

**BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO
TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG**



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**HAIPHONG PRIVATE UNIVERSITY
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GRADUATION PAPER

**A STUDY ON TRANSLATION OF
MOVIE TITLES FROM ENGLISH INTO VIETNAMESE**

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Class:
NA 1002

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HAI PHONG - 2010

**BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO
TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG**

Nhiệm vụ đề tài tốt nghiệp

Sinh viên:Mã số:.....

Lớp:Ngành:.....

Tên đề tài:

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1. Nội dung và các yêu cầu cần giải quyết trong nhiệm vụ đề tài tốt nghiệp (về lý luận, thực tiễn, các số liệu cần tính toán và các bản vẽ).

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2. Các số liệu cần thiết để thiết kế, tính toán.

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3. Địa điểm thực tập tốt nghiệp.

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CÁN BỘ HƯỚNG DẪN ĐỀ TÀI

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Họ và tên:.....

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Đã nhận nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

Sinh viên

Đã giao nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

Người hướng dẫn

Hải Phòng, ngày tháng năm 2010

HIỆU TRƯỞNG

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Hải Phòng, ngày tháng năm 2010

Cán bộ hướng dẫn
(họ tên và chữ ký)

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1. Đánh giá chất lượng đề tài tốt nghiệp về các mặt thu thập và phân tích tài liệu, số liệu ban đầu, giá trị lí luận và thực tiễn của đề tài.

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PART I: INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale

There are many languages in the world among them English is the foremost of all. It is understood and spoken almost everywhere in the world. English has become the key instrument of globalization.

No one denies the importance of English language in the present time as global language. It is clear that English has become more dominant around the world. In some countries, it is considered as the mother tongue and other countries as second language in their school. English is used in many subjects and scientific researches at universities and institutes. It has become an addendum to the mastery of scientific individual stock.

There is no doubt that the English is language of communication among the people with different cultures. It is also the language of computers that help to communicate with the people around the world through Internet technology. Besides, People use it in various fields of life such as, economy, commerce, medicine and aviation and email. In addition, it is the language which is used in the tourism and travel. These reasons move the people to learn English.

English has been the international language of not only socio-economic, cultural, political issues but also of entertainment aspect including movie industry. Movies are a reflection of society. Movie encompasses individual motion pictures, the field of movie as an art form, and the motion picture industry. Movies are produced by recording photographic images with cameras, or by creating images using animation techniques or visual effects. Movies reflect those cultures, and, in turn, affect them. Movie is considered to be an important art form, a source of popular entertainment and a powerful method for educating- or indoctrinating to citizens. The visual elements of cinema give motion pictures a universal power of communication. Some movies have become popular worldwide attractions by using dubbing or subtitles that translate the dialogues. However, there are difficulties in English- Vietnamese translation because of differences in structures and cultures. Of course, between a foreign language and a native language, there are some problems in translation in general and in translating English movie titles in particular.

Culture aspects in language of movie titles draw my attention the most. Hence, my graduation paper: “A study on translation of movie titles from English into Vietnamese” is carried to reflect the similarities and differences between the source and target languages of movie titles.

2. Aims of the study

For the purposes of demonstrating the techniques of movie title translation, my study focuses on:

- Introducing theoretical background of movie translation, movie titles and techniques of movie title translation.
- Giving clear and detailed techniques of translating movie titles so as to find out the effective ways in translation.
- Indicating the findings and implication, and proposing some suggestions.
- Providing some movie titles to discuss.

3. Scope of the study

Translation is an extremely large of study. However, due to the limit of time and knowledge, it could not be covered all matters about translation. As mentioned above, in this paper, only translation of movie titles from English into Vietnamese are presented and analyzed. Particularly, techniques of movie title translation are carefully demonstrated.

4. Methods of the study

In order to fulfill the study, the following methods are fully employed:

Firstly, it is internet accessing because it supplies such a large source of information as well as images that all of data relating to the subject of my paper graduation are easily found out.

Secondly, data collection from related books and documents also plays an important part in the research process.

Thirdly, discussion with my supervisor and friends works effectively in the study completion.

At last, contrast and comparison method is also put into practice to finish this paper graduation.

5. Design of the study

My graduation paper consists of three main parts:

- Part I: Introduction, which indicates the rationale, the aims, the scope, the methods and the design of the study.
- Part II: Development mentions the main content of the study and it is further divided into three chapters as below:
 - › Chapter I: Theoretical background includes the definitions and types of

translation.

- › Chapter II: Translation of English- Vietnamese movie titles, deals with the following matters: The importance, steps, functions of movie title translation.
- › Chapter III: Techniques and principles of movie title translation.
- › Chapter IV: The findings and discussions.
- Part III: Conclusion gives a brief summary of the study and suggestion for further study.

PART II: DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER I: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1.1. Language of movie titles

1.1.1. Definition of a movie

A form of entertainment that enacts a story by sound and a sequence of images giving the illusion of continuous movement.

(wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn)

Films are made up a series of individual images called frames. When these images are shown rapidly in succession, a viewer has the illusion that motion is occurring. The viewer cannot see the flickering between frames due to an effect known as persistence of vision (wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

Movies (also referred to as motion pictures) are produced by recording photographic images with cameras, or by creating images using animation techniques or visual effects. (wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

A sequence of photographs projected onto a screen with sufficient rapidity as to create the illusion of motion and continuity.

(www.thefreedictionary.com/movie)

A movie that is made to be shown on television scene, shot- a consecutive series of pictures that constitutes a unit of action in a film.

(www.thefreedictionary.com/movie)

1.1.2. Definition of a movie title

A common name for film in the United States is movie, while Europe the term cinema is preferred. Additional terms for the field in general include the big screen, the silver screen, the cinema and the movies.

Movie title is the name of a movie.

1.1.3. Movie types

1.1.3.1. Violent movie

Some movies feature intense violence that really stays with us after the final credits stop rolling. These films use dark intensity, and the most primitive instincts of man, to grab our attention and make us think.

For example: "Saving private Ryan" is translated into "Giải cứu binh nhì Ryan".

1.1.3.2. Science fiction movie

Science fiction is largely based on writing rationally about alternative

possibilities. The settings for science fiction are often contrary to known reality, but the majority of science fiction relies on considerable degree of suspension of disbelief provided by potential scientific explanations to various fictional elements.

Example: “Lord of the Rings” is translated into “Chúa tể của những chiếc nhẫn”

1.1.3.3. Romantic movie

Romantic movies of passionate love relationships between men and women have always held a special place in our cultural heritage. Movies about great love affairs have been made from the classic stories of Lancelot and Guinevere, Heloise and Abelard, and Romeo and Juliet. These timeless treasures are remembered as symbols of physical passion and spiritual devotion. Although they are most often regarded as love stories, the literary foundation of these romantic movies is that of tragedies, and tragedies of the most telling kind.

For example: “Titanic”

1.1.3.4. Animated movie

An animated movie is a short, hand-drawn (or made with computers to look similar to something hand-drawn) film for the cinema, television or computer screen, featuring some kind of stories or plots (even if it is a very short one). This is distinct from the terms “animation” and “animated movie”, as not all follow the definition. Although cartoons can use many different types of animation, they all fall under the traditional animation category.

For example: “Alice in wonderland” is translated into “Alice lạc vào xứ sở thần kì”

1.1.3.5. Action/ adventure movie

Action movie is a film genre where in the story is largely told through physical action as opposed to dialogue. The action typically involves individual efforts on the part of the hero. While action has long been an element of film, the “Action movie” as a genre of its own began to develop in the 1970s, the genre is closely linked with thriller and adventure film genres. While action films have traditionally been a reliable source of revenue for movie studios, relatively few action films genre critical praise. While action films have traditionally been aimed at male audiences, from the early teens to the mid-30s, many action filmmakers from the 1990s, and 2000s added female heroines in response to the times, glorifying the strong female archetype

For example: “The Matrix” is translated into “Ma trận”

1.1.3.6. Classic/ Historical movie

The historical movie is a film genre in which stories are based upon

historical events and famous persons. Some historical movies attempt to accurately portray a historical event or biography, to the degree that available historical research will allow. Other historical movies are fictionalized tales that are based on an actual person and their deeds, such as “Braveheart”, which is loosely based on the 13th century knight William Wallace’s fight for Scotland’s independence and “Saving Private Ryan”, a heavily fictionalised version of a search for paratrooper of the US 101st Airborne Division during World War II.

For example: “Braveheart” is translated into “Trái tim dũng cảm”

1.1.3.7. Comedy movie

Comedy movie is a genre of film in which the main emphasis is on humour. Also, films in this style typically have a happy ending (the black comedy being an exception). One of the oldest genres in film, some of the very first silent movies were comedies. Comedy, unlike other film genres, puts much more focus on individual stars, with many former stand-up comics transitioning to the film industry due to their popularity. While many comic films are lighthearted stories with no intent other than to amuse, others contain political or social commentary.

For example: “Man of the year” is translated into “Quý ông của năm”

1.1.3.8. Crime/ Mystery movie

Mystery movie is a sub-genre of the more general category of crime film. It focuses on the efforts of the detective, private investigator or amateur sleuth to solve the mysterious circumstances of a crime by means of clues, investigation, and clever deduction. The successful mystery film adheres to one of two story types, known as Opened and Closed. The Closed (or Whodunit) mystery conceals the identity of the perpetrator until late in the story, adding an element of suspense during the apprehension of the suspect, as the audience is never quite sure who it is. The Open mystery, in contrast, reveals the identity of the perpetrator at the top of the story, showcasing the “perfect crime” which the audience then watches the protagonists unravel, usually at the very end of the story, akin to the unveiling scenes in the Closed style.

For example: “Angry men” is translated into “Người đàn ông giận dữ”

1.1.3.9. Documentary movie

Documentary film is a broad category of visual expressions that is based on the attempt, in one fashion or another, to “documentary” reality. Although “documentary film” originally referred to movies shot on film stock, it has subsequently expanded to include video and digital productions that can be either television series. Documentary, as it applies here, works to identify a “filmmaking practice, a cinematic tradition, and mode of audience reception” that is continually evolving and is without clear boundaries.

For example: “Home” is translated into “Quê nhà”

1.1.3.10. Dramatic movie

A drama film is a film genre that depends mostly on in-depth development of realistic characters dealing with emotional themes. Dramatic themes such as alcoholism, drug addiction, racial prejudice religious intolerance, poverty, crime and corruption put the characters in conflict with themselves, others, society and even natural phenomenon.

The film genre can be contrasted with an action film, which relies on fast-paced action and physical conflict but superficial character development, All film genres can include dramatic elements, but typically, films considered drama films focus mainly on the drama of the main issue. Some well-known drama films include “The Godfather” (Bố già), “As good as it gets” (Không thể tốt hơn),..

1.1.3.11. Fantasy movie

Fantasy films are films with fantastic themes, usually involving magic, supernatural events, make-believe creatures, or exotic fantasy worlds. The genre is considered to be distinct from science fiction film and horror film, although the genres do overlap.

For example: “Star Wars” is translated into “Chiến tranh giữa các vì sao”

1.1.3.12. Horror movie

Horror films are movies that strive to elicit the emotions of fear, horror and terror from viewers. Their plots frequently involve themes of death, the supernatural or mental illness. Many horror movies also include a central villain.

Early horror movies are largely based on classic literature of the gothic horror genre, such as “Dracula”, “Frankenstein”, “The Phantom of the Opera”, and “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde”. More recent horror films continue to exploit the monsters of literature, and also draw inspiration from the insecurities of modern life. Horror films have been dismissed as violent, low budget and exploitation films. Nonetheless, all the major studios and many respected directors have made forays into the genre. Serious critics have analyzed horror films through the prisms of genre theory and the

amateur theory. Some horror films incorporate elements of other genres such as science fiction, fantasy, mockumentary, black comedy, and thrillers.

For example: “Dracula” is translated into “Bá tước ma cà rồng”

1.1.3.13. Musical movie

Musical film is a film genre in which several songs sung by the characters are interwoven into the narrative, the songs are used to advance the plot or develop the film’s characters, but some musical films (E.g Down Argentine Way) simply plop the songs in as unrelated “specialties”- as with Carmen Miranda’s numbers. A subgenre of the musical film is the musical comedy, which includes a strong element of humour as well as the usual music, dancing and storyline. The musical film was a natural development of the stage musical. Typically, the biggest difference between film and stage musicals is the use of lavish background scenery which would be impractical in a theater. Musical films characteristically contain elements reminiscent of theater; performers often treat their song and dance numbers as if there is a live audience watching. In a sense, the viewer becomes the deictic audience, as the performer looks directly into the camera and performs to it.

For example: “Hairspray” is translated into “Cuộc thi hoa hậu tóc”

1.1.3.14. War movie

War films are a film genre concerned with warfare, usually about naval, air or land battles, sometimes focusing instead on prisoners of war, covert operations, military training or other related subjects. At times war films focus on daily military or civilian life in wartime without depicting battles. Their stories may be fiction, based on history, docudrama or occasionally, biographical. The term anti-war film is sometimes used to describe films which bring to the viewer the pain and horror of war, often from a political or ideological perspective.

For example: “Saving private Ryan” translated into “Giải cứu binh nhì Ryan”

1.1.3.15. Western movie

The Western is a genre of art that may be found in film, television, radio, literature, painting and other visual arts. Westerns are devoted to telling stories set primarily in the later half of the 19th century in the American Old West. Some Westerns are set as early as the “Battle of the Alamo” in 1836 but most are set between the end of the American Civil War and the massacre at “Wounded Knee” in 1890. In the 1930s many B-Westerns were set in the present. There are also a number of films about Western-type characters in contemporary settings where they don’t fit in, such as “Junior Bonner” set in the 1970s and “The three Burials of Melquiades Estrada” in the 21st century.

1.2. Translation

1.2.1. Definition of translation

Translation is an operation performed on language. It is an across the board skill which helps to improve student's language proficiently in the process of translation, a text in another. Thus, it is the important means of communication between people is different language. Since then, it can attract the attention of many linguistics researchers and translation theorists, so what is translation? There are many definitions around this.

Translation is a kind of activity, which inevitably involves at least two languages and two cultural traditions. (Toury, 1978: p200)

Translation is the action of explanation of the meaning of a text, and a subsequent production of an equivalent text called a translation, that communicates the same message in another language. The translated text is called the source text, and the language it is to be translated into is called the target language; the final product is sometimes called the target text.

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/translation>)

Translation consists of producing in the target language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, firstly with respect to meaning and secondly with respect to style.” (E. A. Nida (1959)

Translation is made possible by an equivalent of thought that lies behind its different verbal expressions (Savory, 1968)

Translation is the interpretation of the meaning of a text in one language (the source text) and the production, in another language of a equivalent text (the target text) that communicates the same message (E.A. Nida,1959)

1.2.2. Types of translation

For learners of English, there are different approaches to translation. For a number of definitions of translation given above, we can see that understanding towards translation varies from one to another. As the results of such diversity, translation can be classified into different viewpoints. The followings are the commonly used translation types:

1.2.2.1. Word-for-Word translation

This is the type of translation that learners of English are likely to take up in the process of mastering their translation skill. In word-for-word translation, the source language word order is preserved and the words translated singly by their most common meanings, out of context.

In word-for-word translation, the result often makes little sense, especially when idioms are involved. The translators can use word-for-word

translation both to understand the mechanism of the source language and to construct a rough process for a difficult text.

For example: “Red eye” is translated into “Mắt đỏ”

1.2.2.2. Literal translation

Literal translation is a broader of translation, each source language word has a corresponding target language word, but their primary meanings may differ. Literal translation follows very closely the grammatical and lexical forms of the source text language.

Literal translation is considered as the basic translation step, both in communicative and semantic translation.

For example: “Brave heart” is translated into “Trái tim dũng cảm”

1.2.2.3. Faithful translation

A faithful translation requires a faithful precision in meaning and grammar structure of the original. However, we can also transmit the source language text into the target language one more flexibly basing on its contextual meaning.

1.2.2.4. Semantic translation

Newmark (1892) states that: “Semantic translating where the translator attempts, within the base syntactic and semantic constraints of the target language, to reproduce the precise contextual meaning of the author”. Therefore, the semantic translation is more flexible than faithful, admits the creative exception and allows the translator’s intuitive concession with the original.

1.2.2.5. Free translation

In free translation, the linguistics structure of the source language is ignored, and equivalent is found based upon the meaning it conveys. Free translation is sometimes called paraphrases. The disadvantage of this type is that translating is too casual to understand the original because of its freedom.

(Dung Vu, 2004, <http://www.talawas.org>)

1.2.2.6. Idiomatic translation

Idiomatic translation is concerned with communicating the meaning of the source text using the natural grammatical and lexical items of the target language.

Idiomatic translation is used for colloquialism and idioms whose literalism of the origin, uses the translation of colloquialism and idioms.

For example: “As good as it gets” is translated into “Không thể tốt hơn”

1.2.2.7. Communicative translation

Communicative translation allows the translator to transmit the source language into the target language by ready and comprehensible ways to the readership. “But even here the translator still has to respect and work on the form of the source language text as the only material basic for his work”. (Peter Newmark, 1982: p39)

1.2.2.8. Adaptation

Dung Vu (2004) pointed out: “Adaptation has a property of lending the ideas of the original to create a new text by a new language more than to be faithful to the original. The creation in adaptation is completely objective in content as well as form”. So, adaptation is the freest form of translation.

For example: “Perfect storm” film is translated into “Con bão kinh hoàng”

1.2.3. The importance of movie title translation

Movie industry is booming more than ever before with a series of new movies release everyday. It is one of the most exciting and profitable forms of entertainment and business in the world with a huge number of viewers. The famous center of movie industry- Hollywood, California (The US) or known as “the movie capital of the world” is where most of movies are shot and released. Of course, the major language used in movies is English. As defined previously in the Scope of the research, this paper focuses on English movies only for the dominance of English language and Hollywood flourishing motion pictures. When an English art work in general or a movie in particular travels to non-English speaking countries, it is necessary to be translated so that it can be approached by majority of viewers. Movie translation helps people overcome cultural and language barriers for the better understanding of the movie.

In fact, before a movie reaches the audience, one of three modes will be applied: dubbing, subtitling, or voice-over, which all concern translation. Translation is necessary, however, the necessity depends on each country. The source-language countries or English-speaking countries such as the United States or the United Kingdom, where hardly any films are imported,

the foreign ones tend to be subtitled rather than dubbed. In Britain, film translation does not appear to be a significant issue as the great majority of imported films are from the USA and require no translation. Countries with high percentage of imported films have a great and steady demand for translation such as Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Greece...(Agnieszka Szakowska 2005). Therefore, the more films are imported, the more translations have to be done. Problems during language transmission process are inevitable due to different factors between the source-language and the target one.

Vietnam can be listed for its great majority of foreign films compared with domestic ones. With the increase in cultural exchanges between Vietnam and the rest of the world, especially with the Western countries, the movie has gradually stood out as an important media of communication. Foreign movies are showing its dominance at cinemas, on video or television market, leading to considerable involvement of translators including students. The popular mode in Vietnam's screen translation is voice-over comprising two principle stages of translation and recording, of which the former is the first and foremost one. Another familiar mode is subtitle that is the textual version of the dialogue in films and television programs, usually displayed at the bottom of the screen (as defined in Wikipedia). Under the process of subtitle translation, the meaning is more important than the form. This process is said to be vulnerable, for translation mistakes are visible on the screen and easy to be spotted, requiring special carefulness and responsibility from subtitlers whose task is so demanding.

Although movie translation has been discussed widely in the world, few materials are found in Vietnam, particularly ones relating to movie titles. In general, movie title translation is often underestimated and it has not received due attention. Hopefully, the next chapters will help to raise people's awareness of movie titles.

1.2.4. Functions of English- Vietnamese movie title translation

The fundamental, crucial and prime function is to identify the text of the film (Soren Kolstrup 1996). Without this initial identification, we are not able to talk about the movie or even distinguish one from another. Movie titles are always the first thing that audience comes to know about new movies. The title can provide information about the story for the audience by summarizing the main plot, uncovering them, or offering some ideas. It gives a means for guiding audience's guess and understanding of the content in a direct or indirect way. Even if the title is vague, abstract or hard to capture the meaning, at least it may provide us a certain notion of the film. On the other hand, the title is an integral of the movie.

In addition to this obvious function of the title, we can indicate another major function namely an attracter, which can create commercial effect.

The title might play a remarkable role in movie's promotion, drawing attention from TV viewers or moviegoers. It takes the key position on advertisements and posters which create the very first impression on the movie on viewers. An interesting, attractive and curious-arousing title on an eye-catching poster will surely stop anyone and make them spend money and time to find out what is behind the title. In general, it adds attraction to the movie and stimulates the audience's interest and desire for viewing.

As said Lenore Wright in her tutorial "10 ways titles can work for you" in 2003, first impressions count and great titles create a positive impression. If the title hooks viewer right from glancing at posters, it is a better chance to make them watch. Titles can convey the genre of the movie (Star wars: science fiction/action), emphasize conflict or crisis (Home alone), pose an intriguing question (Men in black : Who are those cool guys?), conjure up a vivid image (Lost horizon)...In fact, a title cannot cover all these functions, nonetheless, the more functions it plays, the more winning it is. In conclusion, a title is able to perform various functions and covers many aspects of the movie it stands in.

CHAPTER II:

CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGLISH MOVIE TITLES AND PRINCIPLES OF ENGLISH MOVIE TITLE TRANSLATION

English is a very concise language. The average English word is often shorter than its Vietnamese equivalent. On the other hand, it usually needs many Vietnamese words to express the meaning of one English word. In addition, most words in English have several meanings conveying different meanings and using the same word in a different context. Characterized by some features of English language, similar characteristics can be seen in English movie titles. The best translated version is the one that can remain those features at the maximum level.

2.1. Brief and concise

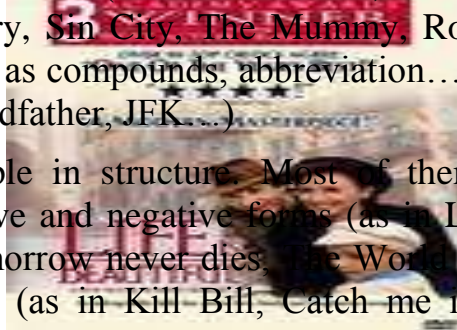
English movie titles are usually concise and straight to the point. Many of

them just contain one to three words including lexical words. The main components are nouns, uncountable nouns...(as in *The Piano*, *The Lion King*, *The Idiot*, *Star Wars*, *War of the Worlds*, *Sin City*, *The Mummy*, *Road to Perdition*...); different structures such as compounds, abbreviation...(as in *Flightplan*, *Batman*, *Madagascar*, *The Godfather*, *JFK*...)

In terms of sentence structure, they are simple in structure. Most of them are declarative sentences, but some are affirmative and negative forms (as in *Life is beautiful*, *Nothing's gonna give Tomorrow never dies*, *The World is not enough for me*), and some are imperative ones (as in *Kill Bill*, *Catch me if you can*...).

English movie titles have simple structure with a subject and a predicate (as in *I am Sam*, *Ten things I hate about you*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *SCHINDLER'S LIST*).

Despite their brevity, they are expensive and suggestive words conveying a lot of information, conveying the movie plot and theme.



Notes:

Pictures used in the research are official posters of films.

The translated titles in Vietnamese are collected from reliable resources movies which have been shown in cinemas and TV, introduced on the media and accepted widely.

2.2. Descriptive

Peter Newmark divides titles into two categories: descriptive and allusive. Descriptive titles “*describe the topic of the text*” directly while allusive titles “*have some kinds of referential or figurative relationship to the topic*” (Zheng Feng, 2005). A descriptive title is capable to provide the audience with a general idea of a story. For example, “Catch me if you can” (Néu

giỏi hãy bắt tôi) is the story about the run and chase of a young con artist and a FBI agent. Meanwhile, an allusive title cannot tell the main plot of the movie, but it really relates to the story. “Closer” (Xích lại gần nhau) is such a title, which is an intriguing story of passion, drama, love, and abandonment involving two couples, which only gets more complicated when the man from the first couple get acquainted with the woman from the second couple (summarized by the Internet Movie Database).

More descriptive movie titles than allusive ones are found as English language is straight to the point. On the contrary, Vietnamese movie titles are often allusive, which is characterized by characteristics of Vietnamese (as in *Thời xa vắng, cánh đồng hoang...*) Due to the linguistic difference between English and Vietnamese, it is not a facile task to remain this feature in the translated version. Sometimes translators have to make choice to translate the original title regardless of its descriptiveness or to create a new but descriptive one.



2.3. Retaining many proper names

In a Vietnamese movie, usually only famous people or well-known characters in novels adapted for the movie can have their names as movie titles as in “ Nguyễn Ái Quốc ở Hồng Kông”, “Chị Tư Dậu”, “Chị Dậu”...and few such titles are available. But an English movie does not always follow this way. Even ordinary people’s names can have privilege to be present in the titles. We can take a large number of such titles: Evelyn, Mr&Mrs Smiths, Win a date with Tad Hamilton, Bridget Jones’ Diary, Annie Hall, Finding Nemo, Saving Private Ryan, Driving Miss Daisy, Bonnie and Clyde, Along Came Polly... These proper names are merely names of characters in the movie. If the audience want to know who she/he is, they must watch the movie to find out.

In addition, English movie titles also have proper names of setting telling where the story occurs, such as Pearl Habor, Titanic, Casablanca, Manhattan, Notting Hill, Wizard of Oz, A Nightmare on Elm Street, Pirates of the Caribbean, Sleepless In Seattle...These settings make contribution to the development of the story, playing significant role in the plot or having deep meanings to the characters. Unlike characters’ names, those of setting are often popular to a large number of audience. Vietnamese titles of the same kind share this feature as found in “Hà Nội mùa chim làm tổ”, “Ngã ba Đồng lộc”, “Giải phóng Sài Gòn”...



CHAPTER III:

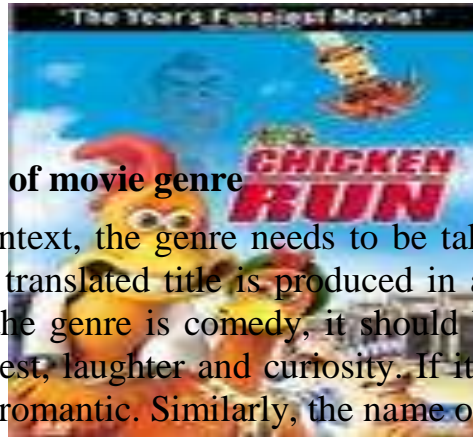
PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES OF ENGLISH MOVIE TITLE TRANSLATION

3.1. Principles of English movie translation

3.1.1. Faithfulness to the context

Faithfulness to the context may be the first principle in title translation. The context is also called “the invisible in translation” by Abdolmehdi Riazi, Ph.D. Associate Professor, Department of Foreign Language & Linguistics Shiraz University, Shiraz, Iran at the First International Conference on Language, Literature, and Translation in the Third Millennium, Bahrain University, March 16-18, 2002. In screen translation, the context embraces movie details. It is conventionally believed that familiarity with the source and target languages, as well as the subject matter to be translated is enough for a good translation. In fact, the role of context in screen translation now seems crucial. Taking the context into consideration is a promising tool more impressive than original titles.

The faithfulness is shown in the way that title should be in either direct or indirect connection with the movie itself or in other words, it should suggest one of the followings: event, plot, main actor/actress, theme, place, spirit... which are mentioned in the movie, or in David Stensaltz’s word, “if possible convey an accurate impression of the film’s contents” 2001. Let analyze an example, “Red eye”- newly released thriller movie starring Rachel McAdams (A young hotel manager) and Cillian Murphy (an elegant terrorist) who are on the same flight to Miami. The title is word for word translated as “Mắt đỏ” in Vietnamese. At first, this title may cause confusion for audience, for with the Vietnamese title “Mắt đỏ”, it is not easy to catch the movie plot. However, by looking at the English title and watch film, we can explain how it links to the content. In fact, “red eye” is a term referring to an overnight flight operated by an airline roughly during the period from 1:00 to 4:00 AM. The term “red-eye” derives from the fatigue symptom of having red eyes during the night flight (definition of Wikipedia). The story takes place on such a flight and the title “Mắt đỏ” is translated faithfully to the context. With the cited example, obviously translators have to respect to original title or at least respect the movie story. The excellent title is faithful to both like the case of “Red eye”.



3.1.2. Consideration of movie genre

In addition to the context, the genre needs to be taken into account while translating title. The translated title is produced in a way that can convey the movie genre. If the genre is comedy, it should be a humorous, funny, cute to provoke interest, laughter and curiosity. If it is a romance, the title should be gentle and romantic. Similarly, the name of a horror film needs to sound scary, threatening or haunting.

Sample 1: “Chicken-run” is the name of an animated movie telling the humorous story of a band of chickens who seek escape from their coop by learning how to fly before their owners make them all into chicken pot pies. The Vietnamese name as “Phi đội gà bay” is an intriguing one, making a good match with the genre of animated comedy as well as the content. If it is translated as defined in the dictionary “sân nuôi gà vịt” (an enclosed yard for keeping poultry), then it is not a successful movie title.

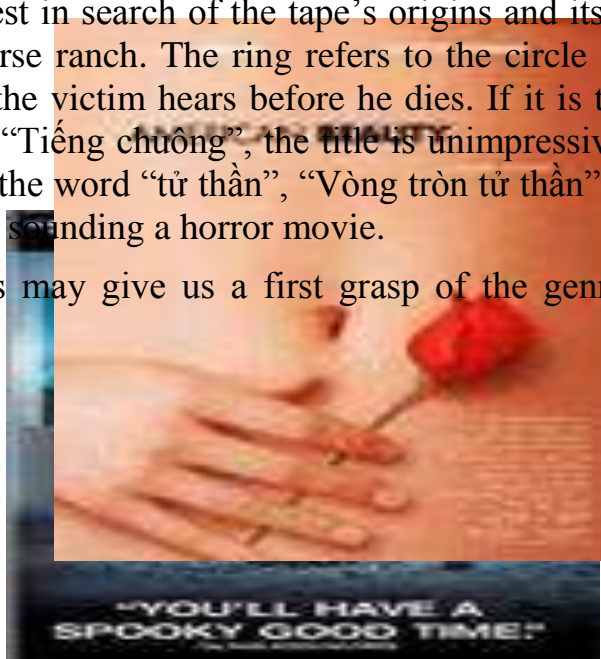


Sample 2: “Starsky and Hutch” – a comedy, crime action movie about two detectives named Starsky- the most dedicated undercover and Hutch- a good cop with hardzadous laidback personality and desire for a quick buck is known in Vietnamese under “Cóm chim, cóm nôi”. The title itself can suggest several characteristics about the movies with promising fun, laughter, action...to viewers by the use of slang “cóm” and a pair of impressive antonymous words “chim” and “nôi”.

Sample 3:

“The Ring” is a suspense/horror and thriller blockbuster in 2002 telling the story about a cynical journalist whose niece spontaneously died of fright one week to the day she watched a disturbing video. She travels to the Pacific Northwest in search of the tape’s origins and its links to a string of suicides at a horse ranch. The ring refers to the circle the victim sees and the phone ring the victim hears before he dies. If it is translated simply as “Vòng tròn” or “Tiếng chuông”, the title is unimpressive, monotonous and boring. Adding the word “tử thần”, “Vòng tròn tử thần” is more mysterious and threatening, sounding a horror movie.

Those examples may give us a first grasp of the genre’s impact on title translation.



3.1.3. Cultural awareness

According to Even-Zohar, translation is acculturation and negotiation between two cultures and translation is now culturally oriented. Due to cultural differences between Vietnamese and English, English movie title bears distinctive features of its own and lack of cultural awareness and knowledge will lead to mistranslation.

Sample 1:

“American Beauty”- a drama in 1999 telling about Lester Burnham- a loser suburbanite rebelling against his dead-end job, bitch-on-wheels wife unloving daughter, and imminent middle-age. His subsequent actions unfold into a darkly comic drama laced with a stellar supporting cast and enough roses to fill a nursery (summarized by Yahoo Movie Information). When rendering the word “beauty”, translators have to make decision of a word choice: “Vẻ đẹp” or “Người đẹp”. The latter meaning is not a good choice, for “American beauty” is a type of rose bearing large, long-stemmed purplish-red flowers, according to the American Heritage Dictionary Online.

Thus, the former one “Vẻ đẹp” matches in terms of cultural information. The title “Vẻ đẹp Mỹ” is a good translation.

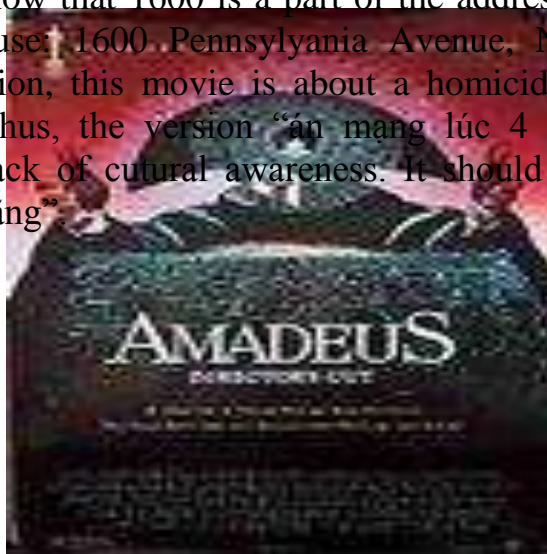
Sample 2:

Another example is the movie “Amadeus”- an incredible story of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. The title is a proper name and it can be left untranslated as “Amadeus”. In fact, few people know who Amadeus is and they may pay no attention to the unknown guy mentioned in the title. However, if the translator knows that Amadeus is the mid-name of Mozart, then she/he will change it into “Mozart” whose name is undeniable and needless to comment.



Sample 3:

The significance of cultural awareness can be also seen through the translation of “Murder at 1600”. Many will be confused of the number 1600 if they do not know that 1600 is a part of the address of the White House (The White House: 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20500). In addition, this movie is about a homicide investigation at the White House. Thus, the version “án mạng lúc 4 giờ” is unreasonable, resulting from lack of cultural awareness. It should be translated as “Án mạng tại Nhà Trắng”.



3.1.4. Combination of commercial and aesthetic effects

Translated titles should be the combination of commercial and aesthetic effects. Commercially, despite its briefness, a movie title is obviously one of the movie's essential components and crucial in marketing and appealing to the viewers. Titles are in reference to the performance of commercial and advertising functions so as to call the attention of many moviegoers and TV viewers for a large profit. Translators are inevitably affected by this purpose. They are expected to produce titles with passion, thrill and mystery with the view of impressing people as much as possible. However, this function is sometimes abused resulting in the fact that some translated titles reflect nothing of the movie and suggest nothing of the original titles. Therefore, translators cannot go too far out of the original and the movie itself. They are expected to polish the title so that it can bring about aesthetic feeling to people. In general, a well-translated title will be characterized by two vital ingredients of commercial and aesthetic effects.

Sample: Let's take several movie titles as examples:

- “Just like heaven” (Hồn yêu)
- “Fever pitch” (Con sốt tình yêu)
- “Wimbledon” (Mắc lưới tình yêu)
- “Just married” (Yêu là cưới)
- “Elizabeth town” (Thị trấn tình yêu)
- “Head over heels” (Bắt được tình yêu)
- “Win a date with Tad Hamilton” (Thế mới là yêu)

Those are titles which show a quite combination of commercial and aesthetic effects. The translated titles sound attractive and quaint to moviegoers and they are able to capture movie spirit. The first thing shared by those titles is that translated titles seem to have nothing to do with the original ones but they are faithful to the movie plot. Second, although the word “love” can not be found in the original ones, “yêu” and “tình yêu” (Vietnamese equivalent words of “love”) do make their appearance in translated ones. They are decisive words utilized to polish the titles, familiar but never growing old. Besides “death”, “love” is one of the ‘magic words’ in movie title translation as said by David Steinsaltz . Of course, the majority of moviegoers will prefer to see “Mắc lưới tình yêu” to “Giải vô địch quần vợt” or “Yêu là cưới” to “Mới cưới”, just simply because we are often affected by a common psychological effect, under which people always seek for the feeling of love and stay enchanted by topics relating to love. Employing the magic word is the art of commercial effect-oriented-translation, as long as the creation does not separate from the movie content.

It is interesting to discover that not only Vietnamese movie translator but also foreign ones are clearly fixated on the magic word “love”.



In addition to the four characteristics, it is said that one of crucial factors is that the translation is widely accepted. It is true with titles such as “Rain man”, “One flew over the Cuckoo’s nest” which will be discussed more in the next part.

3.2. Techniques of movie title translation

On the ground of studying relevant materials and references as well as analyzing how English movie titles have been translated into Vietnamese. Five major techniques in title rendering are recommended. The following techniques fall into two main types: respecting the original (keeping the title, literal translation, and explication) and removing the original (adaptation, providing a new title). Of which, literal translation and adaptation are in common use in general translation and other three ones are specific techniques applied on movie titles. Basically, the five will clarify and strengthen the four principles presented in 2.1 part. Whatever technique is employed, translators always have to bear one fundamental principle in mind that new title must be attached to the story in one way or another. In order to follow that principle, by default, translators often leave the title untranslated until the whole movie has been translated. It is easy to explain why movie translators (who translate both the movie and title) often produce more accurate and interesting title than title translators (who are, for example, reporters in charge of movie column in newspapers). The former can connect the movie title to the whole story whereas the latter only translate the title in separation, sometimes with the note “temporarily translated as...” As a result, wacky and funny titles are produced. Let take the following samples as illustrations.

Sample 1: “Bring up Baby” is comedy in which heiress Susan is determined to catch a stuffy zoologist and uses her pet leopard, Baby, to help get his attention. With such plot, it is obvious that “baby” does not refer to any young child but the name of a leopard. Therefore, the translated version “Nuôi con” in the article “Bảng xếp hạng 100 bộ phim hay nhất do AFI bình chọn” by Thanh Ha posted on the Saigonnet January the 4 2006 is unreasonable and has nothing to do with the movie title. The mistake made in translation is due to the ignorance of the plot.

Sample 2: “Ocean’s Eleven” is a film about a robber named Ocean has just released from the prison and his ten companies (a gang of eleven ones) with the heist of three Las Vegas Casinos. The version of VTV “11 tên cướp thế kỉ” sounds reasonable and understandable compared to the version “Đại dương thứ 11” made by My Dung in “Điểm tin điện ảnh” on Can Tho Newspaper Online.



Thus, only by having a comprehensive view of the story, fully watching and understanding it or at least reading the plot can translators choose the best one. In addition, it is needed to combine with one of the following techniques.

3.2.1. Keeping the original title

The easiest way to translate a film title, clearly, is not to translate it (David Steinsaltz 2001). This way is employed when movie titles are proper nouns such as names of characters and places (settings), especially ones that are familiar to the majority requiring no further explanation.

Sample 1: Character names

- Ben Hur (1959)
- Tom and Jerry (1992)
- Romeo and Juliet (1996)
- Evita (1996)
- Batman & Robin (1997)
- King Kong (2005)



Sample 2: Setting names

- Casablanca (1942)
- Manhattan (1979)
- Titanic (1997)
- Chicago (2002)



Those titles suffer no change, even transcription. They will satisfy people who love English sound of the titles. However, they only count for a minor rate Vietnam and the rest needs to be made clear. This technique is also employed in some countries:

Samples in movie title translation in China:

No	The original	The translated	The back-translated
1	Chicago	Zhi jie ge	Chicago
2	Casablanca	Ka sa bu lan ka	Casablanca
3	Gandhi	Gan di zhuan	Gandhi
4	Aladdin	A la ding	Aladdin

Source: <http://yingyu.jituo.net/english/113/18786.html>

3.2.2. Literal translation

In literal translation, the source-language constructions are converted to their nearest target-language equivalents (Bui Tien Bao & Dang Xuan Thu 1999). According to Wikipedia dictionary, literal translation refers to the result of translating text from one language to another, translating each word independently as opposed to translating the entire phrase. By employing this technique, both the form and the content of the original title will be preserved at the maximum level. It is sometimes known as word-for-word translation which is contrary to thought-for-thought translation. This technique is based on the principle of faithfulness to the original and the fact that most of English movie titles contain nouns and noun phrases. It is considered one of the most common and simplest ways in title translation. However, it is of great importance to note that literal translation is not applicable to all types of movie titles as this technique ignores idioms. Most of non-idiomatic descriptive titles and some allusive ones may be objects to literal translation providing that they match with the content and translated titles sound natural Vietnamese.

When titles are simply nouns and noun phrases, the translated ones are just juxtaposition of Vietnamese equivalence. The question is how to select nice words so as to gain aesthetic feeling from the audience.

Sample 1: “Jurassic Park”: Công viên kỉ Ura

Sample 2: “Mission impossible”: Nhiệm vụ bất khả thi

Sample 3: “Independence Day”: Ngày độc lập

Sample 4: “Braveheart”: Trái tim dũng cảm

Sample 5: “Interview with the Vampire”: Phỏng vấn ma cà rồng

Sample 6: “Toy Story”: Câu chuyện đồ chơi

Sample 7: “Panic Room”: Căn phòng đáng sợ

Sample 8: “The Matrix”: Ma trận

Sample 9: “The Silence of the Lambs”: Sự im lặng của bầy cừu

Sample 10: “A beautiful Mind”: Một tâm hồn đẹp

Titles including words in forms of V-ing, which conveys both action directly in the gerund, or indirectly in the participle and an object or a character, can be classified into two categories: titles with present participle and with gerund. V-ing structure is popular and numerous in movie titles. The two categories are identical in form and the classification will be helpful in translation to some extent.

When the V-ing is a present participle, it behaves like an adjective. Generally, English nouns and adjectives often follow the order article-adjective-noun while Vietnamese order is noun-adjective. Thus, the V-ing needs to be rendered so as it can modify the noun.

Sample 1: “Raging Bull”: Bò điên

Sample 2: “The Killing fields”: Những cánh đồng chết

Sample 3: “Working girl”: Cô gái chăm chỉ

Sample 4: “The dating game”: Trò chơi hò hẹn

Sample 5: “The training day”: Ngày huấn luyện

When the V-ing is a gerund, it behaves like a noun. However, the gerunds in English titles are often translated as verbs in Vietnamese so that they are more pleasing to the ear, for example, the word “việc” in “Việc giải cứu binh nhì Ryan” will be omitted. A large number of titles can be found in this category.

Sample 1: “Saving Private Ryan”: Giải cứu binh nhì Ryan

Sample 2: “Coming home”: Trở về nhà

Sample 3: “Finding Nemo”: Tìm kiếm Nemo

Sample 4: “Singing in the rain”: Hát trong mưa

Sample 5: “Being Human”: Làm người

Sample 6: “Leaving Las Vegas”: Rời Las Vegas

Sample 7: “Changing Lanes”: Đổi ngôi

Sample 8: “Sleeping with the enemy”: Ngủ với kẻ thù






Sample 9: “Driving Miss Daisy”: Làm lái xe cho bà Daisy

Sample 10: “Avenging Angelo”: Báo thù cho Angelo

Sample of literal translation in other languages:

Samples in Germany:

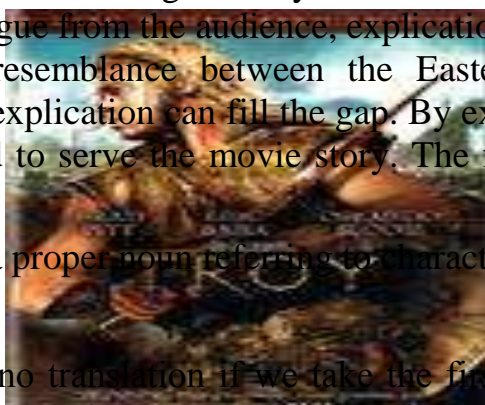
No	The original	The translated	The back-translated
1	Cats and Dogs	Wie kats und hund	Cats and Dogs
2	Charlie’s Angles	Drei Engel fur Charlie	Charlie’s Angles
3	Schindler’s List	Schindlers Liste	Schindler’s List
4	Six days. Seven nights	Sechs tage, sieben nachete	Six days, seven nights
5	 Side by side	 Seite an Seite	 Side by side
6	 Dances with Wolves	 Der Mann mit dem wolf tanzt	 Dances in the RAIN with Wolves

Source: <http://german.about.com/library/bfilmt.htm>

3.2.3. Explication

Briefly, explication means to embellish some more details to the title so that it is understandable and clear. It is a translation technique of clarification, explanation or interpretation, under which additional details must be taken from the movie. First, if titles are too abstract and vague to understand or too plain to attract the audience, they need explication. Second, if keeping

the original title and translating literally fail to bring about a version that can enjoy a great vogue from the audience, explication should be employed. Third, if cultural resemblance between the Eastern and The Western countries is absent, explication can fill the gap. By explicating, titles will be explicit and detailed to serve the movie story. The following cases can be taken into account.



The English title is a proper noun referring to characters and settings:

Sample 1:

“Shrek” may need no translation if we take the first technique. However, the name Shrek seems to be strange to most Vietnamese who hardly know about William Steig’s 1990 fairy tale picture-book of the same time. Therefore, a little explanation should be given by adding more descriptions. The version “Shrek- gã chằn tinh tốt bụng” might be an acceptable explication, clearing off audience’s wonders: Who Shrek is, what he is like and providing them a general look about the character.



Sample 2:

Many of Vietnamese people are familiar with Homer’s Illiad and the famous name of Troy. The title “Troy” itself an recall the audience a lot legendaries dated back 1193 B.C in ancient Greek. However, it is better when the translator polishes the title with several descriptive words about Troy which is capable of covering the the whole epic movie plot. “Trận chiến thành Troy” sounds vivider and more appealing than just “Troy”.

Sample 3:

“Sahara” can be applicable to the explication, too. The story is about the adventure of a lifetime of seeking out a lot of Civil War battleship known as the “ Ship of death” in the desert of Western Africa. And Fafilm translators have an attractive translated title as “Sahara- con tàu tử thần” with the additional noun phrase “ con tàu tử thần” translated from “Ship of death”- the key detail in the movie.



The English title is in forms of V-ing:

Sample 4:

The “Sleeping beauty” is an adaptation of the fairy tale of the same name telling about a princess who was cursed by a malevolent fairy and had to sleep for one hundred years in the wood waiting a kiss to be waked. Obviously, the version “Người đẹp ngủ trong rừng” or “Nàng công chúa ngủ trong rừng” sounds more romantic and beautiful than the simple title “Người đẹp đang ngủ”.



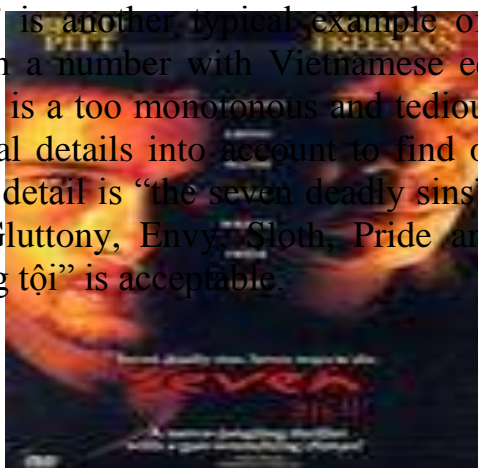
The English title is a noun:

Sample 5:

The version “Hàm cá mập” translated from “Jaws” puts a strong impression on the audience with the supplementation of “cá mập” which enable us to imagine a bloodthirsty animal in the deep sea. It makes the title much more descriptive and sound more fearful.

Sample 6:

The title “Seven” is another typical example of explication. “Seven” is nothing more than a number with Vietnamese equivalent word of “bảy”. Nonetheless, “bảy” is a too monotonous and tedious to be a movie title. We should take several details into account to find out the best translation, of which one of key detail is “the seven deadly sins” mentioned in the movie including Lust, Gluttony, Envy, Sloth, Pride and Wrath. Therefore, the version “Bảy trọng tội” is acceptable.



The followings are titles which observe this technique:

Samples in movie title translation in France:

No	The original	The translated	The back-translated
1	Notting Hill	Coup de foudre a Notting Hill	Love at first sight at Notting Hill
2	Air Bud	Air Bud, star des paniers	Air Bud the basketball star
3	Patch Adams	Docteur Patch	Doctor Patch
4	The Matrix	Matrix to Les jeunes gens qui traversent les dimensions en portant des lunettes a soleil	The young people who traverse dimensions while wearing sunglasses

Source: <http://www.monzy.com/?p=93>

3.2.4. Adaptation

When the three techniques mentioned above fail to produce a good translation adaptation is another choice. Adaptation is to change, to adjust or to modify some unique factors to the source-language (English) so that they are understandable to the readers of target language (Vietnamese). The unique factors may range from cultural information to linguistic elements such as idiom, pun/word-play, slang, fixed expression, terminology, etc, which are sometimes obstacles in finding the equivalence. Translators should firstly be aware of cultural factors, secondly stay sensitive to linguistic phenomenon so as to understand it deeply, aiming at an understandable, accepted and appreciated title in Vietnamese.

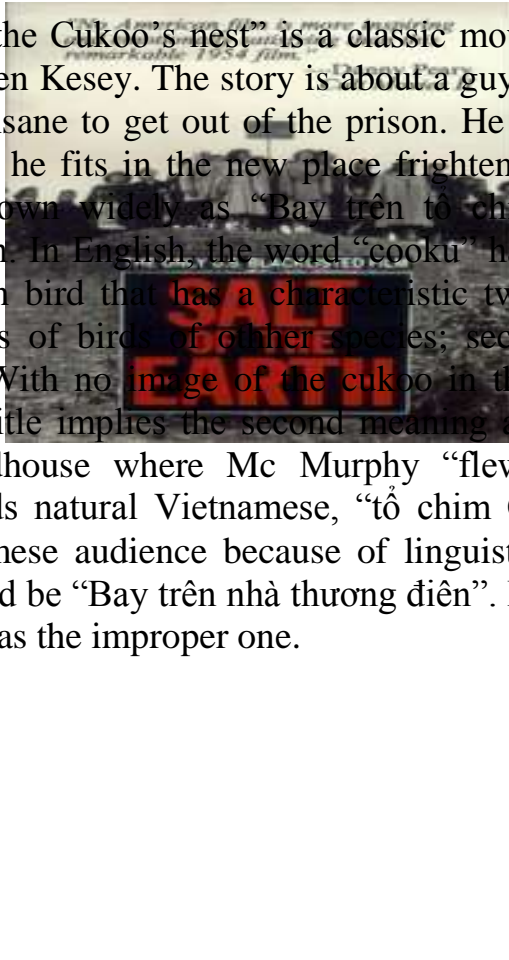
Sample 1:

“Die hard” is an idiom referring to one who stubbornly resists change or tenaciously adheres to a seeming hopeless or outdated cause or “người kháng cự đến cùng, kẻ hết sức ngoan cố”. In comparison with the funny title “Chết khó”, which is literally translated from “Die hard”, the version “Tử thủ” shows more professionalism in translation and sounds like movie title. In addition, it can also convey the genre of the movie (action thriller).



Sample 2:

“One flew over the Cukoo’s nest” is a classic movie inspired by the same name novel of Ken Kesey. The story is about a guy named McMurphy who pretends to go insane to get out of the prison. He is sent to the madhouse and surprisingly, he fits in the new place frightening well. The translated title is often known widely as “Bay trên tổ chim Cúc cu”- a literally translated version. In English, the word “cukoo” has two meanings: first, a grayish European bird that has a characteristic two-note call and lays its eggs in the nests of birds of other species; second, a foolish or crazy person (slang). With no image of the cuckoo in the movie, obviously the “cukoo” in the title implies the second meaning and in fact, the Cukoo’s nest is the madhouse where Mc Murphy “flew over”. Although that translation sounds natural Vietnamese, “tổ chim Cúc cu” does not make sense to Vietnamese audience because of linguistic difference. Thus, the proper title should be “Bay trên nhà thương điên”. However, the proper one is not as popular as the improper one.



Sample 3: Another idiom in movie titles can be seen in “Salt of the Earth”. The idiom “salt of the earth” in popular usage means a person of admirable character. Therefore, the version “Những người lương thiện” makes sense to Vietnamese audience better than “Muối của trái đất” which is translated literally.



Sample 4: “Perfect storm” is a meteorological terminology used to describe a hypothetical hurricane that happens to hit the most vulnerable spot of a given region, at the highest possible intensity, and at the worst possible time

and thus creates the worst possible damage (Wikipedia dictionary). With the given definition, the word “storm” should be rendered as “kinh hoàng” or “khủng khiếp” in Vietnamese, not “hoàn hảo” –a common meaning of “perfect”. Therefore, the movie title “The perfect storm” should be properly translated as “Con bão kinh hoàng”

Sample 5: The movie title “As good as it gets” is an idiom used when you are saying that a situation is not going to get any better (Oxford Advanced learner’s dictionary). This idiom is right for the situation of the main character, Melvin Udall, an obsessive-compulsive writer who finds his life turned upside down when neighboring gay artist Simon is hospitalized and his home entrusted to him. In addition, Carol, the only waitress who will tolerate him, must leave work to care for her sick son, making it impossible for Melvin to eat breakfast. After many conflicts, the film ends with them walking into an uncertain but potentially bright future. Thus, the translation version “Không thể tốt hơn” is acceptable in terms of meaning.

Sample 6: An intriguing sample can be found in “The seven-year itch” which tells the story about a professional book reader for a publish company, whose wife and son are on an ocean-side resort, tries to pass the lonely hours and fantasizes about a young model who is lodging temporarily in the apartment upstairs. And “The seven-year itch” is an informal, humorous and interesting idiom referring to the desire for new sexual experience that is thought to be felt after seven years of marriage as defined in Oxford dictionary. The equivalent expression in Vietnamese that can be used to translate this title can be “ham của lạ” or “chán cơm thèm phở” with similar humor and meaning.

Sample 7: Another popular idiom is “once upon a time” that can be found in “Once upon a time in Mexico”. The idiom means “on some past occasion which is translated successfully as “một thời”. The translation not only ensures the proper meaning but also creates the feeling of nostalgia for the title. “Một thời ngang dọc ở Mexico” is such a wonderful translated title. The translation can be applied on many once-upon-a-time such as : “Once upon a time in America”; “Once upon a time in the Midlands”; “Once upon a time in the West”; “A Father.. A Son, Once upon a time in Hollywood”; “Once upon a time in China”; “Once upon a time in a Battlefield”...



3.2.5. Providing a new title

The linguistics is sometimes too high to overcome, even with the help of the four techniques above. When translators fail to keep the original title, to translate it literally, to explicate or adapt it, they have to employ the last choice: to provide a new title. It is the freest technique of movie title translation, for translators are not bound by linguistic hindrances and their creativeness as well as imagination can work the best. They are free to select a new title that fits the movie plot, which depends on their taste and style. The technique aims at:

Making the movie idiomatic Vietnamese

Sample 1: “Kramer vs. Kramer” tells us the story about Ted Kramer, a career man for whose work comes before his family, whose wife cannot take this anyone and decides to leave him Ted is now faced with the tasks of housekeeping and taking care of himself and their young son Billy with a lot of difficulties. The translator catches the movie pririt and renames it as “Gà trống nuôi con”- A familiar Vietnamese idiom which is easier to understand than literally-translated title “Kramer chống lại Kramer”.

Sample 2:

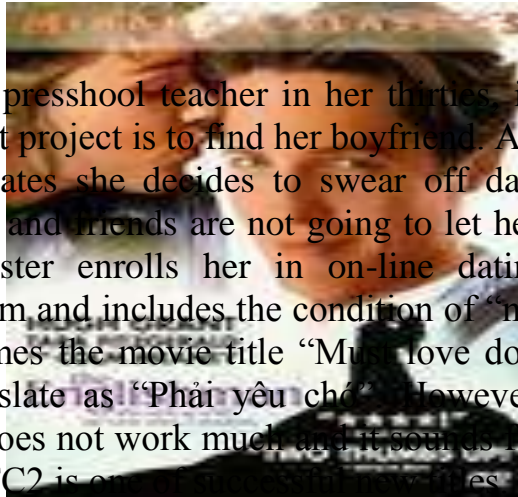
A similar sample is “The lady-killers”, of which the movie plot is summarized in one Vietnamese proverb “Kẻ cắp gặp bà già”. The new title may originate from the tagline “The greatest criminal minds of all time have finally met their match”: the greatest criminal minds- a group of thieves and their match – a sharp old woman. In fact, the word “lady-killer” is a slang referring a man reputed to be exceptionally attractive to and often ruthless with women (The American Heritage Dictionaries Online). However, the title does not imply this meaning, it is used in the literal sense: a group of criminals try to kill an old lady to cover up a clue.



Making the movie title more aesthetic:

Sample 3:

Sarah Nolan, a preschool teacher in her thirties, is recently divorced. Her family's new pet project is to find her boyfriend. After a series of disastrous, but hilarious, dates she decides to swear off dating for good. Her well-meaning family and friends are not going to let her give-up quite so easily though. Her sister enrolls her in on-line dating through the website perfectmatch.com and includes the condition of "must love dogs". And that condition becomes the movie title "Must love dogs". It seems to be very simple to translate as "Phải yêu chó". However, as a movie title, this translated one does not work much and it sounds funny "Điều kiện cho một tình yêu" by VTC2 is one of the best choices.



Making the movie title brief and concise:

Sample 4: The title "The Englishman who went up a hill but came down a mountain" may be the longest title in movie history. It is translated word by word as "Người đàn ông người Anh đi lên một quả đồi nhưng đi xuống một quả núi". It is too lengthy and takes much space. Therefore, it is needed a new title and "Chuyện tình xứ Wales" (VTC2) is a choice, which can cover the story spirit.



Sample 5: The same technique works with the movie "I know what you did last summer". This is the statement in the letter sent to Julie after she and

her three friends who were on summer holiday ran down a man on a cliffside road and dumped him into water. The statement means “Tao biết bọn mày đã gây nên điều gì mùa hè vừa rồi” in Vietnamese. However, if that sentence played the role as the movie title, the literal translation fails to create an aesthetic feeling. It should be changed and “Kì nghỉ hè định mệnh” is one of suggestions.

Dealing with homonymy:

Sample 6: The movie is named “Rain man” because one of the character in the movie, the older brother Raymond Babbitt, an autistic, always fails to pronounce his own name Raymond right, but makes a sound of Rain Man. Therefore, the version “Người mưa” by Vnexpress or “Người đi dưới mưa” by VTV makes people bewildered and tells nothing about the story. It should be “Tình anh em” to make perfectly match the plot. However, the “wrong” version seems once again more appealing.

In general, there is no optimal strategy for all translators to take and for titles to be translated. It is the best if the five discuss strategies are put into practice in a flexible and creative way.



CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Some difficulties in translation of movie titles from English into Vietnamese

As professional movie translators, their work covers various movie genres including social drama, action, science fiction, comedy, horror, cartoon, adventure, epic, police, etc. When the vast majority of Korean films fall into social drama, Chinese ones- police and history, English ones made Hollywood modern movie industry focus on action, science fiction, horror and genres that exploit and take advantages of movie magic and technology. As a result, most of translators often deal with a lot of action and science fiction movies but not horror due to cultural censorship. However, it is difficult to translate movie language.

The difficulty is made from the three major obstacles. First, language used in movies is spoken language with plenty of slangs, idioms, jargons, dialects, puns, etc. Second, the cultural dissimilarity including way of thinking, lifestyle, living environment... sets up barriers for translators. Third, translators also have to come up against difficulties regarding to grammatical structure. Those make movie translation a demanding job.

When translating movie titles from English into Vietnamese, what we often face during movie translation are idioms, slangs, terminologies, puns ...as a frequent obstacle, since they seems to be inundated in movie language. Most of them are not translatable, for their meanings are metaphorical rather than literal. Thus, translators have to find the closest or most appropriate expression in Vietnamese language to deal with. Conformably to respondents' opinions, cultural differences and complicated sentence structures cause them fewer troubles in translation.

4.2. Suggested solutions

In terms of translation methods, literal translation and explication are the most-chosen ones to translate English movie titles into Vietnamese. Of which, the technique of explication is the most frequently used by translators, then the literal translation. The strategy explication selected by most of translators is often accompanied by “translating it last” or “carefully selecting words”. It means explication can only be employed when the translator has watched, translated the whole film and become cognizant of what it is about.

A right choice of movie title translation is a great importance to the successful release of a movie. Translator should pay due attention and should not make light of the title during movie translation process, for title translation is important and challenging. It seems to be easy to transmit a few English words into Vietnamese. In fact, the words are simple in meaning but their combination in movie title is puzzling. For example, how could you deal with “Some like it hot”, “Die hard” or “Die another day?” Such titles often cause headache to movie translators and require so much effort and creativeness in translation so that they are considered “transcreators” by John Yunker in “Transcreation” Gaining Momentum 2001. The title can be compared as the movie’s “face” and it should be nice-looking to win people’s good impression. Translators then need to be responsible for beautifying it with their “make-up-tools” of words so that it can be presented in the most beautiful and impressive way.

PART III: CONCLUSION

1. Major findings

In short, the translation of movie titles includes many complicated factors. It depends on the content of films, the psychology of the audience, and some other factors. Anyway, it must be a good version if it is concise, striking, attracting and meaningful. As we have analyzed above, a good rendering of film titles should obey such principles: Faithfulness, cultural awareness, combination of commercial and aesthetic effects. Transliteration, literal translation and explication are the usual methods we use when we translate movie titles. Only by bearing in mind the principles

of faithfulness, cultural awareness, and combination of commercial and aesthetic effects, and employing techniques, appropriate to different titles, can we translators do a better job when translating movie titles.

The graduation paper has presented basic points relating to English movie title translation. Readers have been provided with titles' functions and characteristics. In general, like newspaper headlines, movie titles are brief and concise with content included, however, what they convey are not only figures and events but also aesthetic and artistic feelings to readers. In addition, principles in movie title translation are also given. A good translation needs to be faithful, communicable and natural while a good translated movie title has other specific requirements such as: commercial and aesthetic effects.

Then, five major techniques have been suggested as general guidelines for various relevant subjects, namely:

- Keeping the original title
- Literal translation
- Explication
- Adaptation
- Providing a new title

Advantages and disadvantages of each technique as well as their application has been pointed out in the chapter II. Plenty of translated movie titles in Vietnam and other countries are listed and discussed so as to make techniques clearer and more persuasive and help readers draw a comparison between titles translated into Vietnamese and some other languages.

However, a 60-page research is unable to wrap up all aspects of movie title translation and presented every point in detail. The research would be better if the following dimensions were added. Firstly, more illustrating samples for each translation technique are needed so that suggested technique would be analyzed more deeply and comprehensively. Secondly, the paper would be better if a translated title is accompanied with the translator's name. Yet it seems to be unfeasible to look for the name, for it is never found on a movie advertising banner at cinemas. I hope to be offered a chance to better my research.

2.Implications for English language teaching

Movie translation is far from simple, particularly title translation is never an easy work for those who are serious in work. In order to produce an intriguing title, it is needed both responsibility and creativeness from translators.

This research could be of great use to teach ESP in Vietnam's stage and screen colleges. That is to help students comprehend the importance of a

movie title, the right understanding of a movie, plot, content and its title as well as the best principles and techniques to translate a movie title from English to Vietnamese and vice versus. Thanks to it, the students' capacity of absorbing artistic values of movie could be enhanced, deepening their love for movie study. Hopefully, the number of successful translated titles will be on the rise to satisfy more and more movie fans and Vietnamese movie industry will develop rapidly to create a better chance of studying the translation of Vietnamese movie titles into English.

3. Suggestions for further study

The study gives an analytical and critical account of translation principles and techniques used in translating movie titles from English into Vietnamese. The author hopes that she would go further with her research on other aspects of translation such as:

- Translation of movie titles from Vietnamese into English
- Translation of song titles from English into Vietnamese
- Translation of a certain well-known art work from English into Vietnamese

However, there will be inevitable minus of the study due to limited knowledge of this field. Any comment and recommendations from teachers and readers who are interested in this field to make the study better are most welcomed.

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B. Vietnamese

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C. Internet

Frequently-used links:

- <http://www.literarytranslation.com/workshops/almodovar/>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page
- <http://movies.yahoo.com>
- <http://www.imdb.com/>
- <http://www.answers.com>
- <http://yingyu.jituo.net/english/113/18786.html>
- www.demog.berkeley.edu/~dstein/papers/film/pdf
- <http://yourdictionary.com/ahd/search>
- <http://www.breakingin.net//script-market-news27.htm>
- <http://goingglobal.corante.com>

Appendices

Appendix 1:

This is a speech about the award for best title translation voted by the UCSD Guardian- official newspaper of the University of California, San Diego retrieved from http://www.ucsdguardian.org/cgi-bin/hinatus?art=2003_03_13_01. It shows that movie title translation is highly appreciated in the world.

Best title translation Award:

“Changing Lanes” as “Out of control” in Latin America

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honor to present a unique new category for film recognition: The best title translation award. This award depends on Hollywood’s international viewers and film junkies, who dutifully change the given English titles of films into their own respective languages. When these new titles are translated back into English, the results are award-worthy.

In order to win this award, the translation of the English title must communicate more about the film or those who are in it than the original title. Past winners have included “Babe” (1995), which was translated from a Chinese dialect to English as “I may be a pig, but I’m not stupid”. Avid cinema-goers will agree that this new title is a more appropriate synopsis of the film’s plot and characters.

But who can forget the 2001 winner, “Not another teen movie”, whose translation from Spanish, “Another Stupid American film”, helped the film claim its award. This new title probably enhanced ticket sales in Spain because who honestly wants to miss a chance to laugh at Americans? But one can’t help wondering: Had the Spanish-to-English version of the title been used in the United States, would ticket sales have been any lower?

Now let’s consider this year’s nominations. Members of the 2002 anti-Academy had to consider translation gems from Latin America. The translation, “A Big Boy” for “About a boy”, starring Hugh Grant left anti-

Academy members wondering who the “big boy” was meant to be: Hugh Grant or his co-star, Nicholas Hoult. Another contender included “Deadly Calculation”, the eerie Latin American translation for “Murder by Numbers”, starring Sandra Bullock.

After much deliberation, the members of the anti-Academy voted, and take great pleasure in presenting this year’s best title translation Award to “Changing Lanes” for its Latin American translation: “Out of control”. The voting members of the anti-Academy felt that this translation best articulated the current state of Ben Affleck’s career and love life.

Mara Evans
Senior Staff Writer

Appendix 2:

List of movie titles in the research

No	English movie title	Vietnamese title
1	A beautiful mind	Một tâm hồn đẹp
2	A nightmare on Elm street	Cơn ác mộng trên phố Elm
3	A space odyssey	Hành trình vào không gian
4	Along came Polly	Từ khi có Polly
5	Amadeus	Mozart

6	American beauty	Vẻ đẹp Mỹ
7	Annie Hall	Annie Hall
8	As good as it gets	Không thể tốt hơn
9	Avenging Angelo	Báo thù cho Angelo
10	Batman	Người dơi
11	Being Human	Làm người
12	Ben Hur	Ben Hur
13	Bonnie an Clyde	Cặp bài trùng
14	Braveheart	Trái tim dũng cảm
15	Bridget Jones' diary	Nhật kí tiểu thư Jones
16	Brokeback Mountain	Núi Brokeback
17	Casablanca	Casablanca
18	Catch me if you can	Nếu giỏi hãy bắt tôi
19	Changing Lanes	Đổi ngôi
20	Chicago	Chicago
21	Chickenrun	Phi đội gà bay
22	Closer	Xích lại gần nhau
23	Coming Home	Trở về nhà
24	Derailed	Kẻ tổng tình
25	Die Hard	Tử thủ
26	Driving Miss Daisy	Lái xe cho bà Daisy
27	Elektra	Sát thủ Elektra
28	Elizabethtown	Thị trấn tình yêu
29	Evelyn	Evelyn
30	Fever Pitch	Cơn sốt tình yêu

31	Finding Nemo	Tìm kiếm Nemo
32	Flightplan	Chuyến bay kinh hoàng
33	Forrest Gump	Forrest Gump
34	Godfinger	Ngón tay vàng
35	Head over Heels	Bắt được tình yêu
36	Home alone	ở nhà một mình
37	I am Sam	Tôi là Sam
38	I know what you did last summer	Kì nghỉ hè định mệnh
39	Indepenndence day	Ngày độc lập
40	Interview with Vampire	Phỏng vấn ma cà rồng
41	Jaws	Hàm cá mập
42	Just like Heaven	Hồn yêu
43	Just marreid	Yêu là cưới
44	King Kong	King Kong
45	Kramer vs. Kramer	Gà trống nuôi con
46	Leaving Las Vegas	Rời Las Vegas
47	Life if beautiful	Cuộc sống tươi đẹp
48	Lost horizon	Chân trời bị lãng quên
49	Love story	Chuyện tình
50	Manhattan	Manhattan
51	Men in black	Người mặc đồ đen
52	Mission impossible	Nhiệm vụ bất khả thi
53	Mr&Mrs Smiths	Ông bà Smiths
54	Murder at 1600	Án mạng tại Nhà trắng

55	Must love dogs	Điều kiện cho một tình yêu
56	Notting Hill	Đôi Notting
57	Ocean's eleven	11 tên cướp thế kỉ
58	One flew over the Cukoo's nest	Bay qua nhà thương điên/ Bay trên tổ chim cú cu
59	Panic room	Căn phòng đáng sợ
60	Pearl harbor	Chân trâu cảng
61	Pirates of the Caribbean	Những tên cướp biển vùng Caribe
62	Raging Bull	Bò điên
63	Rain man	Tình anh em
64	Red eye	Mắt đỏ
65	Road to Perdition	Con đường diệt vong
66	Romeo and Juliet	Romeo và Juliet
67	Sahara	Sahara- con tàu tử thần
68	Salt of the Earth	Những người lương thiện
69	Saving private Ryan	Giải cứu binh nhì Ryan
70	Schindler's list	Danh sách Schindler
71	Seven	Bảy trọng tội
72	Shakespeare in love	Shakespeare đang yêu
73	Shrek	Shrek- gã chần tinh tốt bụng
74	Sin city	Thành phố tội ác
75	Singing in the rain	Hát trong mưa
76	Sleeping beauty	Người đẹp ngủ trong rừng
77	Sleeping with enemy	Ngủ với kẻ thù
78	Sleepless in seattle	Không ngủ với Seattle

79	Something's gotta give	Gỡ lấy yêu thương
80	Spartacus	Spartacus
81	Star wars	Chiến tranh giữa các vì sao
82	Starsky and Hutch	Cớm chìm, cớm nổi
83	Ten things I hate about you	10 điều tôi ghét bạn
84	The dating game	Trò chơi hò hẹn
85	The Englishman who went up a hill but came down a mountain	Chuyện tình xứ Wales
86	The Godfather	Bố già
87	The killing fields	Những cánh đồng chết
88	The lady-killers	Kẻ cắp gặp bà già
89	The lion King	Vua sư tử
90	The Matrix	Ma trận
91	The Mummy	Xác ướp Ai cập
92	The perfect storm	Cơn bão kinh hoàng
93	The piano	Dương cầm
94	The ring	Vòng tròn tử thần
95	The silence of the lambs	Sự im lặng của bầy cừu
96	The world is not enough	Thế giới không đủ
97	Titanic	Titanic
98	Tomorrow never dies	Ngày mai không lụi tàn
99	Toy story	Câu chuyện đồ chơi
100	Training day	Ngày huấn luyện
101	Troy	Trận chiến thành Troy
102	Wimbledon	Mắc lưới tình yêu

103	Win a date with Tad Hamilton	Thế mới là yêu
104	Wizard of Oz	Phù thủy Oz
105	Working girl	Cô gái chăm chỉ

