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A PERFECT FORM TRANSLATION IN CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Summary. In the focus of the present paper there are specific functional semantic features of the English perfect tense forms in discourse and their correspondences in the Russian translation text. A synthesis of discourse and corpus types of analysis has defined the correlation of grammatical, lexical, and contextual means of expressing the past action connected with the moment speaking. The contrastive analysis of the Source Text and the Target Text has revealed regular and irregular formulae of transference the present perfect forms.

Key words: perfect, perfective, verb, tense, aspect, translation, contrastive analysis, discourse, cross-cultural communication.

Preliminaries. In the sciences generally, time is considered an infinitely divisible linear continuum and defined by its measurement. Physics in particular often requires extreme levels of precision in time measurement. Philosophers hold that the flow of time or human advance through time is an illusion. They argue, for example, that words such as *past*, *future*, and *now*, as well as the tenses of verbs, are indexical expressions that refer to the act of their own utterance. Hence, the alleged change of an event from being future to being past is an illusion. Perception of time, its conceptualization and the representation of concepts across cultures are culture dependent, reflecting specific cultural experience. As Bassnett points out, “the translator must tackle the SL text in such a way that the TL version will correspond to the SL version. To attempt to impose the value system of the SL culture onto the TL culture is dangerous ground” [4, p. 23]. Evidently, in translation it is important to consider not only the lexical impact on the TL Reader, but also the manner in which cultural aspects may be perceived. Translation is doomed to inadequacy because of irreducible differences not only between languages and cultures, but within them as well. The view that language itself is indeterminate would seem to preclude the possibility of any kind of adequate translation. Perception of time, its conceptualization and the representation of concepts across cultures are culture dependent, reflecting specific cultural experience. The differences concerning systems of the verb can clearly show grammatical differences. The Russian system of tenses is completely different from that of English. The category of aspect in Russian and other Slavonic languages is based on the binary opposition of Perfective and Non-perfective forms of all verbs [5, p. 115–131; 15, p. 356–357]. The opposition is inherent in the aspectual oppositions and uni-aspectual verbs (i.e. either perfective or non-perfective [3, p. 74–75]). English and Russian differ particularly in grammar systems showing significant variations. The English word order is significant for the semantic decoding of a part of the sentence and the sentence itself. The meaning and function of a part of the sentence and the sentence depend mainly on flexions in Russian, whose word order is rather flexible. Due to these differences translation of Russian into English and English into Russian present a serious challenge.

The objective of our paper is the investigation of the ways of transferring English present perfect verb forms into Russian retaining their original aspectual meaning based on the evidence of the synthesis of the contrastive, discourse and corpus types of analysis in the SL and TL. The necessary data is retrieved from the novel “The Associate” by John Grisham and its Russian translation “Юрист” (Yu. Kiriak).

State of the art. There is no agreement among grammarians of different schools on the number of English tenses due to their way of perceiving “time” and “tense” on the one hand, and “tense” and “aspect” on the other. Traditionalists, for instance say that there are three basic tenses: present, past, and future and there are 12 tense forms altogether in English, cf. Russian basic tense system [1, p. 9; 2, p. 72; 3, p. 94]. Structuralists differentiate between two main tenses: past and present. This clearly indicates that scholars employ different criteria to classify tenses in English. However, there are various ways of linking tense and aspect to grant or introduce the following contrasts, each of which can be attributed to one of the three ideas of time: present, past and future. A tenseness theory of time (also known as the B-theory, based on McTaggart’s B-series method of ordering events) calls for the elimination of all talk of past, present and future in favor of a tenseness ordering of events using only phrases like “earlier than” or “later than”. The proponents believe that tensed terminology can be adequately replaced with tenseness terminology, for instance, the future-tensed sentence, can be adequately expressed with the help of the Present tense verb form in combination with the future time marker like ‘after the time of utterance’. Therefore, the future tense likewise the past one can be removed, and the present tense verb form becomes logically tenseness. Consequently, from the philosophical point of view the passage of time must be merely an illusion of human consciousness. We support this approach as an efficient method for “Think-Aloud in translation” when the translators give an enumeration of events of the given text not to miss any detail. In the discourse structure the grammatical tense markers seem to be inadequate and the author tries to strengthen the time of event introducing phrases which explicitly quantify the time passage of action. In case of their absence the contextual analysis can decode the the time of action.

Despite critical attacks at the CA [15, p. 127–128] the rationale for undertaking contrastive studies comes mainly from four sources: (a) practical experience of foreign language teachers; (b) studies of language contact in bilingual situations; (c) theory of learning; and (d) translation [see: 7, p. 15–28; 18]. Time is conceptualized differently in different cultures. In a cross-cultural setting a lot of misunderstandings arise from differences in time perception across cultures.

Investigation. Time is not only measured scientifically, but also is perceived on a personal level and on a cultural level. One may object to this, as Lakoff states, “We do not have detectors of time” [12, p. 57]. It is true that time is not a physical object to be perceived

but still we have a sense of time. Time is conceptualized differently in different cultures. In a cross-cultural setting a lot of misunderstandings arise from differences in time perception across cultures. Time is measured by seconds, minutes, hours, days, nights, weeks, months, and so on. But parametrical concepts are culture-specific, starting from the structure of the day and ending with differing conceptualizations of parametrical concepts.

Primarily Charles C. Fries established a contrastive linguistic analysis as an integral component of the methodology of EFL/ESL teaching. Declaring that the most effective materials (for foreign language teaching) are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner [10, p. 9] that is also true for translation/interpretation.

The relationship between utterance time and the time of the situation described may be direct represented by absolute tenses (past, present, future) or indirect represented by relative tenses (perfect tenses). The Present Perfect is a stumble block for learners of English as ESL or EFL. Sometimes there is a confusion between the present perfect and the present tense, and at other times with the past. It is sometimes difficult to build exact rules about the situation(s) in which the present perfect is used and the purposes to which it is put [12, p. 174–177; 6, p. 66–71]. As for the translators they have to determine the lexical time markers (time adverbials) to objectively specify the time of an event. The temporal structure of discourse makes use of the verbal tenses and time adverbial modification which together may express the temporal-aspectual concept. In discourse there is a sequence of past-tense assertions linked with the present moment of speaking. For this reason we will focus here on the semantic representation of such assertions in the Source Language (SL) and their transferring into the Target Language (TL).

The English present perfect constitutes a problem for the translator because of the fact that it is marked for present time. The translator will tend to use adverbs of time which denote the past completed action, e.g.:

1. SL Present Perfect + Time Adverbial → TL Past Simple + Time Adverbial, e.g.:

You haven't made a verbal commitment to accept a position with an outfit called Piedmont Legal → Aid, in Winchester, Virginia, beginning September the second of this year? «Но разве ты уже не принял на себя обязательства перед Пидмонтским юридическим центром в городе Уинчестер, Виргиния, пообещав им выйти на работу второго сентября?»

2. SL Present Perfect (Contextually dependent) → TL Past Simple + Time Adverbial, e.g.:

And we've even discussed a deferment. «Мы даже обговорили условия отсрочки».

In the original sentence the time of the action is not limited, while the translator uses the Past Simple underling the completeness of the action and the adverb intensifies it. The present perfect tense is commonly used with the indefinite time adverbs never, ever, before, yet, already in English, on the contrary in Russian they are used to underline the completion of the action.

Consider the following: the English present perfect has numerous detected uses in the theoretical literature on “tense” and “aspect”, most grammarians [8, p. 106–107; 9, p. 24–25] often try to put it against the simple past since both include, to a greater degree, a close semantic relationship to refer to the past in one way or another [16; 18]. But it is clear that the simple past can be used to refer to the completion of the action (a period that ended earlier)

whereas the present perfect is used to display the non-completion of the action i. e., to denote a period from the past up to now.

3. SL Present Perfect (Contextually dependent) → TL Past Simple (Contextually dependent), e.g.:

Our experts have studied the audio. Joey Bernardo says to Baxter Tate, «Is she awake?» «Наши эксперты самым внимательным образом изучили аудиозапись».

In this case the translator uses Russian past of the perfective *изучили*. Thus the semantic component is retained though the English grammatical feature (“before the moment of speaking”) is lost.

Consequently, the present perfect conveys an element of meaning called “current relevance” while the simple past does not [9, p. 25; 4, p. 15–16; 19]. In addition, the present perfect is used with events whose time is invariably indefinite in this sentence. In contrast with the present perfect, it is possible to use the past simple for the purpose of correction an incorrect belief or expectation or to say that it is surely true.

J. Praninskas underlines that the present perfect is of three main uses [13, p. 185] which can be summarized as follows:

(a) An action or state that was repeated in the past and that may be repeated in the future, e.g.:

4. SL Present Perfect (Contextually dependent) → TL Present Simple (Contextually dependent), e.g.:

You boys have tried to forget about Elaine, haven't you? «Пытаетесь вычеркнуть ее из памяти?»

The action occurred in a near past and the situation affects the main character's present situation, like “you still try to forget”. There are also some adverbs (e.g. since) which are compatible with the Present Perfect but not with the simple past. In the Present Perfect, an event predicate is introduced as the presupposition; it is possible for it to hold at a time after the time of speech [6]. The three types (experiential perfect, perfect of result and perfect of recent past) are grouped as Existential (E-Perfect) which conveys the meaning that the predicate holds throughout some interval stretching from a certain point in the past up to the present”.

he action refers to the period of time from the past until the present and may continue to the future, e.g.:

5. SL Present Perfect + Time Adverbial → TL Past Simple + Time Adverbial, e.g.:

I don't remember meeting a Bennie Wright. Could have, but I don't remember that name. It has been, after all, five years since the nonevent did not happen. «Человека по имени Бенни Райт я не помню. Может, мы и встречались, однако в памяти у меня это не отложилось. Видите ли, прошло уже пять лет с того момента, когда ровным счетом ничего не случилось».

Although the Present Perfect Tense is not usually used with adverbs referring to finished periods of time, it is quite common with definite time adverbs. Here (sentence 5) the present perfect tense is used with a very definite time-reference.

(b) An action or state completed at some indefinite time in the past, e.g.:

6. SL Present Perfect + Time Adverbial → TL Past Simple + Time Adverbial, e.g.:

You've just wrecked my life, Bennie, the least you can do is allow me some degree of privacy. «Слушайте, Бенни, если моя жизнь все равно пошла под откос, так что я теряю? Я готов испить чашу до дна».

The perfect tense form may be accompaniment adverbials like “already”, “yet (neg.)”, “recently”, “just”, etc. with sentences of this

type, display that the action was done either immediately before speaking, at some unspecified time in the past or within a short time past.

(c) An action or state which began sometime in the past and has continued up to now. Sometime adverbials like “for” and “since” can often go with this type of sentences, e.g.:

5. SL Present Perfect + Time Adverbial → TL Past Simple + Time Adverbial, e.g.:

I don't remember meeting a Bennie Wright. Could have, but I don't remember that name. It has been, after all, five years since the nonevent did not happen. «Человека по имени Бенни Райт я не помню. Может, мы и встречались, однако в памяти у меня это не отложилось. Видите ли, прошло уже пять лет с того момента, когда ровным счетом ничего не случилось».

Some English grammatical forms and structures have no corresponding counterparts in Russian, others have only partial equivalents. The first group of non-equivalents also includes the Present Perfect Tense whose meaning is usually rendered in Russian by some adverbs of time. The use of “since” refers to the point of time when the action began whereas the use of “for” refers to the duration of time covered by the action.

J.D. McCawley indicates that the present perfect carries four senses: existential, stative, universal and hot news [14, p. 104–107] shown in the following successive sentences, e.g.:

7. SL Present Perfect (Contextually dependent) → TL Past Simple (Contextually dependent), e.g.:

You were born on February 4, 1983, in York, Pennsylvania, third child and only son of John and Patty McAvoy. They divorced in 1989, when you were six years old, neither has remarried, correct? «Ты родился 4 февраля 1983 года в Йорке, Пенсильвания. Третий ребенок и единственный сын Джона и Пэтти Макэвой. В 1989-м отец и мать развелись, тогда тебе было шесть лет. В повторный брак ни один из родителей не вступил. Все верно?»

8. SL Present Perfect (Contextually dependent) → TL Past Simple (Contextually dependent), e.g.:

Though his feet suddenly felt like bricks and his knees were weak, Kyle managed to trudge on as if nothing were wrong. Not only did they find me, he said to himself as he tried to think clearly, but they've done their homework and found my Jeep. Ощувив внезапную слабость в коленях, Кайл сумел все же на почти не гнущихся ногах приблизиться к автомобилю. «Эти типы смогли не только отыскать меня, – подумал он, усилием воли заставив себя рассуждать здраво, – эти всезнайки отлично подготовились и нашли мой джип».

Accordingly, the “universal” meaning inherent in sentence with *has remarried* is used to reveal that a state of affairs dominated throughout some interval stretching from the past up to the present; the “existential” sense represented by sentence (8) is used to refer to the existence of past happenings; the “stative” sense marked by sentence with *(ha)'ve done* is used to demonstrate that the direct impact of a past event still continues, e.g.:

9. SL Present Perfect (Contextually dependent) → TL Past Simple (Contextually dependent), e.g.:

Yes, my firm. You see, Kyle, I work for a contractor, a private one, and we've been hired to do a job. «Да, моей фирме. Видишь ли, Кайл, я работаю по контракту на частное лицо, нас наняли выполнить определенное задание».

Often new information can be given by using the present perfect [13; 16], e.g.:

10. SL Present Perfect + Time Adverbial → TL Past Simple + Time Adverbial, e.g.:

Our recruiting has gone very well. You're joining the best freshman class in years. «По-моему, наша система подбора себя оправдывает. Новички, что вольются осенью в дружное семейство «Скалли энд Першинг», – лучшие из лучших».

The present perfect is used to express past actions with some importance for the present moment. Since there is no present perfect construction in Russian, the translator needs to decide which one to use according to context.

11. SL Present Perfect + Time Adverbial → TL Past Simple + Time Adverbial, e.g.: “*Please give the date, time, and place,*” *Kyle said with an air of confidence that surprised even him. “And please state that the interrogation has yet to begin and that no statements have been made before now.”* «Будьте добры назвать сегодняшнюю дату, точное время и место беседы, – произнес Кайл с удивившей его самой твердостью. И не забудьте упомянуть: беседа еще не началась, никаких заявлений не прозвучало».

Despite the action is presented in the past the adverbial phrase *before now* relates it to the present time. According to Nida, a “gloss translation” mostly typifies formal equivalence where form and content are reproduced as faithfully as possible and the TL reader is able to “understand as much as he can of the customs, manner of thought, and means of expression” of the SL context [17, p. 129]. Thus, when translating, it is important to consider not only the lexical-grammatical impact on the TL Addressee but also the manner in which cultural aspects may be perceived and make translating decisions accordingly [see: 20].

The “vertical” or top-down analysis of the SL written text can reveal the Addressor’s time factor and the Addressee’s time factor in their correlation right for the Translator’s right choice.

Findings and perspectives. In this brief survey of time and tense in the SL and its translation into the TL tense, we have discussed a number of conceptions (physical, philosophical, and linguistic) about time and tense. The results of comparing the two languages are necessary to predict the difficulties and errors which will occur in translation practice. As English tense in a given sentence can be rendered into more than one way and vice versa since translation is not a matter of replacing surface forms by rules of correspondence but it contains analysis, transfer and restricting, all of which are governed by linguistic and non-linguistic factors. In Russian, the English present perfect construction functions the same way that the past simple in combination with time adverbials or past simple with the active contextual support though a corpus analysis of the object functioning in various discourses registers of the SL and the TL.

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Михайленко В. В. Переклад перфектної форми у між-культурній комунікації

Анотація. У центрі уваги даної статті – функціонально-семантичні особливості англійських перфектних дієслівних форм та дискурсі їх відповідності у тексті російського перекладу. Синтез дискурсивного і корпусного типів аналізу визначив кореляцію граматичних, лексичних і контекстуальних засобів вираження минулої дії, пов'язаного з моментом мовлення. Контрастний аналіз вихідного і цільового текстів виявив регулярні і нерегулярні формули передачі теперешніх перфектних форм дієслова.

Ключові слова: перфект, дієслово, час, вид, переклад, кореляція, контрастивний аналіз, дискурс, міжкультурна комунікація.

Михайленко В. В. Перевод перфектной формы глагола в межкультурной коммуникации

Аннотация. В центре внимания данной статьи – функционально-семантические особенности английских перфектных глагольных форм в дискурсе и их соответствия в тексте русского перевода. Синтез дискурсивного и корпусного типов анализа определил корреляцию грамматических, лексических и контекстуальных средств выражения прошлого действия, связанного с моментом речи. Контрастный анализ исходного и целевого текстов выявил регулярные и нерегулярные формулы передачи настоящих перфектных форм.

Ключевые слова: перфект, глагол, время, аспект, перевод, корреляция, контрастивный анализ, дискурс, межкультурная коммуникация.