

RENDERING UKRAINIAN-LANGUAGE DIALOGUES IN THE ANIMATED FILM “CARS”: STYLISTIC, PRAGMATIC AND CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

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Abstract. *The article examines the rendering of Ukrainian-language dialogues in the animated film trilogy Cars produced by Pixar Animation Studios. The study focuses on the stylistic, pragmatic, and cultural aspects of the Ukrainian dubbed versions of “Cars” (2006), “Cars 2” (2011), and “Cars 3” (2017), comparing them with the original English dialogues. The research investigates how translators and dubbing specialists convey humor, idiomatic expressions, emotional tone, character-specific speech patterns, and culturally marked elements. Special attention is given to strategies for translating children-oriented audiovisual content, where naturalness, clarity, and cultural accessibility must be balanced with fidelity to the original narrative.*

The analysis demonstrates that the Ukrainian versions successfully preserve the communicative intent of the English dialogues through a combination of translation transformations, such as modulation, adaptation, cultural substitution, explication, and partial domestication. Character idiolects – including the rural speech of Mater, the formal tone of Doc Hudson, and Lightning McQueen’s dynamic colloquial style – undergo creative reinterpretation to align with Ukrainian linguistic norms while maintaining recognizable traits. Furthermore, humor based on wordplay, cultural references, and intertextual allusions is often adapted to ensure comprehensibility for Ukrainian audiences.

The findings show that Ukrainian dubbing enhances emotional resonance and audience engagement while preserving the stylistic identity of the film. The study highlights the importance of cultural sensitivity, genre specificity, and functional equivalence in audiovisual translation and suggests further research on the translation of humor and dialects in animated media.

Key words: *audiovisual translation, localization, adaptation, film dialogues, humor, wordplay, transformations.*

ПЕРЕДАЧА УКРАЇНСЬКОМОВНИХ ДІАЛОГІВ В АНІМАЦІЙНОМУ ФІЛЬМІ «ТАЧКИ»: СТИЛІСТИЧНІ, ПРАГМАТИЧНІ ТА КУЛЬТУРНІ АСПЕКТИ

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Анотація. У статті проаналізовано особливості відтворення україномовних діалогів в анімаційній трилогії «Тачки» виробництва Pixar Animation Studios. Дослідження зосереджене на стилістичних, прагматичних і культурних аспектах українського дубляжу фільмів «Тачки» (2006), «Тачки 2» (2011) та «Тачки 3» (2017) у зіставленні з оригінальними англійськими репліками. У роботі розглянуто, яким чином перекладачі та фахівці з дублювання передають гумор, ідіоматичні звороти, емоційне забарвлення, індивідуальні мовні характеристики персонажів та елементи з культурною маркованістю. Окремо акцентовано увагу на перекладацьких підходах, характерних для дитячого аудіовізуального контенту, де важливо узгодити природність і зрозумілість мовлення з точністю та відповідністю авторському задуму.

Проведений аналіз демонструє, що український дубляж переважно зберігає комунікативну спрямованість оригінальних реплік завдяки використанню таких перекладацьких трансформацій, як модуляція, адаптація, культурна заміна, експлікація та часткова доместикація. Ідіолекти персонажів, зокрема простонародна манера мовлення Сирника, стримано-офіційний тон Дока Гадсона та жвавий розмовний стиль Блискавки МакКвіна, творчо інтерпретуються відповідно до норм української мови, але зі збереженням упізнаваних рис. Гумор, що ґрунтується на грі слів, культурних алюзіях чи інтертекстуальних відсилках, часто зазнає адаптації, аби залишатися зрозумілим і дотепним для українських глядачів.

Отримані результати свідчать, що український дубляж посилює емоційний вплив стрічок і забезпечує високу залученість аудиторії, водночас зберігаючи стильову індивідуальність оригіналу. У роботі підкреслено значущість культурної чутливості, жанрових особливостей та принципу функціональної еквівалентності в аудіовізуальному перекладі, а також окреслено перспективи подальших досліджень гумору й діалектних форм у мультимедійному контенті.

Ключові слова: аудіовізуальний переклад, локалізація, адаптація, кінодіалоги, гумор, гра слів, трансформації.

Statement of the problem. The growing global popularity of animated films has highlighted the complexities of their translation and dubbing. Animated films, intended for diverse audiences, require translators to go beyond linguistic substitution to preserve narrative, stylistic, and cultural meaning. The Cars trilogy (2006–2017) showcases communicative strategies, stylistic nuances, and culturally embedded elements that must be accurately conveyed in translation.

The problem addressed in this study is how Ukrainian translators render stylistically

marked English dialogues while maintaining humor, emotional expressiveness, character-specific speech, and cultural references, including American geography, automotive culture, and wordplay. Despite the high quality of Ukrainian dubbing of Pixar films, research on translating character idiolects and culturally marked humor in children's films remains limited, particularly in Ukrainian scholarship. Therefore, the Cars trilogy provides a valuable case study for exploring stylistic adaptation, cultural substitution, and functional equivalence in dubbing practice.

The aim of this article is to analyze the linguistic, stylistic, and cultural strategies employed in the Ukrainian-language dubbing of the animated film trilogy *Cars*, focusing on the rendering of English dialogues into Ukrainian. The study seeks to determine how translators preserve the communicative intent, stylistic distinctiveness, and character-specific linguistic features of the original while ensuring naturalness and accessibility for Ukrainian audiences.

To achieve this aim, the following **tasks** are set:

1. To outline the theoretical foundations of audiovisual translation with emphasis on dubbing.
2. To identify stylistic, pragmatic, and cultural challenges in translating animated film dialogues.
3. To examine specific translation strategies used in the Ukrainian versions of “Cars”, “Cars 2”, and “Cars 3”.
4. To analyze how translators convey humor, idiomatic expressions, and culturally marked references.
5. To investigate the rendering of character idiolects and expressive means.
6. To evaluate the effectiveness of translation solutions in terms of functional equivalence and audience perception.

Object of the study: the English-language dialogues of “Cars”, “Cars 2”, and “Cars 3”, as well as their Ukrainian-language dubbed versions.

Subject of the study: translation strategies, stylistic transformations, pragmatic adaptations, and cultural substitutions used to render dialogues from English into Ukrainian in the *Cars* trilogy.

Analysis of Recent Research. Research in audiovisual translation has expanded considerably in recent decades, emphasizing multimodality, synchrony, character identity, and cultural adaptation. Notable contributions have been made by scholars such as Díaz Cintas, Chaume, Gambier, and Remael, who highlight the complexity of dubbing as a multimodal process involving linguistic, sociocultural, and acoustic dimensions. Their works underline the importance of lip-synchrony, isochrony, emotional fidelity, and the interplay between verbal and visual channels in translated media.

In Ukrainian linguistics, the theoretical foundations of translation have been laid by scholars such as Karaban, Korunets, Bilozerska, and others, whose studies address lexical, stylistic, and cultural challenges in translation. Recent Ukrainian research has also explored the specifics of translating humor, idiomatic expressions, and culture-bound elements in audiovisual media, though studies focusing on animated films remain limited.

Scholarly attention has been paid to the strategies used in dubbing: domestication, foreignization, adaptation, modulation, explicitation, compensation, and transcreation. These strategies help recreate the stylistic texture of the source text while making it accessible to target audiences. However, the translation of character-specific speech patterns – such as dialects, sociolects, and idiolects – remains an area requiring further exploration.

While various studies have addressed theoretical principles of audiovisual translation, the specific issue of rendering dialogues in the *Cars* trilogy has not been comprehensively investigated. The linguistic creativity, cultural specificity, and humorous nature of the film series require detailed scholarly attention, especially regarding Ukrainian-language dubbing, which is praised for its artistic quality and cultural resonance. Thus, the present study aims to address this gap.

The *Cars* trilogy, produced by Pixar Animation Studios, presents a particularly rich corpus for studying audiovisual translation due to its extensive use of humour, colloquial register, automotive jargon, and culturally embedded references. Unlike subtitling, dubbing requires the translator not only to render linguistic meaning but also to account for timing, intonation, character identity, and cultural acceptability. This multimodal nature of dubbing increases the complexity of translation choices and often necessitates creative departures from the original text.

Ukrainian dubbing of the trilogy is considered one of the most successful localisation projects undertaken in Ukraine. Its popularity derives not from literal fidelity but from skillful recreation of pragmatic intent, humour, emotional tone, and character-specific linguistic behaviour. This article investigates how these effects are achieved through specific translation strategies.

Theoretical Framework. Audiovisual translation (AVT) includes dubbing, subtitling, and localisation, each constrained by different technical and cultural factors [4, p. 2–5]. Dubbing requires synchrony with on-screen lip movements, natural prosody, and coherent character representation, which necessitates flexible translation strategies.

Modulation is used when direct translation would distort meaning or fail to reproduce stylistic nuance. Adaptation and cultural substitution are applied when the target audience lacks the cultural background necessary to understand the original reference. Compensation helps restore humorous or stylistic effects lost elsewhere. Explicitation clarifies implicit elements for audiences with differing cultural or linguistic knowledge.

Methodology. The research employs a comparative linguistic analysis of original English dialogues and their Ukrainian dubbed versions in “Cars” (2006), “Cars 2” (2011), and “Cars 3” (2017). The material includes scenes containing humour, idioms, wordplay, culturally marked references, and character-specific speech patterns. The analysis focuses on identifying translation strategies and evaluating semantic, pragmatic, and stylistic equivalence between the source and target texts.

Stylistic Dimensions of Translation. Stylistic equivalence is central to the Ukrainian dubbing of Cars, where translators often use modulation to recreate expressive force. For instance, Lightning McQueen’s colloquial remark “*That ain’t nothing*” [Part 1, 00:36:31] becomes “*Тю, то ж на щастя!*”, where the Ukrainian version shifts the meaning from negation to a culturally familiar positive exclamation, thus preserving the upbeat tone associated with McQueen’s personality. Similarly, when the character shouts “*Get outta here!*” [Part 1, 1:19:51], the Ukrainian “*Котися звідси!*” introduces a metaphor tied to the automotive theme, strengthening stylistic coherence.

Humour in Cars frequently involves puns that cannot be transferred literally, prompting translators to apply adaptation. When one character exclaims “*I’m in hillbilly hell!*” [Part 1, 00:40:13], the Ukrainian version transforms the metaphor into “*Я здохну в цьому Задринанську!*”, creating a humorous fictional toponym that preserves the emotional intensity and comic

effect. A similarly creative adaptation appears in “*Well, life’s a beach and then you drive*” [Part 3, 00:38:26], rendered as “*Все наше життя – нісок, а потім – ямка*”, where the Ukrainian pun relies on familiar imagery rather than mirroring the English sound play.

Cultural and Pragmatic Adaptation. The trilogy references American popular culture, automotive history, and motorsport institutions, many of which are unfamiliar to Ukrainian audiences. Consequently, the translators apply cultural substitution. For example, the culturally distant mention of “*Los Angeles International Speedway*” [Part 3, 00:00:37] is often generalised in Ukrainian as “*головна траса*” or “*великі перегони*”, ensuring narrative clarity without introducing obscure details. Similarly, slang terms like “*jalopy*” [Part 2, 01:06:33], are translated as “*драндулети*”, using a well-established Ukrainian colloquialism to maintain the pragmatic tone of humorous insult.

The translators also employ explicitation, especially when rendering complex colloquial constructions. A line such as “*What’s happened to McQueen is ‘cause I’m such a big one*” [Part 2, 01:16:19], is localised as “*І халена з МакКвіном сталася через мене*”, eliminating the ambiguous metaphor “a big one” and replacing it with a clear admission appropriate for a children’s audience.

Another important pragmatic technique is euphemisation, used to soften rude or emotionally charged expressions. The American rural exclamation “*Dad-gum!*” [Part 2, 01:11:42], becomes the playful Ukrainian “*Патрон в батон!*”, which maintains the character’s rustic charm without introducing inappropriate connotations.

Humour as a Translation Challenge. Humour in Cars arises from punning, cultural stereotypes, and phonetic play. When a pun cannot be transferred, the translators often employ compensation, adding humour to another line or recreating the comic effect in a new form. For example, the English euphemistic pun “*He did what in his cup?*” [Part 1, 1:06:11], involving homophony is replaced with “*Наробив на кукли?*”, where the Ukrainian version uses invented phonetic similarity to achieve a humorous effect meaningful to Ukrainian-speaking children.

Another notable case is the Ukrainian recreation of Mater’s rustic slang. His line

“*We’re best buds!*” [Part 1, 1:27:46] becomes “*Ми друзьбаку!*”, preserving the informal warmth that defines his character. Through such strategies, humour becomes not an imported cultural feature but an organically localised element of the Ukrainian version.

Rendering Character Identity.

The translators demonstrate sensitivity to character-specific speech patterns. McQueen’s lines are often short, energetic, and assertive, which is preserved in translations such as “*I’m gonna cut to the chase. Me, you, dinner*” [Part 1, 00:30:56] rendered as “*І давай одразу до сумі. Ти, я, здибанка*”, where the colloquial “здибанка” reinforces his bold personality.

Mater’s rustic, humorous, and slightly naïve speech is conveyed through colloquial forms such as “*Це наша юристка, ну і тину моя дівка*”, which translates “*She’s the town attorney and my fiancée*” [Part 1, 00:31:38] while enhancing his playful tone. Sally’s gentle, refined style is maintained in lines like “*I fell in love with this little town*” [Part 1, 00:48:00] – “*Я закохалася в це маленьке містечко*”, which faithfully conveys her emotional sincerity.

Through these choices, the translators preserve not only semantic content but the entire pragmatic identity of each character, thus ensuring that Ukrainian viewers perceive the same interpersonal dynamics as in the original.

Localisation for a Child Audience. Since the primary audience includes children, the translators simplify complex constructions and avoid culturally dense metaphors. The line “*Lifting my funk making sculpture outta junk!*” [Part 3, 00:55:53] becomes “*Кайфую од життя, люблю скульптури із сміття!*”, where rhythm, rhyme, and emotional colour take precedence over literal accuracy. This transformation reflects the principle that accessibility and enjoyment outweigh lexical precision in child-oriented dubbing.

Simplification is also applied to technical vocabulary. Motorsport terminology that might confuse younger viewers is either generalised or replaced with familiar Ukrainian equivalents, ensuring comprehension without compromising narrative flow.

Discussion. The analysis reveals that the Ukrainian dubbing of the Cars trilogy is characterised by consistent reliance on

pragmatic and functional equivalence rather than literal translation. Creativity proves essential, as translators frequently rebuild jokes, modify cultural references, and restructure idioms. Their work demonstrates that successful localisation requires:

- 1) sensitivity to cultural differences;
- 2) preservation of character voice;
- 3) audience-oriented simplification;
- 4) creative reconstruction of humour;
- 5) dynamic equivalence in stylistic and emotional meaning.

These strategies contribute to the cultural resonance and popularity of the Ukrainian version, which is widely acknowledged as a creative achievement rather than a derivative adaptation.

Conclusions. The analysis of Ukrainian-language dubbing in Pixar’s Cars trilogy demonstrates that successful audiovisual translation requires far more than linguistic accuracy. The translators act simultaneously as language mediators, cultural interpreters, and creative adaptors. By employing strategies such as modulation, adaptation, cultural substitution, explicitation, compensation, and audience-oriented simplification, they manage to preserve the humour, emotional resonance, and character individuality inherent in the original dialogues.

The study shows that Ukrainian localisation is not limited to reproducing the semantic content of the source text; rather, it reconstructs pragmatic intent, stylistic nuances, and culturally marked elements in forms that are natural and engaging for Ukrainian audiences, particularly children. The translators’ decisions often involve a shift away from literal equivalence but contribute to creating a coherent and culturally meaningful audiovisual experience. As a result, the Ukrainian versions of “Cars”, “Cars 2”, and “Cars 3” can be considered not merely translations but creative reinterpretations that maintain the spirit of the original while integrating local linguistic and cultural conventions.

The findings highlight the importance of flexibility, cultural sensitivity, and creativity in dubbing animated films. They also confirm that the success of Ukrainian dubbing is rooted in the translators’ ability to balance fidelity with naturalness, preserve character voice, and re-create humour through innovative solutions rather than mechanical transfer.

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