

GRAMMATICAL EQUIVALENTS IN TRANSLATION

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Grammatical meaning and Grammatical Categories

- The elements of the grammatical structure, such as **affixes, forms of inflection and derivation, syntactic patterns, word order, functional words**, etc. serve to carry meanings which are usually referred to as "**grammatical**" or "**structural**", as distinct from lexical meanings.
- The rendering of such meanings in the process of translation is an important problem relating to the general problem of translation equivalence

Grammatical meaning and Grammatical Categories

- **Grammatical forms** of different languages only very **seldom coincide** fully as to the scope of their meaning and function. As a rule, there is only **partial equivalence**, that is, the grammatical meanings expressed by grammatical forms, though seemingly identical, of two different languages coincide only in part of their meaning and differ in other parts.

The Category of Number of Noun

- The category of number of noun in English and in Russian seems to coincide, cf. **table - стол, tables-столы**, etc.
- But an English plural form is rendered through a Russian singular form and vice versa;
- This is especially common among the so-called **Singularia and Pluralia Tantum**, i.e. nouns that have only a Singular or a Plural form whose distribution is often arbitrary and motivated only historically.
- Cf.: **oats - овес, peas - горох, onions - лук, cherries - вишня (used collectively), outskirts (of a town) - окраина, billiards - бильярд, measles - корь;**
- **money - деньги, ink - чернила, information - новости, данные etc.**

The Category of Number of Noun

- The forms of number in two languages often do not coincide when the noun is accompanied by a numeral.
- Thus, in Russian all nouns preceded by such numerals as **двадцать один, сто тридцать один** and others ending in **один** are used in the **Singular form** while in English in corresponding patterns a **Plural form** must be used: **twenty-one tables, one hundred and thirty-one passengers, etc.**

The Category of Tense

- English and Russian distinguish such forms of the predicate verb as **Present and Past**, their general grammatical meanings being, on the whole identical.
- In certain cases the Tense forms in English and Russian do not coincide;
- E.g. in English there exists "Sequence of Tenses" according to which the predicate verb in subordinate object clause following the main clause in which a Past form is used must, with a few exemptions, also be used in a Past form, whereas in Russian a Present form is common in the same position: **He said he lived in Moscow -Он сказал, что он живет в Москве.**

The Category of Gender

- Russian distinguishes three genders: **Masculine, Feminine and Neuter** formally expressed:
- (a) **through agreement**, e.g. **ЭТОТ ЮНОША - ЭТА ДЕВУШКА**; **дедушка пришел - бабушка пришла**; **время пришло** etc;
- (b) **by the inflectional forms of the noun**, e.g. **СТОЛ** (Masc.) - zero ending, "hard" stem, **ВОДА** - (Fem.) - the ending - а, **ОКНО** (Neut.) - the ending -о, etc;
- (c) **by means of pronominal substitution**, e.g. **ЗВЕРЬ** (Masc.) - **ОН**; **ДВЕРЬ** (Fem.)-**ОНА**; etc.
- In English, the same three genders are also distinguished;
- the only formal way to express the distinction is through **pronominal substitution**, e.g. **boy - he, girl - she, house - it**, their being no such things as agreement in gender or difference in inflectional (case) endings.

The Category of Gender

- **The category of gender in English** is expressed, actually, not in the noun itself but in the **corresponding personal (possessive, reflexive) pronoun.**
- Many nouns in English are not marked as to gender and can be used as Masculine or Feminine depending on the context, whereas in Russian a choice between these two genders is necessary with due regard for the wider context;
- cf. **artist - художник, художница; worker - рабочий, работница; student - студент, студентка; teacher- учитель, учительница** (See for reference Л. С. Бархударов, Язык и перевод, стр. 147-151)

Deep Grammatical Categories

- There are in all languages the so-called grammatical universals, that is, categories that are found in all languages and without which no language can function as a means of communication.

These are mainly the **so-called deep grammatical categories**, i.e. categories that are semantic rather than formal, such as **"object", "process", "quality", "relation", "actor", "goal" (of action), "instrument", "cause and effect"**, etc.

The formal ways in which they are manifested may differ widely.

Deep Grammatical Categories

- The translator's task here is, 1) to **assign the correct meaning** to this or that form and,
- 2) to **find an appropriate form** in the target language for the expression of the same meaning, taking into account various factors.
- Moreover, it should be born in mind that the content which in one language is expressed **grammatically** may be **expressed lexically** in another language.
- Thus, for instance, the English language does not distinguish between the forms of the **Perfective and Imperfective aspect (совершенный и несовершенный вид)**.

Deep Grammatical Categories

- E.g. «Что же **делал** Бельтов в продолжение этих десяти лет? Все или почти все. Что он **сделал**? Ничего, или почти ничего». (А. Герцен «Кто виноват?» (J. C. Catford, A Linguistic Theory of Translation, London, 1965, p.75)
- The only way to convey in English the semantic difference between the Perfective and the Imperfective verb forms of Russian is through lexical differences between two verbs, for instance: "**What did Beltov do during these ten years? Everything, or almost everything. What did he achieve? Nothing, or almost nothing.**"

Deep Grammatical Categories

- "Out came the chaise - in went the horses - on sprang the boys - in got the travelers." (Ch. Dickens, Pickwick Papers) - inversion is employed to convey the additional meaning of rapidity of movement.
- In Russian the same meaning cannot be conveyed by inversion alone and the lexical means must be employed to achieve an adequate translation:
- «Быстро выкатили коляску, мгновенно запрягли лошадей, мальчишки-форейторы вскочили в седло, и путешественники поспешно уселись на свои места»
- (см. В. Комиссаров, Я. Рецкер, В. Тархов, «Пособие по переводу с английского языка на русский» ч.2, М., 1965, стр. 33).

The Free and Bound Use of the Grammatical Form

- There are cases when grammatical meanings are not rendered in translation at all, i.e. when the grammatical form is not used freely, according to its own meaning, but when its use is predetermined by purely linguistic factors, such as syntactic construction, rules of agreement (grammatical concord) or government, etc.
- E.g. The use of the tense form is not free and determined by so-called "rule of the sequence of tenses": "**He said he lived in Moscow**". The difference in the tense form in English and Russian (Past vs. Present) must be reflected in translation: «**Он сказал, что он живет в Москве**»

The choice of the grammatical equivalent

- The **choice of the grammatical equivalent** in the target language is determined by **the following factors**:
 - a) The **meaning inherent in the grammatical form** itself, e.g.: **СТОЛ - table, СТОЛЫ - tables, or ЖИВЕТ - lives, ЖИЛ - lived** (see the examples above).
 - b) The **lexical character of the word or word-group** used in this or that form, e.g. **workers of all industries - рабочие всех отраслей промышленности; other philosophies - другие философские течения/направления; etc.**

The choice of the grammatical equivalent

- c) **Factors of style.**
- E.g. both English and Russian have the **Passive form** of the verb: however, in **Russian** the use of this form is mainly confined to **the literary or bookish** (formal) style.
- "**At the station John was met by his brother**" - «**На вокзале Джона встретил брат**».
- In **the formal language**, however, for instance, in newspaper reports, this is quite acceptable;
- cf.: "**At the station the delegation was met by a group of students**" - «**На вокзале делегация была встречена группой студентов**».

The choice of the grammatical equivalent

- Both languages have the so-called "Historic Present" (the Present tense used to denote past events); however, it is only in English that this form is employed **in newspaper headlines**. Consequently, such a headline as "**Prominent Scientist Dies**" can not be rendered as «Известный ученый умирает» since Russian headlines favour noun phrases, it is preferable to translate the above as «**Смерть известного ученого**»

The choice of the grammatical equivalent

- d) **Frequency of use.**
- The American linguist and translator **E. Nida** writes: "Rare form of words may also constitute serious obstacle to a proper communication load. For example, translators often find convenient formal parallels between constructions in the source and receptor languages, and, regardless of the relative frequency of such constructions in the language concerned, endeavor to match the forms more or less automatically. Thus, both source and receptor languages may have passive forms of words, but in the source language they may be relatively frequent, while in the receptor language they are rare. (English and Russian are perfectly the case.) If under these conditions one attempts to translate every source language passive by a corresponding passive in the receptor language, the result will be an inevitable overloading of the communication..." (Toward a Science of Translating", p. 133).

The choice of the grammatical equivalent

- Russian uses both subordinate clauses and verbal adverbs (деепричастие) to express adverbial relations: however, if a translator does not make use of the latter, his translation will sound unnatural and too "heavy".
- Also, both in English and in Russian subordinate and co-ordinate are used, but their relative frequency is different: English often prefers subordination whereas Russian more often than not makes use of co-ordinate structures.
- Therefore, **subordinate syntactic structure** of English are quite commonly **replaced by co-ordinate structures** in Russian translations

GRAMMATICAL TRANSFORMATIONS

- In the course of translation, it is always necessary to perform **various grammatical and lexical changes** or **transformations** to achieve translational equivalence. These transformations can be divided into four types: **(1) transpositions: (2) replacements: (3) additions; (4) omissions.**
- **This classification** is, to a great extent, **arbitrary** and in practice it is hardly possible to find these elementary transformations in their "pure form":
- In most cases they are **combined with one another**, so that we observe is a combined use of more than one type of transformation.

TRANSPOSITIONS

- **A change in the order of linguistic elements**, such as words, phrases, clauses and sentences due to the necessity to preserve "functional sentence perspective", i.e. the division of the sentence into two main parts from the point of view of communication: **"the known" or "theme"** and **"the new" or "rheme"**
- In **Russian** this division of the sentence is usually expressed by means of **word order**: what is already known or supposed to be known to the receptor (usually from the preceding context), that is, the **"theme" is placed at the beginning** of the sentence whereas what is new, that is, communicated for the first time and , therefore, what forms the semantically most important part of the message (**"rheme"**) **is placed at the end.**

Transpositions

- **In English** the word order is arranged along the same lines;
- in certain cases the "theme" is placed at the end and the "rheme" at the beginning as **the "rheme" is marked differently**, by the **indefinite article (with plural forms of nouns and with uncountable noun the "zero article")** with the noun which is the subject of the sentence.
- Therefore, in **Russian the word order** in such cases must be **reversed**, that is, the sentence subject which is the "rheme" of the sentence must be placed at the end. Cf.:
- **A boy came in - Вошел мальчик.**
- *But:* **The boy came in - Мальчик вошел.**

Transpositions

- **Within a complex sentence**, a similar tendency is observed:
- in Russian, the first place is occupied by that part of the sentence (main or subordinate clause) which must logically precede the second,
- in English the position of both clauses, though not quite fixed, is in most cases governed by purely syntactical rules: the main clause precedes the subordinate one.
- This often calls for **a change in the order of the clauses** in translation,
- E.g. **He trembled as he looked up - Взглянув наверх, он задрожал.**

Transpositions

- **Within a passage of discourse independent sentences are also transposed,**
- e.g. "You goin' to court this morning?" asked Jim. We had strolled over. (H. Lee, To kill a Mockingbird). Мы подошли. - Вы в суд пойдете? - спросил Джим. (пер. Н. Галь и Р. Облонской)
- Here the transposition of the sentence is used to make up for the absence in Russian of the difference between the Past Indefinite and the Past Perfect

REPLACEMENTS

- Replacements can affect practically all types of linguistic units:
- **word forms,**
- **part of speech,**
- **sentence elements,**
- **sentence types,**
- **types of syntactic relations, etc.**

Replacements

- (a) Word forms
- Replacement of word forms are quite common in translation.
- A novel about **the lives** of common people - Роман о **жизни** простых людей.
(replacement of Plural by Singular)
- He said he **knew** the man - Он сказал, что **знает** этого человека. (replacement of Past by Present)
- The door **was opened** by a middle-aged woman - Дверь **отворила** пожилая женщина.
(replacement of Passive by Active).

Replacements

- **(b) Parts of Speech**
- This type of replacement is also fairly common.
- Especially typical is the replacement of English nouns, derived from verbs and denoting actions ("Nomina Actionis") by Russian verbs: It is our hope that... Мы надеемся, что...
- ...The abandonment by Irene of all the glittering things he had given her.... (J. Galsworthy, In Chancery) - Когда Ирэн оставила все безделушки, которые он ей подарил.

Replacements

- **"Nomina Agentis"** in English are nouns with the suffix - er.
- Russian either has no such nouns at all (e.g. corresponding to such English nouns as **riser, packer, drinker, sleeper**) or uses them to denote people of permanent occupation, **writer** - "a person who writes or has written something", as in "**the writer of this note**" - **тот, кто написал эту записку**.
- He is an early **riser** - Он рано **встает**.
- John is a sound **sleeper** - Джон крепко **спит**.
- I'm a very rapid **packer** - (J.Salinger, The Catcher in the Rye) - Я очень быстро **укладываюсь**.
- She is a very good **dancer** (ib.) - Она очень хорошо **танцует**.

Replacements

- **English adjectives** are replaced by **Russian nouns** (in an oblique case or preceded by a preposition):
- Australian prosperity - (экономическое) процветание Австралии.
- youthful joblessness - безработица среди молодежи.
- generational style of life- образ жизни, СВОЙСТВЕННЫЙ данному поколению.
- English comparative forms of adjectives such as **higher, lower, longer, shorter, better**, etc. are frequently replaced by Russian nouns **повышение, понижение, увеличение, сокращение, улучшение** etc.: "They demand higher wages and better living conditions" - Они требуют повышения заработной платы и улучшения жизненных условий.

Replacements

- (c) **Sentence elements**
- sometimes referred to as **syntactic restructurings** of the sentence.
- It consists in **changing the syntactic functions of words** in a sentence (like in transpositions) preserving the functional sentence perspective.
- **In English**, like in Russian, the "**theme**" is generally at the beginning of the sentence; this place is reserved for the sentence subject. - > the "**theme**" of **the English sentence** is also its **subject**, though semantically it is not always the doer of the action expressed by the predicate verb: it may be **its object** ("goal") or even denote some **adverbial relation such as time, place, cause** etc.
- In Russian the word order is relatively free, therefore the first word or word group within a sentence (its "theme") must not necessarily be at the same time its syntactic subject.
- Hence **the subject of the English sentence** is **often replaced in Russian by a corresponding secondary element**, such as **object, adverbial of time, place, cause**, etc., with concomitant changes in the syntactic pattern of the whole sentence, often also with necessary lexical changes.

Replacements

- He was met by his sister - Его встретила сестра.
- He was given money - Ему дали денег.
- The new film is much spoken about - О новом фильме много говорят, (and other passive-active transformation; see above)
- Last week saw the 500-strong meeting of shop stewards and trade-union officials... (Morning Star, 11 .III.75) - На прошлой неделе состоялось собрание цеховых старост и профсоюзных деятелей, в котором приняло участие 500 человек.
- The tent sleeps six people - В палатке могут спать шесть человек.
- Rhodesia has hanged five African guerillas - В Родезии были казнены пять африканских партизан.
- New terrorists attacks have injured six persons - В результате новых нападений террористов шесть человек было ранено.
- The fog stopped the traffic - Из-за тумана движение транспорта было остановлено.
- Figure 2 gives a summary of the results of such experiments - На рис. 2 показаны сводные результаты этих

Replacements

- When translating from Russian into English the process is reversed;
- cf.: В комнате установилась тишина - The room turned silent;
- В радиотехнических устройствах часто встречаются системы из электрических проводов - Radio equipment often includes systems of electronic wires.

Replacements

- (d) Sentence types
- A very common transformation is the **replacement of a simple sentence by a complex one and visa versa.**
- Translating from English into Russian it often becomes necessary to render English structures with non-finite verbal forms by means of subordinate clauses, thus turning a simple sentence into complex,
- I want you to speak English - Я хочу, чтобы Вы говорили по-английски.
- I heard my mother go out and close the door (Salinger, The Catcher in the Rye) - Я услышал, как мама вышла из комнаты и закрыла двери.
- Here is a book for you to read - Вот книга, которую Вы должны прочитать.
- The General's a good man to keep away from (S. Heym. The Crusaders) - Генерал, конечно, неплохой человек, но лучше от него держаться подальше.

Replacements

- A subtype of this transformation is **unification**, or, conversely, **division** of sentences in translation, that is, a **replacement of two simple sentences by one complex or compound** and visa versa; cf.:
- “Thousands of Algerians tonight fled from the dead city of Orleansville after a 12-second earthquake had ripped through central Algeria, killing an estimated 1.100 people.” (Daily Worker)
- A typical “**lead**” **alien to Russian newspaper articles** makes it necessary to divide the English sentence into two or more Russian sentences, as below:
- “Сегодня ночью в центральных районах Алжира произошло землетрясение, длившееся двенадцать секунд. Число жертв, по предварительным подсчетам, составляет 1100 человек. Тысячи жителей бежали из полностью разрушенного города Орлеансвилля”. (Note also a change in the order of sentences).

Replacements

- More rarely, **unification of two or more sentences into one complex or compound sentence** takes place, as in the following case:
- **The only thing that worried me was our front door. It creaks like a bastard** (Salinger, The Catcher in the Rye) - **Одно меня беспокоило - наша парадная дверь скрипит как оголтелая.**

Replacements

- (e) **Types of syntactic relations**
- Both English and Russian have such types of syntactic relations as **co-ordination and subordination**. However, the former is more characteristic of spoken Russian; hence it is often necessary or desirable to replace subordination of sentences by co-ordination while translating from English into Russian; cf.:
- ...**He had a new father whose picture was enclosed...** (H. Lee, To Kill a Mockingbird)-**У него новый папа -это он снят на карточке.**
- **So I started walking way over east, where the pretty cheap restaurant are, because I didn't want to spend a lot of dough.** (Salinger, the Catcher in the Rye) - **Я пошёл к восточным кварталам, где были дешёвые рестораны: не хотелось тратить много денег.**

Replacements

- From a purely grammatical point of view the above transformation is **optional**;
- however, taking into account the relative frequency of grammatical forms, such transformations are necessary if we want our translation to **sound "natural"**.

Replacements

- Both English and Russian make use of **syndetic and asyndetic co-ordinate structures**, but their relative frequencies differ: **Russian**, especially spoken Russian, prefers **asyndetic co-ordination** in multi-member structures where **English** often employs the **syndetic type**, as, for instance:
- All I have in it is two dresses and my moccasins and my underwear and socks and some other things. (J. Salinger) В нем только два платья, туфли, белье, носки и всякие мелочи.

ADDITIONS

- Additions are caused by various factors.
- Very often they are necessitated by what may be called "**lexical incompleteness**" of certain word groups in the source language.
- Thus, in English in many cases words are omitted that can be **easily restored from the context**,
- while in Russian their **actual presence** is necessary, which calls for additions in translation.

Additions

- pay claim - требование о повышении заработной платы;
- gun license - удостоверение на право ношения оружия;
- oil talks - переговоры по вопросу о нефти;
- solid engine - двигатель на твёрдом топливе;
- the Watergate judge - судья, назначенный для рассмотрения Уотергейтского дела.

Additions

- Sometimes additions are required to compensate for the lack of grammatical forms in the target language.
- The lack of plural forms of the corresponding nouns in Russian calls for lexical additions when translating the following phrases: **workers of all industries - рабочие всех отраслей промышленности; modern weapons - современные виды оружия; enemy defenses - оборонительные сооружения противника; other philosophies - другие философские направления (теории).**

OMISSIONS

- **Omissions** are the **reverse of additions** and are used to ensure a greater degree of what is called "**compression**", that is, reducing the redundancy of the text by **omitting words which can be easily restored from the context**.
- Thus, the following sentence from J. Salinger's novel: "**So I paid my check and all. Then I left the bar and went out where the telephones were**" is translated by R. Rait-Kovaleva as:
«Я расплатился и пошёл к автоматам».

Omissions

- The words "left the bar" are omitted because of their redundancy (the bar was mentioned in the preceding context and "leaving" is implied by the subsequent use of "went out"). Note also **other transformations** here, such as **unification of sentences** and **replacement of a complex sentence by a simple one**, all of which greatly reduce redundancy of the original text. (Л. С. Бархударов, Язык и перевод, гл. 5.)