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Methods of Modality Transmission within Intercultural Communication

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Abstract

The main idea of the research is the specifics of modality expression in English compared with the Russian language. Therefore, this analysis helps us not only to understand the nature of modality, but also the ways of its expression. For this purpose, the study benefits from comparative analysis methodology. The analysis of similarities and differences in the category of modality in English and Russian languages, translation techniques of modal meanings are investigated in the article. The article contributes to the expansion and deepening of modality linguistic concepts. Materials of the article can be useful in practice of teaching English, especially on the practical classes in translation and in further development of theoretical issues of language modality.

Keywords: Linguistics, Education, Category of modality, Bilingual translation, Student, Modal values, Adequacy of translation, Intercultural communication.

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Introduction

The end of the 20th century in linguistics was marked by the increasing interest in language not as symbolic, but as an anthropocentric system. A lot of different areas appeared in science, such as: cognitive linguistics, cultural linguistics, ethno psycholinguistics, psycholinguistics, intercultural communication. All listed linguistic directions set one task – to reveal those mental and psychological processes which resulted in human speech. These mental processes are inseparably linked with modality.

At the beginning of the 19th century German scientist Wilhelm von Humboldt wrote that language, like all human activities is permeated with feelings and emotions that a person always expresses in language with the help of linguistic resources (Vinogradov, 1960). This phenomenon is called the speaker's relationship to reality or modal relations. In any language there is a category of modality which conveys these relationships with different linguistic means. The category of modality is complicated and has a contradictory interpretation in linguistics. According to Ya. I. Retsker, there is no other lexical and grammatical category in English which would present more difficulties in translation process, than modality (2007). Despite the existence of a long tradition in modality research and a huge amount of literature devoted to it, it is still an important issue of study in modern linguistics, because its nature is not clearly defined yet, its subtypes are not revealed, the relationship between logical modality and linguistic modality is not always clearly explained and the volume of this category is not firmly established. There is no standard definition of the modality that puts it in one line with other basic concepts of linguistics – words, sentences, text - and therefore can't be considered as its distinctive feature.

Interest in the category of modality especially increased in the last decades when functional approach was strongly approved in linguistics, the consecutive attention to a human factor as to an important extralinguistic component of the language phenomena was shown. From the point of view of functional approach, the modality is understood as a broad semantic category, structural and substantial volume, the functional hierarchy of values which are determined by the semantic double-point sentence, namely its nominative and communicative aspects. And the unequal nature of the relationship to reality is defined by individual, social and professional experience of the speaker (Nemets, 1989).

It should be noted that the globalization of the economy and integration processes in the culture, scientific and technical fields have led to an increase of multilingual contacts (Gali &

Shakhnina, 2015). Dynamically changing society also implies the readiness of an individual to the processes of intercultural and international communication (Fahrutdinova & Marsheva, 2015). Communication becomes complicated with imperfection of language skills, differences in the perception of its units. The way we see, hear, perceive the world around us and interpret it is predetermined mainly with language habits of the society (Muller et al, 2003). This problem is particularly acute when there is an expression of modality, because this category bears relation to the action and reality and is the expresser and supporter of people's mentality. Using modality, we express our attitude towards the committed act, react to current situation or predetermine it. It is the program and the management of mental activity of an individual and the means of impressions analysis and their synthesis (Muller et al, 2003). Because of subjective perception people speaking foreign language either distort the modality peculiar to a foreign language, or introduce a modality specific to the native language in the statement that may cause misunderstanding. Both types of distortion generally occur simultaneously. The basic modal duplication of values within a language or the numerical disparity of the ratio of the modal values in different languages can often be the reason of it. The task of studying the modality is seen in, firstly, to identify the entire set of senses of the subjective nature, the expression of which is necessary and possible in the sentence; secondly, to define their opposition to each other and the interaction; and thirdly, to outline the range of existence methods of each subjective meanings in the sentence, taking into account their interaction (Shmeleva, 1984).

Methodological framework

The methodology of research approaches allows to broaden and deepen linguistic ideas about the category of modality in general. The leading method to this problem study is the methodology of context and comparative analysis, translation methods that allow considering peculiarities of the modality translation constructions in Russian and English languages.

Results

Developed analysis of the category of modality reveals the characteristics and structure of English and Russian languages. The modality turned out to be one of the essential aspects of achieving adequate translation. Between the extreme poles – affirmation and negation there are located possibility and impossibility, probability and improbability, assumption and doubt. The sphere of communication in any language is limited not only by the exchange of information using simple sentences and asking questions. In spoken and written statements

we are faced with the necessity of expressing requests, offers, orders, desires, assumptions and intentions.

The category of modality is one of the reasons of frequent mistakes in the translation into English. From the translator's point of view, the modality can be divided into two types (Belyaeva, 1992):

- simple (temporary) – whether the action (fact) takes place now or will be;
- complicated, which is expressed with modal verbs: can, may, must (should, ought to), need to be, etc., and also moods (subjunctive and conditional).

In translating English modal verbs, Russian equivalent does not always have the modality:

He can speak and write English – Он говорит и пишет по-английски.

There are no exact conformity of modal verbs in Russian language. For example, the verb 'should' can be translated in accordance with the context:

Those who think that the government **should (1)** take up the slack in private spending point out that there is an abundance of growth-enhancing projects – a point that **should (2)** be obvious to anyone familiar with America's fraying infrastructure... Lastly, extending unemployment insurance in the wake of a once-in-a-half-century crisis **should be (3)** a no-brainer (Why America Isn't Working, 2010a).

In this extract the modal verb *should* is used in the following meanings:

- 1) obligation;
- 2) confidence; assurance;
- 3) probability; supposition.

In the process of translation they are differentiated in the following way:

Те, кто думает, что правительству **следует (1)** устранить слабинку в отношении затрат на частный сектор, указывают на то, что существует изобилие увеличивающих экономический рост проектов – довод, который **должен (2)** быть очевиден для любого, знакомого с изношенной инфраструктурой Америки... И последнее, увеличение страховки по безработице после кризиса, который случается только раз за полстолетия, **было бы (3)** глупостью (Why America Isn't Working, 2010b).

The English modal verb *can/could* is used in statements which are absent in Russian. For example,

- 1) I can speak English. – Я говорю по-английски.
- 2) No one was interested in options other than Putin's plan, as people could see on the TV and feel in their pockets what a good job he was doing (Russia under pressure, 2008a). – Никто не интересовался какими-то иными вариантами, кроме плана Путина, поскольку люди видели по телевизору и ощущали своим карманом, насколько хорошо он работает (Russia under pressure, 2008b).

Most of English modal verbs have many meanings, for example, 'must' expresses the obligation, probability, 'may' – opportunity, permission, 'can' – emphasizes physical and mental capacities. When the modal verb is in the Perfect Indefinitive form, its polysemantic character is lost: 'must have been' – supposes certainty, confidence, 'may have been' – opportunity. The Perfect Infinitive indicates the previous action (after *must*, *may*, *can't*) or action which didn't happen (after *should*, *ought to*, *could*, *to be to*):

They must have discussed it yesterday – Должно быть, они обсудили это вчера.

In the process of modality transmission from English into Russian, in the latter the following words can be used: *ведь*, *хоть*, *мол*, *де*, *дежкать*, *разве* etc., but they are differently expressed in English:

«**But you *must have seen*** her every morning when you did the housekeeping» (Maugham, 2000). – **А *разве* вы не видели** ее каждое утро, когда отдавали распоряжения по хозяйству? (Maugham, 1985).

Introductory modal words: *certainly* – конечно, *apparently* – очевидно, *presumably* – возможно, *allegedly* – будто бы, якобы, *of course*, *surely*, *in fact* – на самом деле, более того, словом; *indeed* – более того, поистине, фактически; *reportedly* – якобы, по сообщениям, and also structures: *it is reported*, *it is presumed*, *surely* – несомненно, верно and similar can express various shades of the modal relations that it is also necessary to consider in translation. For example:

Lastly, the number of significant scientific discoveries made each year can be estimated, and through such an estimate must, of course, be somewhat arbitrary. – И, наконец, количество ежегодных значительных научных открытий может быть подсчитано, однако такой подсчет, само собой разумеется, будет несколько произвольным (Belyaeva, 1987).

The native language is the first source of difficulties in the foreign speech. To speak English properly, you need to know the culture of the British, and to know it, you must be fluent in their language. In the modern interactive world it is necessary to increase contacts between countries in order to understand each other.

In etiquette of the British there are more conventions than in Russian. At the end of business and friendly talks the British often offer: We must get together. The modal verb 'must' shouldn't mislead the Russian-speakers. It is the phrase which has many meanings, for example, I'd love to see you soon, I hope we meet again soon. 'Must' has the same effect here, as in the expression 'You must come visit us soon'. These courtesies don't oblige.

In Russian language, there are many ways to make a polite request. It is a subjunctive mood with a particle 'would', modal verbs, diminutive suffixes, and also the word 'please'; wish or request are also often expressed by means of negative constructions. In English such keywords are 'please' or 'thank you' which occur in English speech much more often than in Russian where there is a subjunctive mood with negation. In English language these grammatical forms are rare or never used. In English, when we express a question-request the word 'please' is used:

Please, give me that pen.

Could you pass me some bread, please?

Polite forms such as 'I'd like', for example, in the sentence: I'd like to have green tea, spoken with proper intonation, may not require the word 'please', but the constructions with 'will' definitely require it.

Questions-addresses present the greatest difficulty in communication in English. In Russian language, they are used in the negative form, and the answers in English are expressed with positive structures. Russian polite requests and questions: «не могли бы вы?», «вас не затруднит?» are transferred into English: Could you please / kindly, Could / May I bother / trouble you to (do smth.).

To get a piece of advice the British use the usual expression: 'I'd like to ask for your advice on this...', or more often, 'I'd like to know your opinion'. In this meaning they differ from advice structures in Russia, where people look for advice not only because they are interested in another's opinion, but also to find a partner in reaching a decision; in Britain, after listening to the advice of many people, the person is able to do as he considers it necessary. Advice is usually given by the English in the subjunctive mood, expressed in the form of opportunities:

If I were you, Perhaps you might, Why don't you try to...

Advice, which in Russian is expressed through negation, in English often has a positive form: Не сделать ли вам...

Correctly: What if you were to / What about your doing... Perhaps you might / do / think of / about / consider doing...

Thus, as Russian language on typological system belongs to synthetic languages and English language is analytical, contextually appropriate forms of their realization are not always adequately translated into the opposite language. Nevertheless, in each case of the contextual use of modal constructions in Russian it is possible to find an equivalent in English.

Discussion

The previous researches conducted by I.R. Galperin, E. Sapir, D. Lyons, M. Swan are devoted to the consideration and analysis of aspects of the modality in general. I.R. Galperin noted that modern English grammar "in general avoid giving the definition to this category, obviously, considering it as a reality, and are limited only with indication of forms in which is the modality" (1980). E. Sapir wrote that: "Modality, roughly speaking, the grammatical category (or related concepts), which are traditionally known as mood, under "modalities" I do not mean a factual statement, let us say, the negation or uncertainty, but rather their formal expression" (Swan, 1995). In this definition the modality is identified with a verb mood. Features of a modality transmission in translation are considered in Ya.I. Retsker's (2007), Zh.P. Viney's and Zh. Darbelnet's (1995) works. On the nature of modality D. Lyons singled out two classes of sentences: imperative (expresses a command or an order) and interrogative (expressing additional modal signs on certain expectations of the speaker). D. Lyons also finds various ways of grammatical expression of the speaker relation to the contents in various languages. M. Swan specifies that in English grammar such meaning as volition, opportunity or necessity are considered as modal words. So verbs that express these values are called modal auxiliaries" (Swan, 1995).

However, the analysis of the scientific works devoted to a problem of the modality translation has a theoretical character, the novelty of this research is expressed in the comparative analysis of the category of modality in modern communication.

Conclusion

Thus, it was concluded that the text translation can't be considered correct if the modality which is present in the original text, isn't reflected in it. In each case of the contextual use of

modal structures in Russian it is possible to find an equivalent in English. The comparative analysis of modal relations transference in English and Russian languages was carried out. The modality in translation process is one of the essential aspects of translation adequacy achievement and without its correct interpretation communication can be complicated. The desire to be polite, requirement to emphasize the special relation lift one of the main problems of intercultural communication – a problem of adequacy of perception and interpretation of the modality of the foreign-language statement. In many cases the choice of modality transfer method is mediated by standards of the translating language. English modal verbs do not have a direct correspondence in Russian, so the translator can choose an appropriate word or words that match the context.

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