

Cultural Context Adaptation: Mashkini Strashilki in Hindi (12th Episode)

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Abstract:

The present article is an analysis of the Hindi adaptation of the 12th episode “Тревожный сказ про Бабку-Ёжку” of the cartoon series *Машины страшилки* (Masha’s spooky stories). The analysis focuses on the adaptation of various cultural references, employing the approach proposed by Swedish linguist Göte Klingberg for translating children’s literature. The Hindi adaptation’s reliance on the English version of the series rather than the original Russian version, as well as the dilution of Russian cultural contexts, are highlighted.

Keywords: Masha and The Bear, Cultural Context Adaptation, Göte Klingberg, Audiovisual Translation, Audiovisual Production, Audiovisual Text, Children’s Production, Animated Series.

1. Introduction

The origins of Russian cartoon films can be traced back to the world’s first puppet cartoons, which were created in Russia. “Natalia Ivanova-Dostoevskaya, Development Director of the IKAR Award, spoke about the history of Russian animation, which began on April 8, 1912, when Mr. Vladislav Aleksandrovich Starevich debuted “The Beautiful Lyukanida, or the Barbel War With Stag,” which featured a puppet cartoon.” (Times, n.d.) Another significant step in this direction was the establishment of Soyuzmultfilm in 1936. Soyuzmultfilm produced the famous Russian cartoon “Cheburashka” in the 1970s, but there was little progress in this field after that. During the 1990s, cartoon film production virtually ceased. Natalia Ivanova admits that *there was no animation industry in Russia prior to the early 2000s*.

Russia now ranks near the bottom of the list of countries producing cartoon films worldwide. According to an article published on the website cartoonbrew.com, Yuliana Slashcheva, chairman of the board of directors of Moscow-based animation studio Soyuzmultfilm, published a column on snob.ru about the state of the Russian animation industry. In this piece, she wrote, “In 2020, we created a strategy that the industry should become one of the top ten world animation powers in

five to seven years... At the moment, in terms of the volume of the animation market, Russia is near the bottom of the Top 20.” (Lang, 2022)

Masha is most likely the first Russian cartoon character to gain popularity in countries other than the Russian Federation. Masha and Bear-themed animated films are already available in a variety of European and other world languages. Masha's YouTube channels have received over 80 billion views, and one episode, "Recipe for Disaster," holds the Guinness World Record for the most viewed cartoon/animated movie video on YouTube. (Source: Guinness World Records). Masha is on the verge of becoming an international brand, thanks to her selection for the popular online media streaming service Netflix. Collaboration with Amazon Prime Video was also announced in January 2021. (*Animaccord and Amazon Prime Video “Power up” New Collaboration for Masha and the Bear - Animaccord*, n.d.)

Masha and the Bear, Masha's Tales, and Masha's Spooky Stories are three different series of Masha stories produced by the parent company Animaccord LTD. (Animaccord, n.d.)

In 2017, the series was first made available in Hindi on YouTube. Since then, over 900 adapted/translated episodes have been uploaded to the YouTube channel, garnering over 4 billion views. More than ten million people have subscribed to the channel. (माशा एंड द बेयर, 2017) These cartoon series have influenced an entire generation of Indian children.

In contrast, another generation of Indian children grew up reading Soviet children's books made available by various Soviet publications such as Progress, Raduga ("Rainbow"), and Mir (1. "Peace", 2. "World"). These translation projects included prominent translators such as Bhishm Sahani, Madan Lal Madhu, Gopikrishna Gopesh, Onkarnath Panchal, and Virendra Nath Shukla, among others. This process, however, came to a halt following the disintegration of the USSR.

Individual translators continued to translate a few works out of their personal interest, just as an academic activity.

After a gap of almost a quarter century, Russian work is being made available to Indians on a grand scale. This time, it is done privately for commercial purposes. The parent company, Animaccord LTD, which originally produced and continues to produce the Masha and The Bear series in Russian, has partnered with an Indian production house based in Mumbai, SH Productions, for a Hindi adaptation. Mr. Sahul Hameed produces the Hindi version, while Ms. Jennifer Rewadi adapts the dialogues.

The purpose of this article is to examine the Hindi adaptation of the 12th episode: “Тревожный сказ про Бабку-Ёжку” (बाबा यागा की विकट कहानी) of the cartoon series Машкины страшилки (माशा की भयंकर कहानियाँ).

2. Methodology

The translation of various cultural references is the focus of our analysis, which follows the approach proposed by Swedish linguist Göte Klingberg for the translation of children's literature. Klingberg supports the literal translation approach as opposed to the free translation method. However, he agrees that, for a variety of reasons, cultural references in the source text must be changed to meet the needs of the target reader. This is known as cultural context adaptation. Asghari and Salmani (2016) write about the categories proposed by Göte Klingberg that go through the adaptation process. These categories are as follows: *literary references, foreign language in the source text, references to mythology and popular belief, historical, religious, and political background, building, home furnishing and food, customs and practices, plays and games, flora and fauna, personal names, titles, names of domestic animals, names of objects; geographical names, weights, and measures*. Klingberg proposes nine different adaptation methods, namely: *added explanation, rewording, explanatory translation, explanation outside the text, substitution of equivalence in the culture of the target language, substitution of a rough equivalence in the culture of the target language, simplification, deletion, and localization*.

3. Literature Review:

The animated series "Masha and the Bear" has been instrumental in reviving the lost glory of Soviet-era Russian cartoon films. According to the news channel France 24, which published a news item under the title "Masha and the Bear Effect", "it is a cartoon series produced by a private Russian studio, Animaccord, that has proven to be a big international commercial hit." 2019 (France).

The majority of articles about this cartoon series analyse its popularity. Few, if any, research articles on its adaptations have been published in the last 2-3 years. A.V. Osiyanova and Y.F. Tsimmerman published an article in 2022 titled "Realities Transfer In The Translation Of The Animated Series Masha And The Bear Into English." (Osiyanova & Tsimmerman, 2022)

A.V. Moreva and N.P. May published an article titled "Translation of idiolect features of speech in the animated series "Masha and the Bear"." They examined the German version and concluded that Masha's idiolect features in the German version are untranslatable. (Moreva and Mai, 2020)

We have yet to come across any work dedicated to evaluating the Masha and Bear series' Hindi translation/adaptation process.

4. Discussion:

We created parallel text for analysis with Russian (Маша и Медведь, 2016), Hindi (माशा एंड द बेयर, 2020), and English (Masha and The Bear, 2020) versions of the 12th episode “Тревожный сказ про Бабу-Ёжку” of the cartoon series Машкины страшилки (Masha’s spooky stories). Furthermore, we highlight all sentences with cultural references and categorise them using the previously suggested adaptation methods.

Literary references: We did not find any literary references.

Customs and practices, plays and games:

Однажды четвёртый Б пошёл в поход.	एक बार की बात है। क्लास 4बी के बच्चे कैम्पिंग करने गए।	Once upon a time the class 4B went <i>camping</i> .
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For Поход, the English equivalent ‘camping’ is used instead of the Hindi word ‘सैर’. Although *Camping* is an English word, it is widely used among Hindi speakers and aptly conveys the meaning in the given context.

Выбрали место, поставили палатки, собрались у костра.	उन्होंने जगह चुनी, अपने टेन्ट्स लगाए, कैम्प फायर के पास जमा हुए.	They chose the place, set up a <i>tent</i> , and gathered around the <i>campfire</i> .
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For ‘палатки’ and ‘костёр’ the English equivalents ‘tents’ and ‘campfire’ are used in place of the Hindi words तम्बू and अलाव.

References to mythology and popular belief:

А Паша и говорит, “Зря мы здесь ставили! В этом лесу как ... Баба Яга живет.	तभी पाशा ने कहा - यहाँ पर कैम्प लगाना सही नहीं होगा। इस जंगल में बाबा यागा रहती है।	Then Pasha said, ‘It’s a bad idea. In this forest <i>Baba Yaga</i> lives here.
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The mythological character ‘Баба Яга’ is transliterated as बाबा यागा following the grapheme-based approach as it is done in the English version. Phoneme-based transliteration will be *Baba Yiga*. Слово बाबा in Hindi is used for males and has several meanings like *father, grandfather; (amongst native servants of European masters) child, children; a form of address used by beggars in addressing the master of a house, and vice versa; fakir, ascetic; old man, sir, sire (respectfully)*. It may create confusion among the target Hindi viewers. On the contrary, the same can be adapted as यागा/ईगा चुड़ैल.

Нет. - говорит дяденька. И даже не кося бессмертный.	नहीं। - उस आदमी ने कहा - और मैं कोई डरावना भूत भी नहीं हूँ।	No. I am not even the immortal Kashi.
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Koschei the Deathless is the archetypal male antagonist and probably one of the scariest characters in Eastern Slavic folklore (Savic). A rough equivalent, “डरावना भूत” is used which takes away the original Slavic background of the text.

Building, home furnishing, and food:

В избушке на курьих ножках.	चिकेन के पैरों पर बने एक घर में।	In a hut on chicken legs.
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Translating Избушка as घर is an example of simplification. The Hindi word ‘झोपड़ी’ is closer in meaning. Further, the English word *chicken* is used for ‘курьих’ in place of the Hindi word मुर्गी.

Тогда кашу вари! - говорит - вернёмся, будет каша с малиной.	तो फिर तुम दलिया पकाओ - उसने कहा - हम वापस आकर लंच में दलिया और रास्पबेरीज़ खाएंगे।	You cook porridge. She said, “We will come back from the forest and have porridge with raspberries for lunch”.
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For малина, the English word *raspberries* has been used instead of the Hindi word रसभरी. We also noticed that the English version has the word *forest* added in the translation which is neither present in the Russian nor in the Hindi version. This gives the impression that the Hindi adaptation is done not solely through the English version.

Personal names, titles, names of domestic animals, and names of objects:

Вот увидите она нам ещё покажет. Посадит кого-нибудь на <i>лопату</i> и в <i>печь</i> засунет.	बात मानो। वो कुछ गड़बड़ करेगी। तुम सब देख लेना। वो किसी को एक बड़े चम्मच पर बिठाकर ओवन के अंदर डाल देगी।	You will see. She will show you. She puts someone on the <i>spatula</i> and shut in the <i>oven</i> .
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Translating Лопата as बड़ा चम्मच is a simplification. Substitution of a rough equivalence method is used to translate the word *печь* as an oven. Печь in Hindi can mean चूल्हा, भट्ठी, अंगीठी, स्टोव.

на утро Пашины сапоги были полны воды.	और अगली सुबह पाशा के जूतों में पानी भर गया था।	And the next morning Pasha's <i>boots</i> were full of water.
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Сапоги translated as जूते is an example of simplification: the actual equivalent is बूट / हाई बूट.

А на заборе корзинки заблудившихся <i>грибников</i> висят.	और उन पर लटकी हैं खोए हुए मशरूम हंटर्स की टोकरियां।	And on them hangs baskets from the lost <i>mushroom hunters</i> .
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For *грибники* the term from the English translation *mushroom hunters* is used.

Мы видели ваш <i>костёр</i> и рядом тут лежит и не шевелится.	मैंने यहाँ से धुआँ आता देखा और पास में कोई था जो हिल नहीं रहा था।	I saw your <i>fire</i> and saw someone lying near without moving.
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Костёр (अलाव) has been replaced with धुआँ (smoke).

А Пашу сонную <i>тетерю</i> мы с тобой возьмём.	और हम पाशा को अपने साथ ले जाएंगे।	And we will take <i>sleepyhead</i> Pasha with us to the helicopter.
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The Phraseological expression *сонная тетеря* which is translated as *sleepyhead* in the English version has been deleted in the Hindi version.

Мы пожарный из МЧС.	हम तो इमरजेंसी सर्विस के फायरमैन हैं।	We are firemen of the <i>emergency service</i> .
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МЧС (Московская Чрезвычайная Служба "Moscow Emergency Service") is simplified as इमरजेंसी सर्विस, which is an English expression but used commonly by Hindi speakers. The English equivalence *fireman* is used in place of the Hindi expression दमकल कर्मी for *пожарный*.

Из него <i>дяденька</i> выходит в форме.	युनिफॉर्म पहना हुआ एक आदमी बाहर निकला।	A man in uniform came out of it.
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The cultural nuance expressed by the Russian word *дяденька* ("uncle") is missing in the Hindi expression एक आदमी, the same as in the English version (A man).

Один мальчик Паша очень боялся всяких сказочных злодеев.	एक लड़का था पाशा जो हर एक कहानी के विलेन से डरता था।	A boy named Pasha was afraid of every <i>fairy tale villain</i> .
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Сказочный злодей is translated as कहानी का विलेन, straight from the English version (*fairy tale villain*). *Сказка* ("fairy tale") is लोक कथा and *злодей* is दुष्ट पात्र. In place of लोक कथा, a more generic word कहानी is used which is an example of simplification. *Злодей* is adapted as "villain", as in the English version. It is an example of substitution of a rough equivalence in the culture of the target language

А потом боится. Да ещё других детей сказочными страшилками пугает.	फिर उसे डर लगता और वो दूसरे बच्चों को भी उन डरावने कैरेक्टर्स से डराता।	Then he was afraid and even scared other children with these <i>scary characters</i> .
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Сказочные страшилки ("scary characters in fairy tales") is translated as डरावने कैरेक्टर्स. Here we witness deletion as сказочные has not been translated and again an English equivalent 'characters' is used.

5. Conclusion:

The analysis clearly shows that the adaptation of this episode of the Masha series is heavily reliant on the English version. The following words, for example, are directly taken from the English version: *विलेन, कैम्प फायर, टेन्ट्स, कैम्पिंग, कैरेक्टर्स, ओवन, चिकेन, मशरूम हंटर्स, रास्पबेरीज़, इमरजेंसी सर्विस, युनिफॉर्म, फायरमैन*. Adaptation of Кося бессмертный as डरावना भूत takes away the Slavic identity of the story and is uncalled for. Despite not being directly connected to the field of Russian language learning, a whole generation of Indians knew a lot about Russian-Soviet realities because translations during the Soviet era made a concerted effort to keep all cultural contexts intact. In the given production, that approach is severely lacking. The only Russian contexts we encounter after watching the episode are Russian proper names such as Masha, Pasha, Dima, Sweta, and Baba Yaga. This contradicts the views of Irina Matusova, the head of the Russian Animation

Association, "There is a desire to ensure that our children see animated films with our national cultural codes, mentality, language, and culture," she said. (2019 France)

It is not possible to redo the nearly 900 episodes that have already been uploaded. However, if those involved in the production are made aware of this viewpoint, perhaps in the future, they will be able to ensure that Russian cultural contexts are better adapted and more Hindi words are used than their English counterparts.

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