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COHESIVE TIES IN PROMOTIONAL TEXTS: A MULTIMODAL TRANSLATION PERSPECTIVE ON FILM POSTERS

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Abstract. This study considers multimodal texts of film posters in the light of functional pragmatics and intersemiosis. Film posters lie at the intersection of cinematic and advertising discourses, they cross national boundaries promoting films globally. It informs about our investigation of these promotional texts in the light of multimodal translation. Our research is set in the integrative framework encompassing Social Semiotics and Multimodal Translation. The material includes multimodal texts of film posters in English and their counterparts localized for the Russian audience. The sample texts are analyzed at the levels of meaning-building and reception. We examine cohesive linkages between different semiotic modes in the original posters, then we reveal if these ties are preserved or broken in the course of multimodal translation. Finally, we analyze how the translated versions are perceived by the Russian-speaking viewers. To this end, we conduct an experiment in the form of an interview. The findings reveal that the semantic ties uniting verbal and pictorial elements are not always rendered accurately in the course of multimodal translation, which tends to be assessed negatively by the recipients. However, some participants of the experiment positively evaluate localized posters with broken cohesive links finding them intriguing. It goes in line with the main pragmatic functions of advertising texts as they should not only inform but also stimulate interest in the film, intrigue being a powerful tool to do it. Our empirical study establishes correlation between the genre characteristics of a multimodal text and the perception of its intersemiotic ties.

Key words: cohesion, film poster, multimodal translation, multimodality, promotional text.

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КОГЕЗИВНЫЕ СВЯЗИ В ПРОДВИГАЮЩИХ ТЕКСТАХ: КИНОПОСТЕРЫ В РАКУРСЕ МУЛЬТИМОДАЛЬНОГО ПЕРЕВОДА

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Аннотация. Статья посвящена поликодовым текстам кинопостеров, которые рассматриваются в интерсемиотическом и функционально-прагматическом аспектах. Данные тексты призваны продвигать кинопроизведения на международных рынках, что обуславливает их изучение в ракурсе мультимодального перевода. Исследование имеет интегративный характер, его теоретической основой выступают принципы социальной семиотики и мультимодального подхода к переводу. Материалом послужили поликодовые тексты англоязычных кинопостеров и их русскоязычные версии, анализируемые как с позиций создания авторского посыла, так и с позиций его восприятия. Выявлена роль когезивных связей между семиотически разнородными элементами оригинального продвигающего текста; определено, насколько точно данные семантические связи переданы в процессе мультимодального перевода. Для исследования восприятия кинопостеров, переведенных для русскоязычной целевой аудитории, проведен эксперимент на основе интервью. Полученные результаты показали: семантические связи между вербальными и изобразительными элементами текстов выборки не всегда передаются в ходе мультимодального перевода, что, как правило, негативно оценивается реципиентами. В ряде случаев разрушение смысловых цепочек положительно воспринимается адресатами, поскольку это создает недосказанность, интригующую потенциальных зрителей. Данные характеристики коррелируют с базовыми функциями продвигающих текстов, призванных не только информировать, но и создавать интригу, стимулируя интерес к рекламируемому фильму. В результате эмпирического исследования установлена связь между жанром поликодового текста и особенностями восприятия его интерсемиотических связей. *Вклад авторов.* С.Ю. Павлина – формулирование общей концепции и разработка методологии исследования, описание теоретических основ исследования. М.Р. Сафина – формирование эмпирической базы, отбор текстов для анализа, проведение лингвистического эксперимента. О.Д. Прасолова – анализ результатов эмпирического исследования по разработанной методике.

Ключевые слова: когезия, кинопостер, мультимодальный перевод, поликодовость, продвигающий текст.

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Introduction

Modern communication is marked by the growing salience of visual information and the usage of multiple modes beyond language [Forceville, 2020]. It engendered a medial turn in linguistics stimulating the investigation of semiotically complex, multimodal texts [Chernyavskaya, 2013]. Modern scholarship on multimodality considers the meaning-building in multimodal texts as semiosis of linguistic and visual elements. Verbal and non-verbal modes intertwine and create cross-modal cohesive harmony [Adami, Ramos Pinto, 2020]. Cohesive relations were investigated in the framework of Systemic-Functional Linguistics as semantic ties established by lexico-grammatical means [Halliday, Hasan, 1976, p. 4; Halliday, Matthiessen, 2014, p. 603]. In recent studies discussion of cohesion is extended beyond the realm of systemic linguistics and the focus is shifted to the way discourse-specific and genre-specific conventions shape the type and degree of cohesive linkage present in a text [Christiansen, 2011; Stöckl, Bateman, 2022]. The examination of interrelation of verbal and non-

verbal elements is based on various types of multimodal texts including promotional ones [Borisova, 2016]. A substantial body of research is devoted to intersemiosis in static and dynamic commercial advertisements, while multimodal texts promoting films have not garnered due attention yet.

Being semiotically heterogeneous texts, film posters lie at the intersection of several fields encompassing linguistics, film studies, semiotics, communication studies and marketing among others. It engenders a set of conventions that film posters share. Specifically, they are designed to arrest the viewers' attention, which shapes their structure and pragmatics. The key element of a poster is a pictorial image that is complemented by verbal signs. The linguistic elements tend to incorporate the film title, the director, the cast, and a tagline. All multimodal resources should be laconic and attractive at the same time to impact the viewers and stimulate them to watch the film. It informs pragmatic properties of promotional texts: film posters are designed to intrigue and arouse consumer curiosity [Smith, 2018], cohesive chains being an essential ingredient of this strategy.

Cinematic texts and the posters promoting them target audiences belonging to different cultural and linguistic communities. Film posters cross national boundaries, which allows for their investigation from the perspective of multimodal translation. The researchers in this new field of translation studies explore such multimodal texts as comics [Kaindl, 2010] and commercial advertisement [Adami, Ramos Pinto, 2020; Rodríguez-Arcos, 2024; Tuna, 2019]. Our study extends multimodal translation to film posters aiming at examining cohesion both in the source texts and the target texts.

Modern studies in the fields of linguistics and translation tend to investigate the interaction of different modes in a multimodal text on the level of production, taking the perspective of a sign-maker, while the level of reception is usually neglected [Gambier, Lautenbacher, 2024]. To bridge this gap in scholarship, we conduct an empirical study on the audience's perception of meaning-building in film posters.

We aim to analyze cohesion in film posters on two levels: the level of the text production (from the perspective of a poster designer), and the level of reception (from the perspective of consumers of promotional texts). Specifically, this study examines cohesion in the original English-language film posters and their Russian translations focusing on the way it is perceived by viewers. To this end, we explore the following research questions:

- How do designers employ resources of different modes to build meaning in film posters?
- What happens to cohesive ties in the course of multimodal translation of film posters?
- How does cohesion or the lack of it affect the perception of the translated posters?

Cohesion in multimodal texts

From the semiotic perspective, film posters are comprised of various meaning-making resources such as written texts and images and thus can be approached as a type of *multimodal texts*. Multimodality as a theoretical framework arose in 1990s and was to a large extent influenced by M.A.K. Halliday's *Systemic Functional Linguistics*, an approach that viewed language as a social semiotics and was later applied to other semiotic resources such as image, gesture and sound [Jewitt, Bezemer, O'Halloran, 2016, p. 33].

In multimodal studies, researchers focus on the ways the semiotic resources interact in the process of meaning-making, contributing to the production of multimodal wholes [O'Halloran, 2011; Jewitt, Bezemer, O'Halloran, 2016]. One of the key notions here is that of a *mode*, which is understood either in relation to particular sensory channels (visual, auditory, etc.) or, following J. Bateman, as an “interpretative practice constructed and maintained by communities of users,” often involving more than one sensory channel [Bateman, 2016, p. 39].

An overwhelmingly large body of research in multimodality is focused on the analysis of printed materials including textbooks [Van Leeuwen, 2005] and advertisement [Liu, O'Halloran, 2009; Stöckl, Pflaeging, 2022]. Despite the fact that film posters lend themselves perfectly to this kind of analysis due to the well-established genre conventions and their similarity to printed advertisements, there is surprisingly little research on the topic of multimodality in film posters. The researchers mainly focus on one of the components of film posters such as the image [Chen, Gao, 2014] or the tagline [Mahlknecht, 2015]. Specifically, J. Mahlkecht explores the use of taglines in film posters and shows that in some posters, verbal and pictorial elements reinforce each other, emphasizing different aspects of the same message but remaining largely independent, while in others understanding the reference of the tagline is contingent on seeing the image and vice versa [Mahlknecht, 2015, p. 418]. Such a distinction goes in line with the one made by T. van Leeuwen [Van Leeuwen, 2005], which differentiates between *elaboration* and *extension*. The scholar introduces these concepts together with the notion of *information linking*, the way of stringing together units of information in a verbal or visual message. Elaboration consists in “repeating or restating information” in the form of a specification, explanation, example or summary, while extension presupposes the introduction of new information, which is temporally or logically connected with what was stated previously [Van Leeuwen, 2005, p. 222].

T. van Leeuwen regards information linking as an important component of multimodal *cohesion* [Van Leeuwen, 2005, p. 179], a concept which is useful for understanding the way the verbal text

and images of the film poster produce a coherent message. First explored by M. A. K. Halliday and R. Hasan, as well as other scholars in relation to verbal texts [Halliday, Hasan, 1976; De Beaugrande, Dressler, 1981; Carrell, 1982; etc.], it was further extended to the analysis of multimodal texts such as print materials [Royce, 2007; Liu, O'Halloran, 2009; Stöckl, Pflaeging, 2022], video and film [Janney, 2010; Tseng, 2013; Tseng, Bateman, Laubrock, 2021; Schubert, 2021; Hoffmann, 2021], as well as the Internet media [Tanskanen, 2021; Liebschner, 2021].

In M.A.K. Halliday and R. Hasan's terms, cohesion is defined as the semantic relation which exists between parts of a text and enables it to function as such [Halliday, Hasan, 1976, p. 13]. In verbal texts, the manifestations of cohesion are manifold, they encompass the use of demonstrative and personal pronouns, repetition and other lexical and grammatical means which serve to signal the necessity to retrieve information from another part of the text [Halliday, Hasan, 1976].

Applying the concept of cohesion to the study of printed materials which combine images and written text, T. Royce introduces the notion of *intersemiotic complementarity*, a relation which exists between the verbal and visual elements of a single text and "is realized through various linguistic and visual means peculiar to the respective modes" [Royce, 2007, p. 63]. The particular types of such relations, according to Royce, are repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, meronymy and collocation [Royce, 2007, p. 63]. By contrast, Stöckl and Pflaeging's account of multimodal coherence in print advertisement does not focus on types of semantic relations characteristic of multimodal texts, the scholars concentrate on "mode-specific resources" that shape such relations [Stöckl, Pflaeging, 2022, p. 7]. Pointing out that multimodal cohesive patterns are genre-specific [Stöckl, Pflaeging, 2022, p. 2], the scholars present a multi-level model for the analysis of static advertisements. According to it, the verbal elements that enter cohesive relations are nouns referring to brands and products, adjectives describing qualities of visual elements and demonstrative pronouns, while the visual inventory includes people, objects, actions, scenarios and fusions of images, often representing products or their use [Stöckl, Pflaeging, 2022, p. 8].

The model for analysis of multimodal cohesion provided by Stöckl and Pflaeging is relevant here because film posters are similar, both in form and in function, to printed advertisements and can even be viewed as a sub-genre of the advertisement posters. It is important, however, to take into consideration the distinctions that set apart the genre of film posters from other types of advertisement. The primary difference is concerned with what is being advertised, which informs persuasion strategies. According to J. Staiger, the aim of film advertising is to sell a unique *experience* rather than a standardized product [Staiger, 1990, p. 3]. Thus, the content of advertisement would be concerned with the elements of the work of visual art, such as the characters and scenery that appear in the film or symbolic imagery reflective of its themes. The analysis provided by Chen and Gao demonstrates how both the semantics of the film title and the image of characters tie into the plot and themes of the film [Chen, Gao, 2014, p. 350]. Therefore, it is possible to hypothesize that verbal and non-verbal components of the poster interact to bring forth a coherent whole which is the key to capturing the attention of potential viewers and creating certain expectations in audience about the content and themes of the film.

A multimodal translation approach to semiotically complex texts

It is universally accepted that adopting promotional texts for global markets is a challenging task. The seminal study of De Mooij highlights its cross-cultural aspects showing that advertising styles are underpinned by cultural norms and translation of advertisements is determined by context [De Mooij, 2004]. The situational context is instrumental for translation studies as it works as a lens through which interlingual and intercultural mediation is viewed [Pérez-González, 2024].

The research in the field of visual communication engendered evolution of approaches to translation of advertising. It harnesses interest not only in context but also in multi-text which is viewed as a combination of different semiotic modes [Tuna, 2019]. Multimodality of texts underpinned by the interplay of semiotically diverse modes calls for a new take

on translation making it multimodal. Research on translation of texts that rely on unity of pictorial, linguistic and typographical elements paved the way for a more comprehensive understanding of problems in multimodal translation. Exploring challenges of comic translation, Kaindl posits that the translation of texts combining verbal and non-verbal components should proceed from the identification of semantic ties between modes [Kaindl, 2010]. It allows for the assumption that cohesion informs the choice of translation strategies in semiotically complex texts.

The shift from cultural turn in translation studies to multimodal translation is explored by Adami and Ramos Pinto [Adami, Ramos Pinto, 2020]. The scholars assume that a text as a multimodally composed meaningful whole should be analyzed from the perspectives of context and co-text. The former is social semiotic environment of a multimodal construct defining its production, distribution and reception. The co-text is understood as semiotically heterogeneous signs employed within the frame of a multimodal text and represented cohesively [Adami, Ramos Pinto, 2020, p. 73]. According to the authors, adopting the co-text approach can have far-reaching implications for translation practice. Specifically, methodological integration of social semiotics and translation studies is proposed as a way to explore practices of text production and translation. It should be complemented by the study of “the audience’s interpretations and the impact of translation strategies on such interpretations” [Adami, Ramos Pinto, 2020, p. 85].

Reception becomes central for multimodal translation, as communication is interactive and multidirectional [Gambier, Lautenbacher, 2024]. The investigation of perception is especially relevant for advertising texts whose main function is to persuade the recipients, to shape their consumer choices. It informs the experimental part of our study that focuses on the way unity of modes is manipulated in film posters’ translation and the way it is perceived by addressees.

Methods and material

Our study is based on the analysis of 90 film posters encompassing 45 original English-language multimodal texts promoting films released in 1990–2024 and 45 counterparts of

these posters translated for the Russian audience. We employ the multimodal discourse analysis to establish the modes within the original and translated multimodal texts and then to reveal their interrelation which is essential for meaning-making [Fairclough, 2013]. For further examination we selected one set of promotional texts – the original English-language poster and its translation – in which the modes are arranged cohesively and the semiosis of verbal and linguistic elements is retained in the course of multimodal translation. Two other selected sets of texts contain the original posters whose semiotically heterogeneous elements work as an ensemble with modes being interrelated, while their Russian translations lack cohesion. The texts used in our Case Study include the posters for the films *Pulp Fiction* (1994), *Fight Club* (1999), *Hereditary* (2018) and their counterparts *Криминальное чтиво*, *Бойцовский клуб* and *Реинкарнация* translated for the Russian audience.

To examine the results of multimodal translation in the light of their reception, we conducted an experiment. To run the experiment, the study recruited thirty students of two Russian universities who were of similar age (19–22 years old) and socio-economic status. Students’ participation in the experiment was voluntary. All recruited participants were provided with informed consent forms prior to the experiment. The procedure included individual interviews, the participants’ answers were recorded and transcribed with each participant’s permission. The citations used in this paper do not disclose the participants’ identity and are translated by the authors.

The experiment involved two stages. At first the participants were shown three film posters of American films translated for the Russian audience, the sample texts being executed in the participants’ native language. The respondents were given two minutes to study the posters and then were asked to assess how visual and linguistic components combine with each other in the sample multimodal texts. Responses were given on a 10-point Likert-type scale running between 1 “The visual and pictorial elements are absolutely disconnected” and 10 “The visual and verbal elements are perfectly aligned with each other”.

During the second stage of the experiment some comments on their responses were elicited

from the participants. They were asked to explain what meaning they could infer from the multimodal text and what pictorial and/or verbal components enhanced or impeded their comprehension of the poster's meaning. The interviews harvested both qualitative and quantitative data which were analyzed afterwards.

Results and discussion

Our empirical research includes a case study of the poster advertising the 1994 Cannes Film Festival award-winning film *Pulp Fiction* and its Russian translation (Fig. 1). Bearing on van Leeuwen's classification (2005) of semantic relationships of semiotically heterogeneous elements of a multimodal text, the linkage between the image and the verbal part of the original poster can be described as extension. The verbal part of the poster features the title of the film, its director and film studio, the date of release and its exceptional status: Winner-best picture – 1994 Cannes Film Festival.

Interestingly, the title *Pulp Fiction* is complemented by the text which is styled as a dictionary entry for the word *pulp*:

1. A soft, moist, shapeless mass of matter.

2. A book containing **lurid** subject matter, and being characteristically printed on rough, unfinished paper.

The choice of font for this text is not accidental, it helps to generate typographic meaning which has some pragmatic value [Chernyavskaya 2023, p. 89], as it is aligned with the arrangement of the linguistic units in the form of a dictionary entry. Thus, the visual signal sent by the font complements the graphical arrangement of the definition for the word *pulp* within the red smudge. Such correlations are manifestations of cohesion established among linguistic, iconic, colour and graphical modes of the poster.

The word *lurid* in the definition means “1) brightly colored, 2) related to violence or sex” (Collins). It is semantically connected with the pictorial signs of violence: a gun and a red smudge resembling blood which serve as a focal point of the poster incorporating the definition of the word *pulp*. The female in the foreground is touching an open book with a bright cover that can be attributed to the category of pulp fiction. The meanings of the polysemous word *pulp* are played upon in the pictorial part of the poster, while the red smudge symbolizing blood alludes to some crime. Correlating with the film title, the iconic

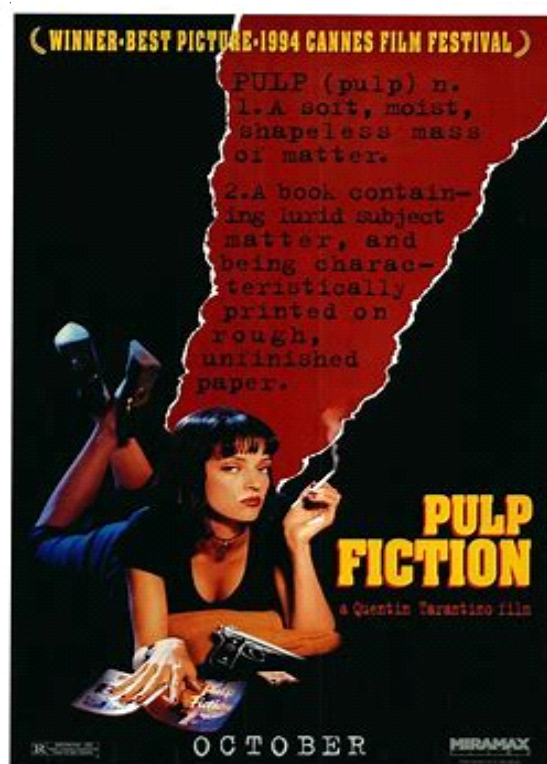


Fig. 1. The *Pulp Fiction* poster and its Russian version

signs extend the meaning expressed by the verbal elements of this multimodal text.

The design of the film poster translated for the Russian audience replicates that of the original text. It is executed in the red, black and yellow colours, the red smudge and the female wearing a black dress being its centrepiece. The yellow colour chosen for the title in the original and the translated versions is suggestive of literature of low quality: yellow journalism, yellow press, yellow media share negative connotations and function in the English language as pejorative nominations. It reveals semantic connection with the title *Криминальное чтиво*, the noun *чтиво* being an apt translation decision as it denotes literature of low quality and belongs to the colloquial register. The second part of the film title *криминальное* correlates with the image of a gun and the red smudge suggestive of blood and violence. Interestingly, the verbal part containing the definition of the word *pulp* is omitted in the Russian version of the poster. This translation decision seems quite well-grounded as the reference to crime and low-quality fiction is expressed in the pictorial part of the poster as well as in the translation of the film title. The analysis of cohesive linkage in the original poster and its translation shows that verbal and non-verbal components of both multimodal texts work as an ensemble creating an unambiguous meaning.

The analysis of the translated poster's reception shows that the mean score of cohesion rating is 7.4. The participants of the experiment tend to assess the relationship of verbal and pictorial elements as harmonious and logical. They notice the link between the image of a gun and the film title. The colour mode has salience, in the respondents' view, as "the red symbolizes rage and blood, while the black colour is associated with mourning and death." The choice of "bold colours gives a cue to the contents of the film" and alludes to its genre. One respondent describes the red smudge above the head of the girl depicted in the poster as an allusion to her "dirty thoughts connected with crime and murder." This observation may be based on some associations with a design of a comic book that contains a bubble above the head of a character expressing their thoughts.

Some participants of the experiment pay attention to the colloquial register of the word *чтиво* in the film title. They assume that the book

called this way means light and entertaining reading like "detective stories by Dontsova," so the text of the poster signals that "the crimes featured in the film are not very grave. Most likely they are some robberies committed by gangsters." Importantly, the Russian respondents indicate that the poster seems to have some signs of the 1990s as "the girl is dressed in the style popular in the 1990s," the title *Криминальное чтиво* is reminiscent of "cheap detective stories written by Darya Dontsova at the turn of the century" and "the font of the poster looks old-fashioned." Both the title and the visual clues make the viewers assume that the film is entertaining with some interesting twists of the plot.

However, some participants of the experiment fail to notice any connection between the image of a girl in the poster and the film title. They find it difficult to "infer how the girl is related to the plot of the film." Bearing on the linkage between the image of a book and the word *чтиво* one respondent supposes that "the film is about some events in the life of the film characters that replicate the plot of the book featured in the poster."

To sum up, though the respondents' inferences about the ties between iconic and verbal elements of the poster are not always accurate, they find the ensemble of verbal and visual modes informative enough to deduce that the film is a crime comedy. It can help potential audience make their consumer choices. It is possible to conclude that the localized version of the film poster efficiently performs its pragmatic function.

The next poster selected for analysis promotes the 1999 film *Fight Club* (Fig. 2).

The verbal component of the original poster features the film title and its tagline: MISCHIEF. MAYHEM. SOAP. The words *fight*, *mischief* and *mayhem* have some semantic similarity as they are associated with violence:

"*mischief* is an offense against property that typically involves the intentional or reckless infliction of damage

mayhem is needless or willful damage or violence" (Merriam Webster).

The word *soap* is linked to the picture of a bar of soap on top of which the designers placed the title *Fight club*. This image serves as the focal centre of the multimodal text. The picture of one

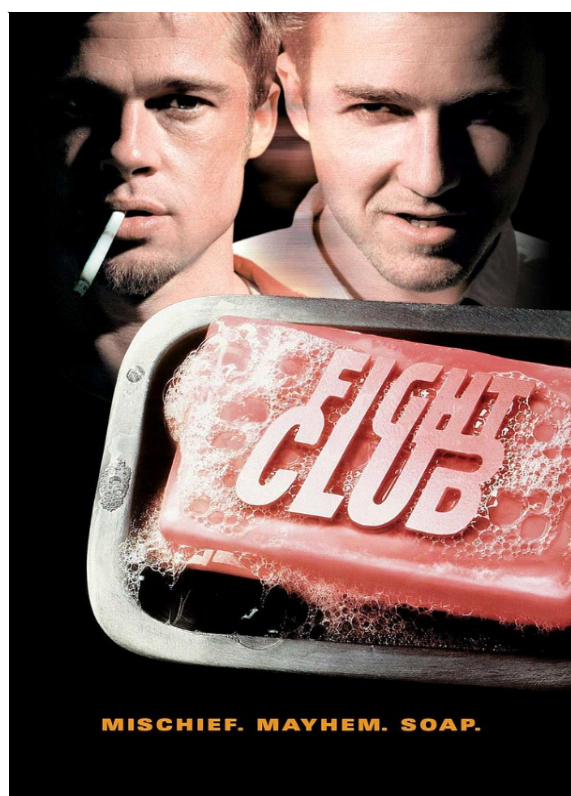


Fig. 2. The *Fight Club* poster and its Russian version

of the main characters impersonated by Edward Norton looks menacing which matches the meaning of the title and the tagline. Though the designers use quite a limited array of verbal and non-verbal resources, they arrange them cohesively. The meaning-building is underpinned by a string of linguistic and pictorial units that complement each other forming a linkage that can be characterized as extension.

The poster translated for the Russian audience modifies the verbal part adding the names of the leading actors *Брэд Питт* and *Эдвард Нортон* to their pictorial images. The key element of the original poster – the image of a bar of soap – is omitted, which ruins the link between the pictorial component of the poster and the word *мыло* in the tagline. The title *Бойцовский клуб* is supported by the image of two characters played by Pitt and Norton locked in some fight. However, the idea of violence and crime expressed in the tagline words *mischief* and *mayhem* is lost in translation: *Интриги. Хаос. Мыло* appear to align neither with the title *Бойцовский клуб*, nor with the pictorial segment of the poster. Therefore, the multimodal translation was done without taking into account the cohesive

arrangement of semiotically heterogeneous elements of the source text.

The examination of reception of cohesive linkage in multimodal translation reveals that the participants of the experiment rate it at 6.7, commenting on some inconsistencies in the poster. 63% of respondents pay attention to the tagline. Specifically, they find the words *интриги* (intrigues) and *хаос* (chaos) too vague, saying that “it is just a combination of words devoid of any clear sense.” “The tagline is so general that it can be applied to a large number of films.” They indicate that the word *мыло* (soap) seems to be the odd one in the three-word tagline. Moreover, 6% of respondents mention that it acquires some meaning only after watching the film as “soap is used by the main character to make explosives and cause havoc.” At the same time, 3% of respondents tie the meaning of the word *хаос* with violence explicated in the title *Бойцовский клуб*, inferring that the film belongs to the genre of action. It “prepares the viewers for some suspense and plot twists” and “creates the expectations of watching something exciting and memorable.” The attempts to comprehend the

tagline result in the participants' deducing some link between the words *интригу* (intrigues) and *мыло* (soap): "soap can be understood as soap opera, a film with a melodramatic plot," "intrigues are associated with love matters." Others link the word *интригу* (intrigues) with the images of two characters who "look like antagonists: one is a guy from the street, the other seems to have just left an office. They are set in contrast, which intrigues the viewers." "The words *intrigues* and *chaos* sound mystifying and create the desire to watch this film."

The usage of parcellation in the tagline also draws the respondents' attention. They mention that it "alludes to the dynamic nature of the plot" and "the text is more informative than the picture." The analysis reveals that even though the translation lacks cohesion, the recipients strive to establish some semantic ties connecting the visual and linguistic elements of the text.

While the genre of the films *Fight Club* and *Pulp Fiction* can be inferred from their titles and other verbal and pictorial components of their posters, not all promotional multimodal texts contain enough clues for the viewers to accurately make genre attributions. The poster of the 2018 film

Hereditary is dominated by the picture of a brightly lit model tree house filled with dolls (Fig. 3).

The image of a home is a symbolic representation of a family, it correlates with the film title *Hereditary* which means "transmittable from parent to offspring" (Merriam Webster). The idea of family ties is also expressed as a visual metaphor – a picture of a tree whose roots are highlighted and whose leaves are falling down. The spots of light visually unite the house and the tree that are set against the black background. The visual signs and the colouristic arrangement bear an allusion to some distressing ancestry, which is echoed in the tagline *Every family tree hides a secret*. The designers use *family* as a sense component unifying pictorial and verbal parts of the poster. The cohesive orchestration of modes renders the promotional text appealing and mystifying. It hints at a certain family secret without disclosing it. It looks like a drama; however, the film proves to be a horror: the secret mentioned in the tagline is connected with a terrifying history of mental instability that runs in the family. Obviously, to tackle this genre ambiguity the translators radically changed the meaning of the title bringing to the fore the



Fig. 3. The *Hereditary* poster and its Russian version

mystical and horrifying dimension of the film. The title *Реинкарнация* (Reincarnation) does not correlate with the pictorial images of a home and a family tree. It manifests a clear discordance with the tagline *У каждой родословной есть свои тайны* (Every ancestry has its secrets). On the one hand, such a translation decision makes the genre explicit, on the other hand, it ruins cohesive ties uniting the visual and the verbal elements of the poster. As a result, the title seems to contradict the pictorial segments and the tagline, which may baffle the viewers.

The experiment shows that its participants assess the interaction of verbal and pictorial elements of the localized poster at 6.8 on the Likert-type scale. More than one third of respondents (35%) commented on the discrepancy between the pictorial elements of the poster and the film title. They find it difficult to understand how the house, that constitutes the main iconic component of the picture, is connected with reincarnation indicated in the title of the localized poster: “Is it the house that undergoes reincarnation?”; “The picture does not give a clue about the plot of the film”; “The title stands in isolation; it is disunited from the rest of the poster.” The respondents also observe the lack of cohesion between the tagline and the title, these elements “do not mesh,” “the tagline does not fit the title, however, its component *родословная* correlates with the picture of a house.” One respondent assumes that to support the message expressed in the tagline, a picture of a family might be added to the poster.

The majority of participants (61%) can’t infer “what the film is about,” they “feel that the poster announces two separate horror films” or it may be “either horror or just mystery.” According to one respondent, “the inability to define the genre does not evoke the desire to watch this film.”

About one third of respondents try to make sense of the image of the house which they find intriguing. They believe that “the house looks mystifying as it has two roofs, each room has quite strange interior,” it “signals that the family living there has some secrets,” Two respondents report that the title *Реинкарнация* (Reincarnation) is aligned with the picture of a house as “each room seems to have some life of its own” and “the house with two roofs serves as a metaphor for reincarnation.”

On average, the findings show that the lack of linkage between the linguistic and pictorial modes impedes the comprehension of the overall meaning of the multimodal text. Though some respondents find such lack of clarity intriguing and mystifying, about two thirds of participants of the experiment indicate that the meanings of different parts of the text do not mesh, they fail to infer the genre of the film and feel reluctant to watch it.

The Case Study reveals the negative effect of the lack of cohesion in translated posters on their perception. During the first stage of the experiment the participants rated non-cohesive translated multimodal texts (*Бойцовский клуб* and *Реинкарнация*) lower than the cohesive one (*Криминальное чтиво*). The connection between the visual and verbal components is assessed as 6.7 and 6.8 against 7.4 respectively. While commenting on the connection between linguistic and pictorial layers of the *Бойцовский клуб* and *Реинкарнация* posters, about one out of four participants indicated that though the semantic ties seemed quite vague, the posters looked intriguing. This property to intrigue and mystify is aligned with the pragmatic function of film posters as promotional texts. Grabbing the viewers’ attention and giving very few prompts about the film plot, posters entice the audience into going to the cinema and watching the film. Thus, genre specificity tends to affect the perception of the semantic linkage between the visual and verbal elements of film posters. It may explain why non-cohesive sample texts are positively evaluated by some recipients.

Conclusion

The findings show that the film poster designers arrange verbal and non-verbal resources cohesively, each mode either elaborating or extending the meaning of other modes. In the course of multimodal translation, the translators either preserve cross-modal semiosis or neglect it breaking the ties that unify the verbal and visual elements in the multimodal promotional texts. It’s possible to establish several degrees of cohesive linkage in the translated texts ranging from strong and prominent cohesive ties to weak and obscure or non-existent ones. Lacking or obscure semantic connections between the verbal and non-verbal modes tend to have a negative impact on the

perception of translated posters. However, the reception of cohesive ties reveals a certain degree of variability. In some cases, the vagueness of meaning stemming from non-cohesion is positively assessed as the recipients find it intriguing. It inspires them to watch the film and unravel the mystery. Importantly, it aligns with the pragmatic function of film posters as promotional texts. Apart from showing the relevance of cohesion for the perception of multimodal translated texts, our study illuminates its genre specificity. The findings open further avenues of research that include the exploration of cohesive ties in different types of promotional texts, such as film trailers, static and dynamic commercial advertisements, etc. Moreover, our study opens windows for marketing investigations, its further direction being the examination of the impact of cohesion in multimodal translation of promotional texts on the audience's choices about film viewing. The findings also derive implications for translation studies, revealing the role of preservation of cohesive ties between the visual and the verbal components in the course of multimodal translation.

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