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ENGLISH MULTIFUNCTIONAL ADVERBIALS IN SPOKEN INTERACTION IN THE LEGAL-RELATED SPHERE

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Abstract

The article deals with the study of three language units *actually*, *in fact* and *really* frequently found in everyday English language use in terms of similarities and dissimilarities between them when used in discursive and semantic meanings, and their corresponding translations into Russian. The multifunctional nature of these adverbials, being closely related in the meaning of actuality and reality, as they are linguistically bound and culturally dependent, often causes problems of their interpretation in translation. In order to realize the scope of multifunctionality and translation options of the adverbials under investigation, some quantitative and qualitative methods and corpus-oriented approach have been applied with the use of two resources of linguistic information: the empirical data obtained from the Netflix Documentary detective series Making a Murderer and the parallel English-Russian subcorpus OPUS2. The presented examples of the use of *actually, in fact* and *really* in the process of oral speech communication in the legal sphere demonstrate their similarities and dissimilarities in terms of the combination of the equivalence paradigm and the communicative-functional approach to translation. The procedure and the results described in the paper might be useful for advanced English learners and legal translation students in order to raise their awareness of the structures of the studied language.

Keywords: Adverbials, discourse markers, semantic and pragmatic meanings, translation correspondences

1. Introduction

The corpus-based research of multifunctional nature of *actually, in fact* and *really* is very important for understanding their adverbial and/or discursive use in spoken interaction. Their semantic and pragmatic meanings in terms of multifunctionality, as well as the difficulties of their translation, have been discussed by foreign authors (Aijmer, 2007; Furkó, 2014; Usonienė et al., 2015). Several studies of domestic authors have also been devoted to investigating the adverbials under consideration in comparison with their Russian translation correspondences. For instance, Shilikhina (2015) examines various translation strategies to *actually* and *in fact*, based on corpus linguistic technologies, using examples from written texts of various genres and some data from the parallel corpus of academic speech. As it is believed that *actually, in fact* and *really* are characteristic mainly of oral communication. In this article we use examples of spoken interaction in different situations occurred among the persons involved in a courtroom procedure.

2. Problem Statement

As has been mentioned above, there are quite a few studies dedicated to a variety of translation solutions of *actually*, *in fact* and *really* in spoken interaction based on cross-language comparisons with their Russian translations and carried out with the help of language corpora. Taking into consideration the fact that the focus on the expression of the communicative effect of the original text determines the importance of adequate translation of these units in their semantic and discursive meanings, we use corpus-based approaches to their functional equivalents.

3. Research Questions

The research questions that we intend to study in this article are:
- what the most frequent translation options of *actually*, *in fact* and *really* are presented in both corpora and how they are related in the aspect of semantic-pragmatic similarities and differences;
- to what extent they overlap in pragmatic and semantic meanings and depending on which factors they can be interpreted in one way or another;
- what functions all three language units express in a pragmatic sense in the examples from the legal-related sphere and what are their most common Russian translation correspondences.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this article is to examine various aspects of multifunctional nature of the language units in question, their communicative orientation and to provide an inventory of their translation solutions. The paper aims to reveal how the pragmatic and semantic meanings of *actually, in fact* and *really*, acting as discourse markers and adverbials in the legal-related verbal communication, are translated into Russian taking into account the scope of their multifunctional nature and to find out how they match their correspondences in the domain of functional and semantic equivalence.

5.   Research Methods

Basic research methods are the following: 1) use of two parallel corpora; 2) search for the units under consideration and their translation correspondences differentiating their adverbial and discursive use in dependence to the context and distribution of their syntactic position within an utterance; 3) data processing and analysis of the results collected.

6.   Findings

6.1.   Statistical analysis of translation equivalents of *actually*, *in fact* and *really*

To solve the set tasks, we compiled an English-Russian parallel corpus of oral speech (hereinafter our PC) using the parallel concordance function of the Sketch Engine search system (Sketch Engine project, n.d.). The material for the corpus comprises naturally occurring real-life examples of conversations between participants in court hearings. In order to obtain statistically more representative data, we also used some data from the parallel mega-corpus OPUS2 of this search system, namely, its English-Russian subcorpus Open Subtitles. We referred to it with the purpose of revealing the most frequently used translation options of the adverbials under consideration. The results of the statistical comparative analysis of the language units in question obtained from both corpora are presented in Tables 1, 2 and 3 (data percentage ratio are expressed in round numbers).

Table 1.   Russian translations of *actually*

Translation correspondences	Our PC	%	OPUS 2	%
Total	95	100	6.455	100
na samom dele (in actual fact)	8	8	926	14.5
deystvitel'no (in reality; in truth)	2	2	318	5
dazhe (even)	1	1	164	2.5
fakticheski (in reality; in actual fact)	1	1	158	2.5
voobshche-to (generally speaking)	2	2	78	1.5
ved' (after all)	1	1	51	1
sobstvenno (govorya) properly (speaking)	1	1	45	1
Other	–	–	25	0.5
Ø zero correspondences	79	83.15	4.690	73

Table 2.   Russian translations of *in fact*

Translation correspondences	Our PC	%	OPUS 2	%
Total	34	100	1.265	100
na samom dele (in actual fact)	9	27	251	20
fakticheski (in reality; in actual fact)	1	3	120	10
dazhe (even)	1	3	87	7
deystvitel'no (in reality; in truth)	2	6	32	2.5
po suti (in principle)	1	3	22	2
ved' (after all)	1	3	15	1
sobstvenno (govorya) properly (speaking)	1	3	8	0.5
v obshchem (generally)	1	3	8	0.5
voobshche-to (generally speaking)	1	3	5	0.25
Other	–	–	5	0.25
Ø zero correspondences	16	46	712	56

Table 3. Russian translations of *really*

Translation correspondences	Our PC	%	OPUS 2	%
Total	205	100	28.090	100
pravda (the truth is)	9	4.5	4.889	18
ochen' (extremely)	4	2	3.125	11
prosto (just)	2	1	551	2
na samom dele (in actual fact)	9	4.5	536	2
deystvitel'no (in reality; in truth)	12	6	515	2
dazhe (even)	1	0.5	273	1
slishkom (too much)	1	0.5	111	0.5
imenno (exactly)	1	0.5	89	0.5
v obshchem (generally)	1	0.5	29	0.15
ved' (after all)	1	0.5	15	0.05
krayne (extremely)	2	1	12	0.05
sobstvenno (govorya) properly (speaking)	1	0.5	15	0.05
Other	–	–	10	0.05
Ø zero correspondences	161	78	17.926	64

In our PC, a fairly small corpus, there were 95 tokens of *actually*, 34 *in fact* and 206 of *really*; in OPUS2 mega-corpus – 6 455 *actually*, 1 265 из *in fact* и 28 090 *really*. The frequency statistics shows that all three or two adverbials overlap in, or share, the similar semantic meanings. Their most common Russian translation correspondences with a relatively close meaning are *na samom dele, deystvitel'no, fakticheski, dazhe, voobshche-to, ved', v obshchem, sobstvenno (govorya)*. Some of adverbials under consideration have few translation options, such as *actually – imenno, in fact – po suti, really – krayne*, but the most common translational variant for them is their omission or zero correspondences (nearly 72 % of cases in OurPC, 64 % in OPUS 2). This fact seems to indicate that often given particular adverbials express a type of meaning that tends to be left out in translations into Russian.

6.2. The main semantic-pragmatic functions of *actually, in fact, really* and their translation equivalents

In contrast to the semantic meanings of the adverbials in question, which are embedded in their structure, their pragmatic meanings largely depend on the contextual parameters and their syntactic position (initial, medial, and final) within an utterance. Appearing in the initial or final position in a sentence, they mainly act as a discourse marker, while its functional sphere covers the entire utterance, shifting in this way to the sphere of pragmatics.

6.2.1. The function of indicating the actual state of affairs

According to the tables, in the most general form a core semantic meaning for the adverbials in question in comparison with their Russian translation correspondences is that they refer to some actual fact. This is a fact of reality and in this regard, the function of indicating the actual state of affairs may be considered their basic or initial function:

(1) We lost our claims against Len Kachinsky. The court **actually** said, "Even though I find this conduct indefensible, I am blocked by federal law from granting relief here." – *My proigrali isk protiv*

*Lena Kachinski. **Na samom dele** sud'ya zayavil: «Schitayu yego deystviya neopravdannymi, no federal'nyy zakon ne pozvolyaet udovletvorit' yego».*

(2) On occasion, the interviewers purported to know details that **in fact** were not true. – *Inogda sledovateli delali vid, chto znayut podrobnosti, kotorykh **na samom dele** ne znali.*

In these two examples, retrieved from a lawyer's closing statement in court, *na samom dele* is used as a translation equivalent, which, as shown in Tables 01 and 02, is the most common translation of *actually* and *in fact*. As its close synonym, expressing the real state of affairs *deystvitel'no* (*v deistvitel'nosti*) is also used. Both of them express confirmation of an assumption, and are also used in contrast functions to oppose another opinion to an alleged statement.

As to *really*, this translation option is less common (Table 03), since in oral speech communication it is most often used in a semantic meaning of modifier of a variety of adjectives, particularly with the most common collocates *"good", "nice", "bad" and "funny"*. Due to this fact, the most common Russian translation correspondences of *really* in OPUS2 are *pravda* (the truth is), *ochen'* or *neobychayno* (extremely) and their synonyms. The translation option *na samom dele* appears in the occasions when *really* is used in initial or final position focusing the hearer's attention on the importance of the whole message:

(3) I don't see what I did wrong to the sheriff for him to pick on me like that. I **really** ain't got much on my record. Two burglaries with my friends. – *Ya ne ponimayu, chto ya sdelal sherifu, chto on obosholsya so mnoy vot tak. **Na samom dele** u menya ne tak uzh mnogo na schetu. Dva ogrableniya s druz'yami* (retrieved from a dialogue between a defence lawyer and his client).

6.2.2. The function of refutation or confirmation

To express a refutation of a previous information in Russian or to confirm it in semantic and pragmatic meanings, along with *na samom*, *v samom dele* is also used. As a member of the sentence, *na samom dele* is freely combined with adversary conjunctions *a, no* (*but*), *odnako* (however), while *v samom dele*, such use is not typical. There are also stylistic differences between these expressions: *v samom dele* is used to argue in favour of the previous statements, and to bring counter-arguments. A similar phenomenon is observed both for *actually* and *in fact*:

(4) If **in fact** you did some things which we believe some things may have happened that you didn't want to tell us about, it's OK. – *Yesli ty **v samom dele** chto-to sdelal, a my polagayem, koyo-chto moglo proizoyti, no ty ne khotel skazat' ob etom, nichego strashnogo* (from the interrogation of a suspect by police officers).

6.2.3. The function of mitigation

Along with *na samom dele*, *voobshche-to* is considered to be one of the closest translation equivalents of *actually* and *in fact* among others. However, in some cases in certain contexts it can be used in its functional meaning as a mitigator indicating some problems on the interpersonal level with the aim to minimize the degree of imposition of face-threatening acts and to produce face-saving acts:

(5) We **actually** had instances where people attempted to change what they had said to the investigators for the attorney general's office when we were deposing them. – ***Voobshche-to**, u nas byvali*

sluchai, kogda lyudi pytalis' izmenit' skazannoye sledovatelyam General'noy prokuratury, kogda my doprashivali ikh (from a police officer's testimony whom the judge suspected of distorting the facts).

The following example, taken from the testimony of the coroner in court against the sheriff, who tried to remove her from work at the crime scene, shows some difficulties that may arise if the chosen translation variant does not correspond to the surrounding context. Along with the function of mitigation *actually* in this case can be perceived as a clear threat:

(6) … if I do it, I will be arrested. And **actually,** in the State of Wisconsin, the coroner is the top law enforcement official when there is a body or remains. And the coroner is the one who can arrest the sheriff. So, he's threatening to arrest me? – *... esli ya eto sdelayu, menya arestuyut. No **voobshche-to** v shtate Viskonsin koroner – starshiy po zvaniyu v organakh, yesli delo kasayetsya trupa ili ostankov. Eto koroner mozhet arestovat' sherifa. A on ugrozhayet arestom mne?*

As for less common translation options for the language units in question, such as *dazhe, ved', sobstvenno (govorya)* and others, they are used in their pragmatic meaning in the function to draw attention to a relevant fact for a given situation; in semantic one they are close to the function of parenthetical words in Russian.

7. Conclusion

In this study, we have attempted to check how the pragmatic and semantic meanings of *actually, in fact* and *really*, acting as discourse markers and adverbials, are expressed in Russian focusing on the scope of their multifunctional nature and to find out how they match their correspondences in the functional and semantic equivalence domain. This study might have practical value to some disciplines in applied linguistics domains, such as discourse analysis, pragmatics and others. It is related to the translation needs and the results obtained also can be used in teaching legal English in terms of developing students' communicative competence and translation skills.

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