

ISCKMC 2022
International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»**SUBJECT TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE TRANSLATION OF
LITERARY TEXTS**

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Abstract

This article considers the concepts of subject and object, which are key to many modern sciences, including linguistics, in the light of the anthropocentric paradigm. The typology of subject developed by Zolotova is presented. Attention is paid to the analysis of transformations of constructions with the subject of action (agentive) and their transformations in translations from French into Russian. The material was Russian translations of the literary text by Romain Gary. In the comparative analysis of the French and two Russian texts with the original and each other, we found examples that illustrate deviations from the original for objective reasons related to the peculiarities of the grammatical structure of the French and Russian languages, and for subjective reasons due to translator's choices. These factors affect the interpretation of the text and change the original author's intention. It is concluded that if a language has two or more options for designating the same situation, there is a need for all these options, which is reflected in the translation.

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Keywords: Literary text, object, subject, translation, transformation

1. Introduction

The concepts of subject and object are connected with the peculiarity of the human psyche, namely with the cognitive activity aimed at “mastering” the world around (Doerksen, 2022). The individual acts as a subject, and the object becomes the one whom he interacts with.

The concepts of subject and object have been the subject of philosophy, logic, epistemology, physics, and many other sciences.

Due to the shift towards anthropocentrism, dominant theories and views on the world structure have been revised taking into account new data.

The theory of speech acts, communicative grammar and other areas of linguistics focus on the human factor in language and describe language, “putting the speaker and the text in the focus of attention” (Zolotova et al., 2004, p. 101). The transition from the structural description of language to semantics contributed to the formation of new schools, theories, classifications etc.

In particular, Zolotova (2010) developed a typology of subjects (Table 01).

Table 1. Types of subjects

	Type of subject	Example
1	Agentive subject	<i>Master rabotayet (The master is working)</i> <i>Rebenok spit (The child is sleeping)</i>
2	Statural subject	<i>U sestry gripp (My sister has the flu)</i> <i>Yemu kholodno (He is cold)</i> <i>Bol'nogo znobit (The patient is shivering)</i> <i>Dom – bez kryshi (The house is without a roof)</i>
3	Qualitative subject	<i>Stariku pod sem'desyat (The old man is in his seventies)</i> <i>U sestry vzdornyy kharakter (My sister has a feisty personality)</i>
4	Quantitative subject	<i>Mal'chikov chetvero (There are four boys)</i> <i>Komarov naletelo (Mosquitoes have flown)</i>
5	Subject of possession	<i>On raspolagayet sredstvami (He has the means)</i> <i>U sosedey sad (The neighbors have a garden)</i>
6	Existential subject	<i>Ivanov prisutstvuyet (Ivanov is present)</i> <i>Vody net (There is no water)</i>
7	Thematic subject	<i>S biletami povezlo (We got lucky with the tickets)</i>
8	Comparative subject	<i>Volga dlinneye Dona (The Volga is longer than the Don)</i> <i>Brat – moryak (Brother is a sailor)</i>
9	Qualification subject	<i>Kiparis odnositsya k vechnozelenym rasteniyam (Cypress is an evergreen plant)</i> <i>Chasy idut (The clock is running)</i>
10	Funcitive subject	<i>Garmon' igrayet (The harmonica is playing)</i>
11	Perceptive subject	<i>Okhotnik slyshit shorokh (The hunter hears a rustle)</i> <i>Yemu chudyatsya golosa (He loves voices)</i>
12	Emotive subject	<i>Pete nravitsya Masha (Petya likes Masha)</i> <i>Detyam nadoyela shkola (The kids are tired of school)</i>
13	Sociative subject	<i>On mne otets (He is my father)</i> <i>Ona yemu nachal'nik (She is his boss)</i> <i>Na dvore solnechno (It's sunny outside)</i>
14	Locative subject	<i>Za oknom metel' (There is a blizzard outside the window)</i>

2. Problem Statement

The study analyzes constructions with the subject of action (agentive) and their transformations in the translation (Ya dyshu legko... Mne dyshitsya legko... Ya veryu, chto... Mne veritsya, chto... – I breathe easily... I breathe easily... I believe that... I believe that...). This study does not aim to consider collateral structures and diathesis.

3. Research Questions

Slavic languages have a significant set of constructions such as U sestry gripp, Ottsu ne spitsya, V koridore smeyalis', Po kryshe grokhotalo (Sister has the flu, Father can't sleep, They laughed in the corridor, Rumbled on the roof), in which the subject is in the non-nominative case or absent. In traditional grammar, they are described as subjectless, indefinitely personal, or impersonal. Vezhbitskaya (1996) argues that the Russian national character is characterized by passivity and fatalism. Zolotova claimed that “Vezhbitskaya’s conclusions about passivity of the Russian national character, a tendency to fatalism and humility, deduced from the fact that the Russian language is characterized by “impersonal” sentences, are superficial, not confirmed either by an analysis of impersonal sentences in the language system. <...> The fact that two constructions with the meaning of spontaneous causation Yego ubilo molniyey (He was killed by lightning) and Yego ubila molniya (He was killed by lightning) coexist in the Russian language does not indicate that Russian culture tends to present the world as not amenable to human understanding, but that the Russian language distinguishes marked and unmarked spontaneity of influence; in the second case, giving the causator some expressive tinge, as it were, of personification, if the speaker needs it. <...> The habitual morphological approach to grammar prevented Vezhbitskaya from recognizing the ontological nature of the phenomena: activity, purposefulness, voluntariness are properties of personal action rather than states; “impersonal” sentences are created by the language to express a state, and it is unjustified to demand from them signs that are unusual for them (Zolotova, 2000). The term “impersonality” gives way to the term “involutiveness”: “Some “impersonal” sentences (Mne grustno, Yego znobit) represent the original, isosemic models, others occupy the systemic place of structural and semantic modifications. They are united by a common, invariant grammatical meaning – the independence of the predicative feature from the will of the subject” (Zolotova et al., 2004, p. 45).

In the comparative analysis of the texts, we have found many examples of constructions that have undergone transformations in the process of translation. These examples can be divided into objective transformations and subjective transformations. Objective transformations are caused by the lack of an absolute equivalent (lexical, grammatical, etc.) in the target language. Subjective transformations are used by the translator despite the presence of a full equivalent in the target language. Here is an example.¹

(1a) **Ma bouche s'ouvrit** démesurément, **mes yeux s'agrandirent**, je demeurai figé sur place devant cette merveille.

(1b) **Рот мой распахнулся, глаза выпучились**, и я застыл на месте при виде такого чуда (My mouth fell open, my eyes bulged, and I froze in place at the sight of such a miracle.)

¹ Examples **b** – Promise at dawn (translated by L. Efimov, 2006);
Examples **c** – Promise at dawn (translated by E. Pogozheva, 1993).

(1c) **Я разинул рот, выпучил глаза** и остолбенел при виде такого чуда (I opened my mouth, bulged my eyes and was dumbfounded at the sight of such a miracle.)

This example demonstrates how in sentence (1c) the role of the subject is increased due to the fact that the actions described in the first and second parts of the sentence (1a) **Ma bouche s'ouvrit** и **mes yeux s'agrandirent**, are controlled by the subject while in the original sentence (1a) and the translation (1b) correlating with the original, the activity of the subject in the first and second parts of the sentence is not expressed.

The same trend can be seen in the following example:

(2a) **Ces caresses** étaient strictement intéressées.

(2b) Так что **нежности** оказались вполне корыстными. (So the tenderness turned out to be quite selfish.)

(2c) **Лаская** меня, он имел свою цель. (Caressing me, he had his purpose.)

Sentence (2a) reports the evaluation that the speaker/narrator gives to the character's actions. However, in sentence (2c), in addition to reporting the evaluation, the character, the narrator is talking about, becomes an active producer of the action.

The reverse process – the lowering of the role of the subject – can be observed in the following examples:

(3a) **J'entends** encore le bon gros rire des «punaises bourgeoises» à mes oreilles.

(3b) До сих пор явственно **слышу** грубый хохот «мещанских клопов». (Until now, I clearly hear the rude laughter of “petty-bourgeois bugs.”)

(3c) Громкий смех «буржуазных тварей» до сих пор **стоит у меня в ушах**. (The loud laughter of the “bourgeois creatures” is still in my ears.)

(4a) La seule chose qui m'intéressait à l'époque était de savoir si **je pourrais** garder ma bicyclette.

(4b) Единственное, что меня в тот миг интересовало, это **смогу ли я** оставить себе велосипед. (The only thing that interested me at that moment was whether I could keep the bike.)

(4c) Меня интересовало тогда только одно: останется ли **у меня** велосипед. (At that time, I was only interested in one thing: whether I would still have a bicycle.)

In sentences (3c) and (4c), the subject is expressed by the form "U + R. p.", while in sentences (3a), (4a) and (4b) the subject takes the position of the subject and is in the nominative case; in sentence (3b) it is followed by the verb in first person singular in the indicative mood.

In the following example, the roles of the two actors of the main and subordinate parts of the sentence have been changed.

(5a) Lorsque ma mère **revenait** de ses courses, **le propriétaire** de l'immeuble **attendait** parfois dans l'escalier, pour lui annoncer qu'il allait nous jeter dans la rue, si le loyer n'était pas payé dans les vingt-quatre heures.

(5b) Когда мать **возвращалась** из своих хождений, **домовладелец** не раз **поджидал** ее на лестнице, дабы объявить, что вышвырнет нас на улицу, если за квартиру не будет уплачено в двадцать четыре часа. (When mother returned from her walks, the landlord waited for her more than once on the stairs to announce that he would throw us out into the street if the rent was not paid within twenty-four hours.)

(5c) Вечером*, **возвращаясь** домой, **она** нередко **сталкивалась** с хозяином квартиры, **поджидавшим** ее на лестнице и грозившим вышвырнуть нас на улицу, если в течение суток не будет уплачено за квартиру. (In the evening*, returning home, she often ran into the owner of the apartment, who was waiting for her on the stairs and threatened to throw us out into the street if the rent was not paid within 24 hours.)

In sentence (5c), the subject of the subordinate clause becomes the subject of the main clause by changing the syntactic model of the sentence. The role of the active subject of the main part has been lowered in the translation.

In the following example with the lowered role of the subject, the transformation becomes inevitable due to the semantics of the verb "to succeed", which cannot be combined with the subject in the nominative case.

(6a) **Je** ne suis cependant jamais parvenu à élucider ce dernier point entièrement.

(6b) Тем не менее **мне** так и не удалось до конца прояснить этот последний пункт. (However, I have not been able to fully clarify this last point.)

(6c) Однако **мне** так никогда и не удалось до конца убедиться в этом. (However, I have never been able to fully verify this.)

In sentences (6b) and (6c) the subject is in the dative case.

In the similar example, we can see the similar transformation in sentence (7b), where the translator replaces the verb **pouvoir** with the verb **удаваться**.

(7a) Je n'ai pas **pu** accomplir toutes les prouesses qu'elle attendait de moi, niais j'ai tout de même réussi à ne pas trop prendre de ventre.

(7b) Мне не **удалось** совершить все подвиги, которые она ждала от меня, но я все-таки сумел не слишком растолстеть. (I did not manage to perform all the feats that she expected from me, but I still managed not to get too fat.)

(7c) Я не **смог** совершить всех подвигов, которых она ждала от меня, но все-таки мне удалось не нагулять слишком большого живота. (I was not able to accomplish all the feats that she expected from me, but still I managed not to work up too much belly.)

The following example illustrates the change in the semantics of original sentence (8a) by reducing the role of one of the subjects in sentence (8c). Here the subject Anel is called by a name in the instrumental case. Only one subject is the initiator of the dispute, but in sentence (8a) both subjects are arguing.

(8a) **Ma mère et Aniela débattirent** longuement le point de savoir s'il fallait accepter le cadeau ou le renvoyer à l'expéditeur.

(8b) **Они с матерью** долго **спорили**: принять подарок или отправить обратно. (She and her mother argued for a long time: accept the gift or send it back.)

(8c) **Мать** долго **спорила с Анелей**, принять ли подарок или вернуть его отправителю. (The mother argued for a long time with Anelya whether to accept the gift or return it to the sender.)

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose is to show how the interpretation of a literary text during translation depends on the lexical and grammatical features of the language systems and to demonstrate that in some cases deviations from the original text depend on the subjective choice of the translator.

5. Research Methods

The comparative method was used to identify discrepancies in the translations.

6. Findings

The analysis shows that transformations of subjective constructions can be of two types: objective (6b, 6c) and subjective (1c, 2c, 3c, 4c, 5c, 7b, 8c). The first type of transformations can be explained by objective reasons that do not depend on the translator and are related to the peculiarities of the lexicogrammatical system of the target language. Transformations of the second type can be explained by subjective reasons based on the conscious or intuitive choice of the translator, which may be erroneous.

However, both of them often lead to a distortion of the author's strategy and tactics. In this case, the perceptions of the original and translated texts will be different. These transformations can be essential (Krylov's fable "Dragonfly (female gender) and Ant (male gender)"; Lafontaine's "La Cigale et la Fourmi" and Aesop's "De cicada et formica" (both insects were female)).

7. Conclusion

The analysis showed that speakers of different languages "package" information in different ways using different language means (*Ya veryu/Mne veritsya – I believe – Je crois*). If a language has two or more options for designating the same situation, there is a need for all these options. Language can get rid of unnecessary things. And there is a difference that seems unobvious (voluntariness / involutivity; marked / non-marked). The task of linguists is to study and describe such meanings. In addition, the comparative analysis of original and translated texts makes it possible to look at the native language from a new angle and pay attention to those aspects that were not in the focus of attention of linguists.

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