content-related changes.

According to Georges Bastin [5; 5–6]:

1) transcription of the original: word-for-word reproduction of a part of the text in the source language;
2) omission: elimination or implicitation of a part of the text;
3) expansion: addition or explicitation of the original information;
4) exoticism: replacement of slang, dialect, and nonsense expressions in the source text by rough equivalents in the target language;
5) updating: substitution of obsolete or obscure information by modern equivalents;
6) situational or cultural adequacy: recreation of a context which is more familiar or culturally appropriate from the point of view of the target reader than the one applied in the original context;
7) creation: a more global substitution of the source text by a text preserving only the basic ideas and functions of the original.

Since the main function of the TV series is to capture and hold the target audience attention, then it should have a “WOW moment”. It is the observation of non-standard characters (vampires, werewolves, skinchangers, etc.) in vampire TV series. As for police TV series and soap operas, here the audience is attracted mainly by the plot development (solving crimes, setting love lines, etc.). Humor is the central element that keeps the audience interest in sitcoms. That is why TV series may contain a huge number of phraseological units, puns, jokes, anecdotes and culture-bound vocabulary.

We should distinguish between the following characteristic features of TV series: language, age, social orientation and video sequence. Short video sequence determines the language features. Since episodes in sitcoms last a short period of time, then the text of TV series will consist of relatively short lexical structures. Unlike films, which set obligatory age restrictions (a minimum age limit that must be reached in order to be able to watch a film), TV series are usually recommended for watching by a particular age group. The linguocultural adaptation of the TV text requires the translator to take into account both the narrator’s and the target receptor’s age orientation. Therefore, the choice of the appropriate lexical elements in translation will depend on the social orientation of the TV series.
Results and Discussion

“Friends” is a popular American comedy sitcom that follows the lives of six characters: three young men and three young women, who are friends. It is characterized by the following features: the usage of informal everyday speech, humor and culture-bound vocabulary.

In our study, the analysis of linguocultural adaptation of the TV series is based on the classification proposed by G. Bastin. The scholar’s classification is quite extensive, which allows us to conduct a more accurate analysis of using different linguocultural adaptation methods in translation. As we have previously mentioned, the translator first needs to choose the adaptation strategy: foreignization or domestication. The translator will choose the first strategy if he is intended to preserve and convey the features of the source text. The second strategy will be selected if it is more important for the translator to make the text convenient for the target audience perception [6].

Let us consider main ways of linguocultural adaptation of the original speech fragments of the characters of “Friends” sitcom in their Russian translations made by RTR and Paramount Comedy TV channels. In the following example (Season 1, Episode 4: The One with George Stephanopolous) Ross comes to the hospital with a bandage on his nose and, while filling out the papers, leaves the hockey puck unattended, and the boy decides to take it for himself as a souvenir. A dialogue takes place between Ross and the Boy (Table 1):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Original speech fragment</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The proverb “Finders keepers, losers weepers” used in Boy’s speech is translated similarly by both TV channels. They apply the technique of cultural adequacy, i.e., the translators find its semantic equivalent in the Russian language — «Что упало, то пропало» [10; 65]. The usage of this proverb is quite logical for this situation. Ross left the puck, the boy found it and did not want to give it back.

Having said the phrase “Well, I’m a rubber, you’re a glue”, Ross shrugs his shoulders. This phraseological unit is rendered as «Тебе смешно, а мне обидно» in the translation made by Paramount Comedy TV channel [10; 124]. Here, the translators apply exoticism method. Such a replacement perfectly conveys the situation. As for the translation made by RTR TV channel, Ross’s phrase is replaced by a nursery rhyme «Вышел месяц из тумана, вынул ножжик из кармана…» [10; 125]. In this case, the method of cultural adequacy seems to be justified as Ross conducts the dialogue with a little boy, with whom he wants to be “on the same page”. Both translators apply the domestication strategy.

Let us analyze another example from “Friends” sitcom and its Russian translations. In the following speech fragments (Season 1, Episode 5: The One with the East German Laundry Detergent) Chandler starts a conversation with Janice to break up with her. Janice gives Chandler socks (Table 2):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Original speech fragment</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this case, the method of cultural adequacy seems to be justified as Ross conducts the dialogue with a little boy, with whom he wants to be “on the same page”.

Measure for linguocultural adaptation of “Friends” sitcom in Russian translations

The proverb “Finders keepers, losers weepers” used in Boy’s speech is translated similarly by both TV channels. They apply the technique of cultural adequacy, i.e., the translators find its semantic equivalent in the Russian language — «Что упало, то пропало» [10; 65]. The usage of this proverb is quite logical for this situation. Ross left the puck, the boy found it and did not want to give it back.

Having said the phrase “Well, I’m a rubber, you’re a glue”, Ross shrugs his shoulders. This phraseological unit is rendered as «Тебе смешно, а мне обидно» in the translation made by Paramount Comedy TV channel [10; 124]. Here, the translators apply exoticism method. Such a replacement perfectly conveys the situation. As for the translation made by RTR TV channel, Ross’s phrase is replaced by a nursery rhyme «Вышел месяц из тумана, вынул ножжик из кармана…» [10; 125]. In this case, the method of cultural adequacy seems to be justified as Ross conducts the dialogue with a little boy, with whom he wants to be “on the same page”. Both translators apply the domestication strategy.

Let us analyze another example from “Friends” sitcom and its Russian translations. In the following speech fragments (Season 1, Episode 5: The One with the East German Laundry Detergent) Chandler starts a conversation with Janice to break up with her. Janice gives Chandler socks (Table 2):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Original speech fragment</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rocky and Bullwinkle are the heroes of “The Rocky and Bullwinkle Show”, a popular American animated TV series in the 1960s. Bullwinkle is a moose and Rocky is a squirrel.

It is obvious that RTR TV channel, guided by cultural inadequacy, makes linguocultural adaptation of the original speech extracts using the method of creation. Taking into account that “The Rocky and Bullwinkle Show” was broadcast in Russia only in 1998–1999, the Russian-speaking recipient would not understand the meaning of the words “Rocky” and “Bullwinkle”. Therefore, the translator decides to make a complete change of the original context, although the dialogue form and its volume remain the same.

Paramount Comedy applies the transcription technique, i.e., the source text is translated literally. The names of such heroes as Rocky and Bullwinkle are familiar to the Russian audience because the translation made by Paramount Comedy is considered more popular and modern than the one made by RTR. Therefore, Paramount Comedy decides that a word-for-word translation will be understandable to the Russian TV viewers.

In the following extract from the original sitcom “Friends” (Season 1, Episode 20: The One with Mrs. Bing) a dialogue takes place between Monica and Rachel, where the latter tries to write a novel, and shows her friend the notes (Table 3):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures for linguocultural adaptation of “Friends” sitcom in Russian translations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Original speech fragment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Translation by RTR</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Translation by Paramount Comedy</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The title of Rachel’s book is “A Woman Undone”, which literally means «развязная женщина» (skanky woman). In the first version of translation, RTR creates a new title of the book: «Дикая страсть» (Wild Passion), but it preserves the sensual subtext of the original title. Thus, translators apply the method of creation. In the second version of translation, Paramount Comedy slightly changes the book’s title: “A Woman Undone” is rendered as «Раскрепощенная», i.e., the omission technique is used.

In the source text, Monica mentions Rachel’s full name: Rachel Karen Green, and in the translation made by RTR, Rachel’s middle name is eliminated. The translators use the omission technique, because the concept of a “middle name” does not exist in the Russian-speaking countries. However, in the translation made by Paramount Comedy, Rachel’s middle name is not omitted — here the transcription is applied. The domestication strategy is used in both translations.

We have determined main ways of linguocultural adaptation in the following speech fragments from “Friends” sitcom (Season 1, Episode 20: The One with the Evil Orthodontist) where Chandler, Ross and Joey argue about which mascot is better (Table 4):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures for linguocultural adaptation of “Friends” sitcom in Russian translations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Original speech fragment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Chandler: I can’t believe you would actually say that. I would much rather be Mr. Peanut than Mr. Salty. Joey: No way! Mr. Salty is a sailor. He’s gotta be like the toughest snack. Ross: I don’t know. You don’t wanna mess with Corn Nuts. They are crazy!” [7]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Translation by RTR</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Translation by Paramount Comedy</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
First of all, it should be mentioned that Mr. Peanut and Mr. Salty are the mascots (advertising characters) of snack trading companies. Corn Nuts are a snack food made of roasted or fried corn kernels.

RTR’s translators try to focus on the following words: арахис (peanuts), соль (salt) and попкорн (popcorn), using the technique of situational adequacy. In spite of the fact that the general meaning of the conversation is conveyed, the humorous effect is not achieved in translation.

Paramount Comedy’s translators use the technique of creation introducing a completely new context. Moreover, they focus on the culture-bound units that would be familiar to the Russian-speaking audience. However, the humorous effect is fully conveyed as the basic idea of the situation.

Consequently, domestication is the dominant strategy in both versions of translation.

If we analyze another passage from “Friends” sitcom (Season 1, Episode 21: The One with the Fake Monica) where Chandler helps Joey come up with a stage name, we can see the usage of foreignization strategy as a method of linguocultural adaptation (Table 5):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original speech fragment</th>
<th>Translation by RTR</th>
<th>Translation by Paramount Comedy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Despite the fact that the name of Joseph Stalin (the politician who is best known to the Russian-speaking audience by name Iosif Stalin) is mentioned in the text, the transcription is used in both versions of translation. The emphasis is made on the linguoculture of the source language. If the translators wanted to enhance the humorous effect for the Russian-speaking audience and, nevertheless, translate “Joseph” as Иосиф (”Iosif”), it would be unclear how the name Иосиф (”Iosif”) could be taken from the name Joe. That is why the transcription is used in both variants of translation, which is undoubtedly considered appropriate. The translators choose the foreignization strategy.

Let us examine another example from “Friends” sitcom and its Russian translations. In the following speech fragments (Season 1, Episode 22: The One with the Ick Factor) Phoebe tells Chandler how his assistants treat him (Table 6):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original speech fragment</th>
<th>Translation by RTR</th>
<th>Translation by Paramount Comedy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The constructions with all words in a phrase written through a hyphen, used to name a person, are common in the English language. However, such constructions do not exist in the Russian language, and their adaptation requires the choice of the words that would convey their pragmatic effect. Therefore, the method of cultural adequacy is applied in both variants of translation. The Russian phrase рубаха-парень (Regular guy) means an ordinary and open-minded person. Thus, Phoebe describes Chandler as being too open-minded and friendly person. The chosen strategy is foreignization.

In the final passage from the original sitcom “Friends” (Season 6, Episode 17: The One with Unagi) Chandler gives Monica an audiotape on which he recorded several tracks. Monica wants to listen to music at dinner (Table 7):
Measures for linguocultural adaptation of “Friends” sitcom in Russian translations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original speech fragment</th>
<th>Translation by RTR</th>
<th>Translation by Paramount Comedy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

In the first version of translation, we see that the English word “tape” is transformed into the Russian word «кассета». Let us recall that this translation was made in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. At that time, tapes (both video and audio) were in widespread use. Moreover, we can say that the tape is a culture-specific concept of that particular time. But in the 10s of the 21st century, when Paramount Comedy TV channel provided its translation, tapes were not used anymore, as they had been replaced with other “gadgets”. That is why, in the second version of translation the word “tape” is rendered as «сборник» [10; 402]. We see a word-for-word translation or transcription in the first variant of translation, and the updating method in the second one. The main linguocultural strategy used in Russian translations is foreignization.

In our research, we have carried out a statistical analysis to identify the most common and optimal methods of linguocultural adaptation while translating TV series from English into Russian. The results are shown in the Figures below (Fig. 1).

![Figure 1. Correlation of linguocultural adaptation methods in “Friends” sitcom translation](image)

According to Figure 1, the situational or cultural adequacy is the most common translation method in both versions of translation by RTR and Paramount Comedy. It means that the linguocultural adaptation of “Friends” sitcom requires the translator to adapt the cultural differences between source and target language speakers, without creating an entirely new context. Apart from it, we have determined the most typical linguocultural adaptation strategies used in two Russian translations of “Friends” sitcom in the following diagrams (Fig. 2–3):
Linguocultural adaptation in TV series translation

Domestication is the dominant strategy in both versions of translation made by RTR and Paramount Comedy. It implies that the linguocultural adaptation of “Friends” sitcom requires the translator to focus on the target culture and mentality. If RTR is mainly oriented towards the target culture, then Paramount Comedy tries to achieve biculturalism in translation.

Having analyzed two Russian translations of “Friends” TV series, we found that the most common method of linguocultural adaptation is the situational or cultural adequacy. That is, the translator of TV series recreates a context, which is more familiar or culturally appropriate from the point of view of the target reader than the one applied in the original context. Besides, it has been determined that TV series translation requires the choice of the domestication strategy. It means that one should focus on the linguoculture of the target language in order to convey the linguocultural information to the target audience as clearly and simply as possible.
Conclusions

Summing up the main points of the article, we have compiled the following essential tips for linguistic
adaptation while translating TV series from English into Russian:
1. The translator’s bicultural competence implies background knowledge (linguistic and extralinguistic)
about both the source and target cultures.
2. The pragmatic effect of the source text should be preserved. TV series is a product aimed at capturing
and holding the target audience attention. That is why the translator needs to create the desired effect on the
receptors. If a humorous effect is not conveyed in TV series translation, it will be impossible to keep audi-
ence interested in the sitcom.
3. The situational context, speech intonation, gestures and facial expressions used by actors should be
taken into account. The units of the TV text and video sequence provide an adequate interpretation of the text
by the recipient.
4. The genre, age and social orientation should be borne in the translator’s mind. Depending on the gen-
re (sitcom, melodrama, crime story, etc.) or social (family, office, social, etc.) orientation of TV series, cer-
tain vocabulary will prevail in it, which must be adapted for the target receptors. Apart from that, the choice
of the vocabulary used in translation will largely depend on both TV series actors’ and target receptors’ age
orientation.
5. The translator chooses between two main adaptation strategies: foreignization or domestication. The
first one is expected to preserve and convey the features of the source text, and the second one is used to
make the text convenient for the target recipient.

We came to the conclusion that the problem of linguocultural adaptation of TV series translation is now
becoming ever more relevant. The linguocultural adaptation of the original text is vital since it provides an
adequate perception of native speakers’ worldview by target receptors.

References

8. «Друзья» в озвучке РТР. — [Электронный ресурс]. — Режим доступа: https://friends-online.me/dan/.

A.S. Tukhtarova, S.S. Issakova, G.R. Alimbek
Телекішілік тармактарының аудармадағы лингвомәдени бейімделуі

Алғашқы бөлімде, амERICANдық телекішілік тармактарының аудармадағы ұлттық-мәдени аспектілерін зерттеуге арналған. Зерттеу аса мақсаты «Друзья» телекішілік тармакты орыс тіліне аудару барысында лингвомәдени бейімделуіндегі негізгі тәсілдерін анықтау. Зерттеудің негізгі материалына салыстырылған ықтималдық және статистикалық тәлдік жұртпіп, аталған телекішілік тармактың қасиеттерін, оның аудармадағы лингвомәдени бейімделуіндегі өзгәртмегін анықтауға арналған. Зерттеуге барысында аудармадағы телекішілік тармактың тілінен аудару арқылы зерттеу ұлттық-мәдени бейімделуінің айқын тәсілдерін анықтауға арналған. Сонымен бірге, «Друзья» телекішілік тармакты орыс тіліне аударуға көбінесе қандай бейімделуінің тәсілдерін танытуға қызмет ететін қасиеттерін анықтауға, салыстыруға қабілдеді.
дставляют устаревшие бейсмалы сократительные и неоригинальные слова. Заметно, что переводчики стараются подобрать наиболее точные и естественные эквиваленты. Важно также отметить, что в русском языке, как и в английском, есть множество выражений, которые не имеют точных переводов.

В статье освещены проблемы перевода культурно обусловленной лексики в популярных американских сериалах. Целью исследования является определение основных приемов лингвокультурной адаптации при переводе телесериала «Друзья» на русский язык. Оптимальные методы лингвокультурной адаптации при переводе анализируемого телесериала с английского языка на русский выявлены путем проведения сравнительного и статистического анализа материала. В нашем исследовании нам также удалось установить, на какую именно стратегию адаптации при переводе англоязычных телесериалов переводчик опирается чаще всего. Более того, сериал «Друзья» изобилует разнообразными шутками, игрой слов и фразеологизмами, умело адаптированными в переводе, что, в свою очередь, вызывает особый интерес у целевой аудитории к данному ситкому. Научная новизна исследования заключается в попытке разработать рекомендации по применению лингвокультурной адаптации при переводе сериалов с английского языка на русский. Результаты исследований подтверждают, что для успешной лингвокультурной адаптации следует учитывать специфику формы подачи материала и восприятия зрителя. Таким образом, обладающая бикультурной компетенцией, переводчик сможет выбрать оптимальные методы лингвокультурной адаптации при переводе телесериалов с английского языка на русский, что подразумевает наличие фоновых знаний (лингвистических и экстралингвистических) как об исходной, так и об целевой культуре.

Ключевые слова: перевод телесериалов, лингвокультурная адаптация, отчуждающий перевод, одомашнивающий перевод, исходная культура, целевая культура, бикультурная компетенция, адекватность.

References