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Subject-Predicate vs. Non-Subject-Predicate Sentences in Translation

This article contrasts sentences in English that have subject-predicate structures (Subject-Predicate Sentences: SPS) with sentences in Russian that do not have formal subject-predicate structures (Non-Subject-Predicate Sentences: NSPS). The article demonstrates that, in certain contexts, Russian NSPS functionally correspond to English SPS, and that stylistic mistakes in translation from English into Russian are caused by the insufficient use of NSPS and sentences without an explicit reference to the agent of the action.

Keywords: sentences; subject-predicate; impersonal; indefinite-personal; generalized-personal; active; passive

An analysis of translation practice reveals a wide disparity between the “spectrums” of the English and Russian languages¹ in the area that in Russian is occupied by sentences without a subject in the nominative and a predicate.

This asymmetry is caused by the fact that English, as a rule, does not have exact equivalents of non-subject-predicate sentences; English sentences equivalent to Russian NSPS do have a formal subject and predicate.

According to the definitive grammar put out by the Russian Academy of Sciences, all sentences in Russian fall into two categories. Those whose predicative base is made up of one word form (e.g. *Зима, Хлеба и зрелищ!, Холодно*) are called one-part sentences (однокомпонентные предложения). Those whose predicative base is made up of more than one word form (e.g. *Завод работает, Следует подождать*) are called two-part sentences (двухкомпонентные предложения).

This article considers two sub-groups within them: one-part sentences, and two-part non-subject predicate sentences (NSPS) (for example, *Хочется узнать; Пора ехать, Нельзя оставаться; Жаль времени; Подтверждения не получено; Много дел*) (Русская грамматика 1980: 95–96). We will selectively examine several kinds of these sentences, their English equivalents, and translation problems connected with them.

¹ There is reason to believe that the idea of “языковой спектр” (“language spectrum”) first appeared in Russian translation studies among the students and followers of the translator Ivan Kashkin. The term itself was introduced into academic discourse by Marina Litvinova. We understand this term to mean the array of characteristics of language units at all levels of a language, in terms of frequency and usage conventions, within the bounds of a particular style, genre, and thematic area.

One-Part Sentences

Native Russian speakers often think that indefinite-personal constructions (e.g. *Стучат; ...Его судили... осудили, лишили чинов, дворянства, сослали в Сибирь. Потом простили... вернули.* (И.С. Тургенев)) are equivalent to English sentences like: *They're going to widen the road soon.* However, Russian sentences in which the subject is “intentionally removed...intentionally presented as unknown, undefined” (Пешковский 2001: 371), can be used to express a much wider range of situations than that type of English sentence. For example, indefinite-personal Russian constructions can be used to translate English sentences in the passive voice, as in this translation of the sign on Owl's House in Winnie-the-Pooh:

PLEASE RING IF AN ANSWER IS
REQUIRED.

PLEASE RING IF AN ANSWER IS NOT
REQUIRED. (Милн 1983: 53)

ПРОШУ НАЖАТЬ ЭСЛИ НЕ
АТКРЫВАЮТ.

ПРОШУ НАЖАТЬ ЭСЛИ НЕ
АТКРЫВАЮТ. (Милн 1988: 340)

Indefinite-personal constructions enable the translator to avoid an excess amount of participles, which are the syntactically literal translation of the passive voice, for example:

The faulty Monk **was turned out** into the desert where it could believe what it liked, including the idea that it **had been hard done by.** (Adams 1988: 5)

Неисправный Монах **был заменен** новой моделью и **изгнан** в пустыню, где мог верить во что угодно и сколько угодно, в том числе и в то, что с ним обошлись чертовски несправедливо. (Адамс)

The translation of the phrase *had been hard done by* as *с ним обошлись чертовски несправедливо* is a fitting illustration of the use of indefinite-personal constructions in Russian to translate the English passive voice. But the first part of the sentence could have been rendered more fluidly in this way: «Неисправного Монаха **заменили** новой моделью и **изгнали** в пустыню, где он...»

While indefinite-personal constructions are often the best choice for rendering English sentences in the passive with an unnamed agent, when the agent is mentioned, a good choice for natural Russian would be to change the passive construction to an active one, for example:

Holidays came and holidays went, and Black Sheep **was taken to see** many people whose faces were exactly alike;

Приходили и уходили каникулы. Паршивца **водили** по разным людям, похожим друг на друга как

was beaten when occasion demanded, and **tortured by Harry** on all possible occasions, but **defended by Judy** through good and evil reports, though she hereby drew upon herself the wrath of Aunty Rosa. (Kipling 1994: 171)

две капли воды, и **пороли** по тому или иному поводу, и решительно по всякому поводу **истязал его Гарри**, зато стойко **защищала Джуди**, хотя и навлекала тем на себя немилость тети Анни-Розы. (Киплинг 2006: 100)

An examination of the translation of indefinite-personal constructions from Russian to English reveals a certain asymmetry between them and English sentences of the type *they do*. Consider this example from a Russian news agency and its translation into English:

Как **отмечают** в пресс-центре, на региональной экспозиции в рамках Российской национальной выставки были представлены инновационные проекты по созданию и выпуску ветеринарных препаратов (REGNUM, 5.12.2008)

As they say at the press center, innovative projects to launch and produce veterinary medicines... were presented at the regional exhibit within frameworks of the Russian National Exhibition. (REGNUM, 5.12.2008)

In the original, the author uses a turn of phrase common in journalistic style, which gives the press center as the source of the following information. To be more precise, it gives the source as individual staff members, or even one staff member, of the press center, but the source is not necessarily indicated to be the press center as a whole. (Compare: *В Думе критикуют новый законопроект – Дума критикует новый законопроект*).

In the English translation, the meaning and style of the sentence have been altered. Firstly, the opening phrase *As they say* sounds inappropriately conversational in the context of a newspaper article. Secondly, instead of pointing to an unidentified staff member at the press center, this phrase seems to provide some information about what people say in general at the press center, or what staff members usually discuss among themselves. The tone and meaning of this sentence is less that of a newspaper article and more along the lines of: “Is Detroit really as dangerous as they say it is?” A better translation in terms of style and sense would have “press center” as the grammatical subject of the sentence, for example: *The press center said/informed that...*, or with a phrase referring to it, like: *according to the press center*.

In impersonal constructions, Alexander Peshkovksy writes, “the grammatical subject is removed not just from the sentence, but from our thoughts” (Пешковский 2001: 343). As a rule, these constructions describe natural phenomena and states, or the condition of a living thing. The translation of such sentences from Russian to English usually does not lead to distortions of

the language spectrum, because the translator is forced to change the syntactical structure, for example:

- Вспомни, как **мне пришлось** из-за вас снимать со стен щиты с вензелями императора, перемещать войска, **пришлось**, видишь, самому приехать, глядеть, что у вас тут творится! (Булгаков 2003: 114)
- Remember how thanks to you **I was made to** remove the shields with the imperial cipher from the walls, to transfer troops, to come and take charge here myself! (Bulgakov a)
- Remember how on account of you **I had to** remove the shields with the emperor's insignia from the walls, had to transfer troops, had, as you see, to come in person to look into what goes on with you here! (Bulgakov b)

Translators working from English to Russian, however, often forget about the possibilities that impersonal constructions offer:

| | |
|---|---|
| He [the character in question is a ghost – <i>D.B.</i>] retched at the horror of what he had seen, but there was, of course, nothing in his stomach. (Adams 1988: 226) | Бедняга почувствовал спазм рвоты от всего, что видел, но его не вырвало, ибо желудок был пуст. (Адамс) |
|---|---|

The Russian phrase *почувствовал спазм рвоты* sounds like the clinical language a medical professional would use in describing a patient's symptoms, rather than the language a person would use to describe his own feelings of illness. In this case, an impersonal verb would have allowed the translator to avoid weighing the text down with medical terminology: «От всего, что он увидел, **его** страшно **мутило**, но в желудке, само собой, было пусто, и облегчить его не было никакой возможности». The theoretical basis for this choice is the fact that, as M.A. Apollova writes, “English sentences always have a formal subject, even in those cases when the sentence is impersonal in meaning. There are no grammatically impersonal constructions in English. However, the impersonal category itself exists in both Russian and English” (Apollova 1973: 24).

Among the so-called “не спрягаемо-глагольные классы” of simple sentences (classes of sentences without conjugated verbal forms), we focus particularly on adverbial sentences, the grammatical foundation of which are predicative adverbs or a noun in an oblique case with a preposition (for example, *Обидно получилось* or *Здесь по колено*).

When translating such sentences into English, as with impersonal constructions, the translator is forced to use the subject-predicate structure, for example:

- – Нехороший человек этот Филипп Филиппыч, – вздыхает Соня. – Вчера входит к нам в детскую, а я в одной сорочке... И мне стало так неприлично! (Чехов 1964: 130)
- “He is a horrid man, that Filipp Filippitch,” sighs Sonya. “He came into our nursery yesterday, and I had nothing on but my chemise... And I felt so improper!” (Tchekhov)
- ‘That Philip Philipovitch isn’t nice,’ sighs Sonia. ‘He came into the nursery yesterday, and I was only in my chemise. I was so ashamed!’ (Chekhov 1996: 97)
- ‘I don’t like that old Philip,’ says Sonya, with a sigh. ‘Do you know, he came into the nursery yesterday when I had nothing on but my night-dress... I felt so embarrassed!’ (Chekhov 1984: 85)

As for translations in the other direction, our recommendation to translators is to use adverbial sentences when appropriate, which allow for the creation of compact, precise, and expressive renderings.

Two-Part Sentences

Particular attention should also be paid to those Russian sentences whose first part is the predicate or modal words expressing possibility, suitability, will, or timeliness (*можно, нельзя, надо, пора, рано, (не)охота, лень, незачем, жаль* и др.). When working from English into Russian, translators often neglect these constructions, repeating the structure of the English sentence with a subject and modal verb:

| Original | Translation | Suggested Option |
|--|---|--|
| The fourth member was a woman. All I could see of her was her pale and ringless hand. (Vonnegut 1999: 74) | Четвертой была женщина. Все, что я мог видеть, – это ее бледная, без колец рука. (Воннегут 2004: 66) | Позади всех поднималась женщина. Видно было только ее руку – бледную и без колец. |
| ‘ May I ask where you’re moving to?’ I said. (Vonnegut 1999: 97) | – Могу ли я спросить, куда вы направляетесь? (Воннегут 2004: 80) | – Можно ли узнать, куда вы уезжаете? |
| “ I just need to know that Richard is on the case. I mean really on the case.” | Я хочу быть уверенным, что Ричард этим займется. Я хочу | Надо , чтобы Ричард занялся «Гимном». Занялся по- |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| I can ask him, and he says, Oh sure, it's fine, but half the time... (Adams 1988: 48) | сказать, по-настоящему займется. Я могу сам попросить его, но он мне, разумеется, ответит: “Да, конечно”, как всегда отвечает... (Адамс) | настоящему. Когда я его спрашиваю, он говорит, что, мол, все идет прекрасно, но... |
|--|---|--|

It should be noted that an indication of the subject of the action, given in English by the grammatical subject, can be saved in translation with the help of NSPS (usually in the form of a noun or a pronoun in the dative case), or it can be left out. In the first of the examples above, it is more logical to remove this indication, since the speaker is the only person observing the people going up the staircase. The version *Видно было только ее руку* is sufficient to show who is looking. On the other hand, if the translator does formally indicate the agent (*Мне было видно...*), it could form the impression that another, contrasting, sentence should follow (*А им было видно...*).

The following two examples show how these and other NSPS can be used to render standard subject-predicate English sentences into Russian:

- Punch was the extra about the house. There was no special place for him or his little affairs, and **he was forbidden** to sprawl on the sofas and explain his ideas about the manufacture of this world and his hopes for the future. Sprawling was lazy and wore out sofas, and little boys **were not expected to talk**. They **were talked to**, and the talking to **was intended** for the benefit of their morals. (Kipling 1994: 159)
- Панч был лишним мальчиком в доме. Здесь не было определенного места для него и для его маленьких дел, и ему **было запрещено** забираться на диван и рассказывать о своих планах и надеждах на будущее. Валяются по дивану только лентяи, и от этого портится диван, а маленьким мальчикам **нечего много разговаривать**. Они **должны слушать то, что им говорят**, и **поступать так, как им приказывают**. (Киплинг 1996: 238)
- Панч оказался в доме сбоку припека. Для него и его нехитрых занятий места отведено не было, и валяться по диванам и излагать свои соображения насчет того, как устроен этот мир и чего лично он, Панч, ожидает от будущего, **ему запрещали**. Валяются одни лентяи, и нечего протирать обивку, и **нехорошо, когда маленькие столько разговаривают**. Пусть лучше слушают, **что им говорят большие**, так как **говорится это в назидание им и во благо**. (Киплинг 2006: 77)

In the original, there are four passive constructions with an unnamed subject. The use of the passive in this case underlines the distance between the

world of adults and the world of children, and the authority and universality of the rules coming from the world of adults. On the one hand, this effect is created by the syntactical structure itself: only the object of the action is named, and the agent of the action is not a specific person, but some unalterable law (in Russian see: *Я тебе говорил сюда не входит – Говорили тебе сюда не входит*). On the other hand, the passive voice is more characteristic for literary writing, and it sounds drier, sterner, and more authoritative than the active voice.

In an attempt to recreate the communicative effect of the English passage, the first translator also used the passive voice, with a passive participle (*было запрещено*), a two-part NSPS with the predicative word *нечего* and a subject-predicate sentence with *должен* as the predicative word, which creates the same modality of obligation. The second translator used an indefinite-personal sentence, a one-part NSPS with the predicative adverb *нехорошо*, an imperative sentence with the participle *пусть* (and the 'missing' subject *они*), as well as the passive voice formed by means of a passive verb. An NSPS with the predicative word *нечего* is also used in the second translation, but it is used to translate a different fragment of the same situation (*нечего протирать обивку*).

Translators should also keep yet another type of NSPS in mind: those that follow the model (*Мне*) *хочется*. These sentences, along with the (*Я*) *хочу* type, correspond grammatically to a single English type of sentence: *I want*. In the example below, maintaining the subject-predicate structure in Russian leads to unnatural dialogue:

Still dancing, counting one to three, I ask, does she have the same kind of dreams?

“A little bit,” she says. “Not very much. More and more all the time. More than **I want to**.” (Palahniuk 2003: 213)

Танцуя и считая от одного до трех, я спрашиваю, видит ли она такие же сны.

“Немножко, – отвечает она. – Не слишком много. Но с каждым днем все больше и больше. Больше, чем **я хотела бы**”. (Паланик)

Another translator attempted to make this dialogue more natural:

Мы по-прежнему кружимся в вальсе, и я спрашиваю у нее: а ей самой снятся такие сны?

– Так, иногда, – отвечает она. – Не слишком часто. Но с каждым годом все чаще и чаще. Гораздо чаще, чем **мне бы хотелось**. (Паланик 2006: 229)

A more natural-sounding rendering, however, would avoid any formal mention of the agent:

– Иногда, – отвечает она. – Не так чтобы очень часто, но чем дальше, тем чаще. Чаше, чем **хотелось бы**.

Inexperienced translators working from Russian to English often distort the spectrum of the target language (TL) by trying to render NSPS into English with the most “impersonal” structures possible with *it* as the formal subject. As a result, neutral questions, instructions, recommendations, etc. (*Здесь можно оставить сумку?*, *Брать с собой еду необязательно*) are transformed into clumsy bureaucratic language, giving an impression of officiality or even rudeness (*Is it allowed to leave bags here?* (instead of: *Can I leave my bags here?*) or *It is not necessary to bring your food with you* (instead of: *You don't have to bring your food with you*)).

It's interesting to note that many researchers (perhaps under the influence of Anna Wierzbicka) consider one-part and two-part non-subject-predicate sentences to be a characteristic illustration of the Russian way of thinking, how Russians view the world. A typical quotation: “These perceived differences in attitude— assuming personal responsibility vs. giving in to “fate,” active vs. passive, – are elements rooted in both the English and the Russian language and in the two cultures. English has hundreds of active active constructions, and lacks the indefinite, impersonal constructions in which Russian is so rich. These active constructions together with the American “positive” attitude are a daily reminder of the nature of the American linguistic-cultural mentality. From first grade on, Americans are instructed to use the active, and not the passive voice in oral and written communication. Of course, there are exceptions to this rule. Various stylistic layers of English which make heavy use of passive constructions include technical writing: “The experiment was conducted” or the language of diplomacy: “Agreement was reached between the parties.” The “active” elements of language and culture impact on each other in maintaining the “active” mode of American speakers of English. Russian, on the other hand, is compelled by the structure of the language to consistently make use of indefinite and impersonal constructions in articulating states or actions in which “something is done” to the subject rather than those in which he “does” something himself. Numerous Russian constructions with the dative case, modal words (*nuzhno*, *nel'zia*), negative infinitive constructions without modal words (*ne byvat'*, *ne vidat'*), reflexive verbs (*ne spitsia*, *ne rabotaetsia*) and impersonal constructions emphasize the subject's passivity and inability to control his environment” (Виссон 2003: 73–74).

Issues relating to cultural studies, national psychologies and so on are beyond the bounds of this article. However, if such constructions are examined from a purely translation viewpoint, it becomes apparent that, despite all the differences between the spectrums of English and Russian in this area, the meaning expressed by Russian NSPS does not differ at all from that of 'active' subject-predicate English sentences. Regardless of the direction of the

translation, avoiding conventional means of description in the TL leads to undesirable additional meanings and distorted communication.

For example, in the sentence «‘Oooh, Mr Jeb,’ **I heard myself saying.** ‘Poor Mr Jeb.’» (W. Boyd, Brazzaville Beach (as quoted in Псурцев 2004: 48)) it would be hard to say that the grammatical form of the highlighted fragment points to the 'activeness' of the subject; it is just a turn of phrase that contains the implication of involuntary action (why the author chose not *I said*, but *I heard myself saying*). Compare two translations of this fragment:

«Ох, Мистер Джеб, – **услышала я собственный голос.** – Бедный Мистер Джеб». (translated by Ye. Dunayevskaya (as quoted in Псурцев 2004: 48))

«Да как же это, Мистер Джеб, – **невольно вырвалось у меня.** – Бедный, бедный Мистер Джеб». (translated by F. Psurtsev (as quoted in Псурцев 2004: 48))

In the first translation, the involuntary nature of the action is greatly intensified, and the idea, absent in the original, is introduced that the character has lost touch with reality and has begun to view herself as if from the outside. In the second translation, an impersonal construction enabled the translator to maintain the communicative intent of the author of the original.

All kinds of signs and announcements offer rich material for a language spectrum analysis. Texts like these are written in clichéd phrases, are neutral in tone, and are intended to be easy to read and to be clearly and quickly interpreted. The strategy when translating such texts, accordingly, should be to find functionally equivalent clichés in the TL, and to bring the text as closely as possible in line with the grammatical and lexical content of signs and announcements familiar to speakers of the TL. However, these texts are usually not translated by professionals, but by employees of the companies or organizations that own these signs. This often leads to literal translations that do not take the TL spectrum into account, and to unintentional nuances or additional meanings.

For example, when visitors to the U.S. embassy in Moscow check their belongings before entering, they receive a card with the following, obviously translated, text:

Ваши вещи будут **Вам** возвращены при предъявлении ЭТОЙ КАРТОЧКИ при выходе из посольства. По истечении недели **Ваши** вещи не будут **Вам** возвращены.

Because of the excessive personalization caused by the obtrusive pronouns *Вы/Ваш* (clearly, these were used automatically in place of the English *you/your*) this message acquires an undesirable subtext. This translation creates the impression that this message is aimed at one specific person only, the

person holding this specific card. What's more, the last sentence could be taken to mean that after a week, the holder of this card could receive items belonging to someone else, or that his belongings could be given to someone else.

Another announcement on the premises of the same embassy acquired a somewhat impolite undertone in translation due to inappropriately explicit reference to the agent of the action (instead of an impersonal notice, it seems to be finding fault with a particular person):

Перед входом **Вам** необходимо снять брючный ремень и верхнюю одежду.

Corrected versions of both texts could look like this:

Оставленные в камере хранения вещи выдаются при предъявлении карточки на выходе из посольства. Вещи, не востребованные в течение недели, возвращаться не будут.

Перед входом снимите брючный ремень и верхнюю одежду.

The authors of *A Communicative Grammar of Russian* maintain their own, non-traditional approach to the classification of sentences. They propose, for example, defining one group as 'involuntary sentences' the grammatical meaning in common being "the independence of the predicative attribute from the will of the subject characterized by this attribute, in other words, involuntariness" (Золотова et. al. 2004: 124). The authors divide involuntary sentences into those with a subject denoting a person (named or unnamed) (for example, *(Мне) не пишется*, *(Мне) чудится*, *(Мне) тревожно*) and sentences where the subject does not denote a person (named or unnamed) (for example, *(В квартире) тихо*, *(Водой) размыло берег*, *Дернуло тебя спорить*).

We can see a tendency in Russian for sentences in the passive without an active agent, expressing not an action, but a process occurring without the will of the agent, to have a subject that is more often in an oblique case (that is, not a formal grammatical subject) with an impersonal verb. Without question, there are also means in English to express the involuntariness of an action, but it is important to note that, formally, they often differ very little from constructions expressing active agency. Compare two examples:

Lloyd George was believed to have **had the beer diluted** in pubs near centres of ammunition-production during the first world war, in order to keep the wheels of the home front turning without a hiccup. (Times, 09.07. 93)

Each year millions of animals **have disagreeable things done to them** in the nation's laboratories. (Newsweek, 09.08.82)

Formally, these two examples share the same structure – a complex object. There is, however, an essential semantic difference between the two. In the first case, the action in the object (related to the subject of the entire sentence) is done through the will of the subject. In the second case, the action is done without the will, and even against the will of the subject. This difference is reflected in these possible translations:

Говорят, во время Первой мировой войны Ллойд Джордж **распорядился, чтобы** в пабах, находящихся в центрах военной промышленности, пиво **разбавляли** водой. Вот пример трезвого подхода к организации трудового фронта.

Каждый год в лабораториях США с миллионами животных **проделывают** пренеприятнейшие вещи.

For the first translation we chose an active subject-predicate construction, and for the second, an indefinite personal construction. In other words, the semantic difference that, in the original, is clear only through context, is expressed syntactically in translation. In the first example, however, it would also be possible to use an indefinite-personal construction, in which the active nature of the subject was made clear lexically (for example, *по его распоряжению пиво разбавляли*).

It is noteworthy that in some cases, English sentences with complex objects (formally active) can correspond to Russian impersonal sentences (formally passive). For example: *The writer **couldn't get his story started** – Писателю **не писалось***.

As in the example from *Brazzaville Beach*, we see that the active nature of the subject in the original is purely formal. Of course, the translation *Писатель никак не мог начать писать* is also possible, but if we look at the bigger picture related to this issue, from the point of view of language spectrums, then we can see that the constant use of active constructions in translation, where involuntary constructions would be more appropriate to the context, leads to stylistic distortions.

Generalized-Personal Sentences

In the concluding section of this article we will focus on yet another type of sentence common in Russian, the generalized-personal sentence (like *Всего не предусмотришь*). Strictly speaking, they belong to the group of subject-predicate sentences with second-person pronouns as subjects, however, in

speech, as a rule, the pronoun is dropped. The singular feature of the generalized-personal aspect lies in the fact that the action or state is ascribed to any and all subjects (Русская грамматика 1980: 245).

It is possible to say that, usually, Russian generalized-personal sentences with absent formal subjects correspond to English sentences with formally expressed subjects, the pronouns *you* or *one*. For example:

- – О, город Ершалаим! Чего только не **услышишь** в нем. (Булгаков 2003: 100)
- ‘Oh, city of Jerusalem! What tales **you** have to tell!’ (Bulgakov a)
- ‘Oh, city of Yershalaim! What does **one** not hear in it!’ (Bulgakov b)

Peshkovsky writes that in generalized sentences “often completely personal facts of a deeply intimate nature are cloaked in the generalizing structure” (Пешковский 2001: 375). “In these cases,” he continues, “the generalizing sentence form acquires a deep meaning both in literature and real life. It acts as a bridge connecting the personal to the general, the subjective to the objective. The more intimate some feeling or experience is, the harder it is for a speaker to put it on show for everyone, and the more willing he is to cloak it in a generalizing structure, transferring this feeling to *everyone*, including the listener, who is as a result more drawn into the narration than he would be by a completely personal structure” (Пешковский 2001: 375–376).

In those cases when the Russian generalized-personal form is used to relay deeply personal things, it is most logical to use the first-person form in an English translation. For example:

После молитвы **завернешься**, бывало, в одеяльце... **Вспомнишь**, бывало, о Карле Иваныче и его горькой участи... и так жалко станет, так **полюбишь** его, что слезы потекут из глаз, и **думаешь**: «Дай бог ему счастья... я всем готов для него пожертвовать». Потом любимую фарфоровую игрушку – зайчика или собачку – **уткнешь** в угол пуховой подушки и **любуеться**, как хорошо, тепло и уютно ей там лежать. Еще **помолишься** о том, чтобы дал бог счастья всем... **повернешься** на другой бок... и **уснешь** тихо, спокойно, еще с мокрым от слез

After saying my prayers **I would wrap** myself up in the bedclothes... I remember, too, that **I used to think** about Karl Ivanitch and his sad lot... and so much **did I love** him, that tears would fall from my eyes as **I thought**, “May God give him happiness... I could make any sacrifice for him!” Usually, also, there would be some favourite toy – a china dog or hare – stuck into the bed-corner behind the pillow, and **it would please me to think** how warm and comfortable and well cared-for it was there. Also, **I would pray** God to make every one happy... Then **I would turn** myself over on to the other side... until at last

лицом. (Толстой 1978: 54)

I slept soundly and peacefully, though with a face wet with tears. (Tolstoy)

It is noteworthy that in this case, the idea of repetition, the ordinary nature of an action, which is present in Russian generalized-personal sentences, is made explicit in the English with the constructions *would* and *used to*.

In another example, the events described are of a less intimate, personal nature, which is why different translators rendered it in a variety of ways, from *you* to *I/we*:

- И уж так **уморишься**, играя, что просто ни на что не похоже. Как **взбежишь** по лестнице к себе на четвертый этаж – **скажешь** только кухарке: «На, Маврушка, шинель...» (Гоголь 1977: 46)
- **You can** practically **kill yourself** playing cards, you wouldn't believe it. I mean **you run** up the stairs to the fourth floor, and **you can** just about **manage to say** to the cook: "Here, Mavra, old girl, take my coat..." (Gogol 2005: 47)
- Sometimes we keep on playing until **we're ready to drop**. **I just have enough strength to dash up** the stairs to my fourth-floor flat and **say** to the cook: "Take my coat, Mavrushka..." (Gogol 2000: 62)

When translating sentences of a generalized-personal nature from English to Russian, directly copying the original syntactical structure with its formally expressed subject often leads to a translation where these utterances lose not only their ability to express 'deeply intimate' facts, but any naturalness whatsoever:

What **you forget** when **you're planning** a hijack by yourself is somewhere along the line, you might need to neglect your hostages just long enough so you can use the bathroom. (Palahniuk 2003: 287)

Когда **ты планируешь** угон самолета самостоятельно, **ты всегда забываешь**, что когда-то в пути может захотеться сходить в туалет, и на это время заложники останутся без присмотра. (Паланик)

Ср.: Когда **планируешь** захватить самолет, почему-то **тебе не приходит в голову**, что на каком-то этапе у тебя, вероятно, возникнет необходимость оставить заложников без присмотра на пару минут – чтобы сходить в туалет. (Паланик 2006: 310)

Или:

Whether **you clean** a stain, a fish, a house, **you want** to think **you're**

Если **ты чистишь** пятно, рыбу, дом, **тебе хочется** думать, что **ты**

making the world a better place, but really **you're** just **letting** things get worse. **You think** maybe if **you** just **work** harder and faster, **you can** hold off the chaos, but then one day **you're** **changing** a patio lightbulb with a five-year life span and **you realize** how **you'll** only **be changing** this light maybe ten more times before **you'll be** dead. (Palahniuk 2003: 263)

улучшаешь мир, но на самом деле **ты** всего лишь **позволяешь** вещам становиться хуже. **Ты думаешь**, что если работать лучше и быстрее, то, возможно, удастся сдержать хаос. Но в один прекрасный день, **меняя** во внутреннем дворике лампочку, которая прослужила пять лет, **ты понимаешь**, что за всю оставшуюся жизнь сможешь поменять не более десяти таких лампочек. (Паланик)

We would recommend translating the fragment thusly:

Когда **выводишь** пятно, **чистишь** рыбу, **убираешь** дом, хочется думать, что **меняешь** мир к лучшему. Но на самом деле **все** только **становится** хуже. **Убеждаешь** себя: если **приналечь** на работу, может, **удастся** сохранить все как есть, уберечь от разрушения. Но в один прекрасный день, **вкручивая** в садовый фонарь очередную лампочку, которая перегорает раз в пять лет, вдруг **понимаешь**: а ведь за всю жизнь **тебе осталось** сменить эту лампочку раз десять, не больше.

In the last example, ten two-part subject-predicate sentences with the formally expressed subject *you* were translated into Russian using generalized-personal sentences with dropped subjects, as well as an infinitive construction in the position of a subordinate clause of condition (*если приналечь*), two two-part NSPS (*удастся сохранить, осталось сменить*) and a participial phrase (*вкручивая лампочку*). Meanwhile, almost nowhere was it necessary to point out the agent of the action.

We have already looked at typical mistakes in the translation of signs and announcements. Advertising texts in Russian, which are usually translated and poorly adapted from the point of view of pragmatics, are also a rich source of material for analyzing the differences between language spectrums and the causes of translation errors. For example, this is the slogan that Gillette used to promote its Fusion Power Phantom razor: "You'll barely feel the blades". The meaning of this message is that shaving with this product is so pleasant that the user will hardly notice the touch of sharp blades against his skin. The English construction is completely normal in this context, and sounds like the advice of a knowledgeable person (who has, perhaps, already tried this new product).

The Russian translation, which appears in advertisements, is the following: «Ты почти не почувствуешь лезвий». It is not surprising, then, to find Russian responses to the advertisement on the Internet like these: "...I

noticed an ad, with this text on a dark background «Ты почти не почувствуешь лезвий». My first thought was, where's the picture of Freddy Kreuger from Nightmare on Elm Street? It turned out to be an advertisement for some razor.”; “Brrr. Is it just me, or does this ad call up bloody associations? Or did the advertisers go too far here?”, “For some reason, it seems like the person saying this should be some maniacal looking guy with a dangerous razor (or two)”.

The translators could have avoided creating associations completely opposite to the communicative effect intended by advertisers by using a generalized-personal construction like: «Лезвий совсем не чувствуешь».

Russian linguists use varying principles to classify simple sentences in Russian. This means that subject-predicate and non-subject-predicate sentences and their specific types are defined and discussed differently by different linguists. We will attempt to take what all approaches have in common in order to formulate practical recommendations for translators working with the English-Russian language pair.

The main differences between English and Russian sentences seem to consist of the following:

1. English sentences absolutely require a subject, while Russian sentences can go without one: *It is beautiful here* – *Здесь красиво*.
2. In Russian, identifications of the agent of action are more frequently dropped (since the agent is given by the context or the syntactical construction itself, or is unimportant or unknown): *Пойдешь, бывало, на пляж – Опять наверху стучат – Хочется пить – Пойду домой: пора обедать – Лампочку включать? – Повалило все деревья*, etc.
3. There are more ways to indicate the agent of action in Russian than in English, apart from the grammatical subject: *Мне холодно – В этом доме всегда рады гостям – У него не решается задача – Волной унесло лодку*, etc.
4. In English, due to the specificities of its grammar, the agent of action is more often the grammatical subject. In addition, statements about involuntary actions more often correspond formally with statements about conscious, intentional action: *I felt pain – He got his licence revoked – She heard herself saying*, etc.

Therefore, before choosing one or another syntactical model in the TL, translators should determine whether the agent of the sentence is acting or being acted upon/experiencing a certain state, and thus, whether it is necessary in that case to include an explicit reference to the agent. By following this principle, translators can maintain the communicative effect of the original without distorting the TL spectrum.

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