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BILATERAL CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF UKRAINIAN AND ENGLISH VERB SYSTEMS

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The paper focuses on the role the contrastive linguistics has got in modern philology paradigm. It presents the author's view on the bilateral contrastive study applying to identifying isomorphic and allomorphic features of the Ukrainian and English verbs. The bilateral approach to contrastive analysis is implied as a key point of the research. The crucial stage of bilateral analysis deals with the choice of a tertium comparationis as an objective common basis reflecting similarities and differences in verbal semantics and grammar. The author gives proofs of using the verbal category "process" as a tertium comparationis for contrastive study of Ukrainian and English verbs. The choice of this basis of comparison is predominantly caused by the universal nature of the category "process". This category is considered to have a great scientific potential for complicated contrastive study of the verbs in the sphere of their semantic and syntagmatic paradigms.

Key words: Contrastive linguistics, Bilateral contrastive analysis, Ukrainian and English verb systems, tertium comparationis, Universal verbal category "process".

Іваницька Н. Б. Білатеральне контрастивне дослідження української та англійської дієслівних систем / Вінницький торговельно-економічний інститут КНТЕУ, Україна, г. Вінниця.

У статті здійснено спробу обґрунтування методологічних засад зіставного мовознавства як окремої дисципліни в сучасній

філологічній парадигми. Представлено авторський погляд на двобічні зіставні дослідження, які проводять для виявлення ізоморфних та аломорфних рис українських і англійських дієслів. Основоположним для об'єктивного міжмовного зіставлення виступає вибір *tertium comparationis* як об'єктивної, узагальненої основи, реалізація якої в кожній мовній системі має семантико-граматичні особливості. Наведено докази щодо пріоритетності обрання дієслівної категорії "процесуальність" як *tertium comparationis* для зіставного дослідження українських та англійських дієслів. Визначено доцільність вибору цієї основи зіставлення через універсальний характер категорії "процесуальність". Доведено, що ця категорія володіє потужним науковим потенціалом для комплексного зіставлення дієслів у сфері їхніх семантичних і синтагматичних парадигм.

Ключові слова: зіставне мовознавство, двобічний зіставний аналіз, системи українських та англійських дієслів, *tertium comparationis*, універсальна дієслівна категорія "процесуальність".

Иваницкая Н. Б. Билатеральное исследование украинской и английской глагольных систем / Винницкий торгово-экономический институт КНТЕУ, Украина, г. Винница.

В статье предпринята попытка обоснования методологических основ сопоставительного языкознания как отдельной дисциплины в современной филологической парадигме. Представлен авторский взгляд на двусторонние сопоставительные исследования, которые проводят для выявления изоморфных и алломорфных черт украинских и английских глаголов. Важным этапом в объективном межъязыковом сопоставлении выступает выбор *tertium comparationis* как объективной, обобщенной основы, реализация которой в каждой языковой системе имеет семантико-грамматические особенности. Приведены доказательства

приоритетности избрания глагольной категории "процессуальность" как tertium comparationis для сопоставительного исследования украинских и английских глаголов. Определена целесообразность выбора этой основы сопоставления, базирующаяся на универсальном характере категории "процессуальность". Доказано, что эта категория обладает мощным научным потенциалом для комплексного сопоставления глаголов в сфере их семантических и синтагматических парадигм.

Ключевые слова: сопоставительное языкознание, двусторонний сопоставительный анализ, системы украинских и английских глаголов, tertium comparationis, универсальная глагольная категория "процессуальность".

Introduction

Contemporary linguistics regards the verb as a universal language phenomenon. The verb is believed to have peculiar lexical and grammatical semantics, syntactic capacity, functional specificity, as well as systemic and interlevel connections and relations with other linguistic units [1; 2]. The verb has got the top priority over all other parts of speech [3]; its significance is true for the verb-oriented syntax theories [4]. But it has been the centre of attention for the contemporary linguists. The verb is considered to be sufficiently researched and simultaneously controversial in comparative viewpoint, particularly in the Ukrainian-English parallel.

For the present, the theoretical interpretation of the Ukrainian and English verbal systems is based on well-grounded understanding the verb as one of the most complicated and capacious grammatical categories. Comparative studies are supposed to be very efficient to find the sense of the universality of verbal nature, as well as to understand its uniqueness in the language area, and to transfer this knowledge to explication common and particularly specific in the language worldview. The scientific

powerfulness of contrastive studies seems to be indisputable in the context of social globalization covering all life spheres not leaving languages in their theoretical (metalinguistic) interpretation and practical (speech) interaction [5; 6]. Modern comparative linguistics is considered to be a multilingual study formed by different fields (comparative-historical, typological, universal linguistics). The Eastern scholars recognise that contrastive linguistics (as a part of comparative studies) can be autonomous [6]. The importance of identifying semantic universals and conceptual distinctions in languages have been mentioned by well-known linguists [7; 8]. Nowadays, linguists have been discussing the appropriate approaches and methods to compare linguistic units and phenomena [6; 8; 9].

Results and Discussion

Identifying the contrastive aspect of comparative linguistics, it is necessary to point out that cross-lingual studies have great advantages over other approaches to language comparison. They allow (1) avoiding a special focus on genetic factors, (2) building a linguistic model, abstracted from the closed / open distinctive features list and the list of languages that are important for characterology and typology. At the same time, such “simplicity” of contrastive analysis actually appears quite complex procedure demanding careful realisation that ensures identifying not only the common (isomorphic, identical) and divergent (specific, allomorphic) characteristics of the selected object in each compared languages. It also helps to reveal the structural laws of the language systems functioning, peculiarities of cross-language links, often not having been found in the intralanguage analysis. Contrastive study also provides a basis for further typological generalizations.

In this regard, it is extremely significant that Ukrainian and English verbal systems, having been relatively profound researched within

individual components and aspects, are open for complex lexical-semantic and grammar contrastive study.

There are fundamental guidelines for cross-language Ukrainian and English verbal systems comparison: (1) considering current tendencies in intralanguage theoretical interpretation of verbs with the necessity in many cases to “adapt” them to the chosen research methodology, (2) ensuring the principle of consistency being important for cross-language comparison, (3) applying more efficient (we believe) two-way (bilateral) approach to comparison [6, p. 81-85; 10], the value of which is that compared language get equal status, so you can avoid “insulting language A to language B image” [11, p. 104] and avoid the research of other language(s) and culture(s) in the light of native language [12, p. 48], (4) the substantiated choice of the *tertium comparationis* (basis of comparison) relevant to the research object.

To compare language items, it is necessary to answer at least two problematic questions: (1) what do we focus on to compare? (2) How language units can be compared? The settling the first problem is based on the *a priori* consistent statement about possibility to compare any languages as well as variability of compared units. The capacity of languages to be compared is caused by human cognition capacity which is not in contrast to the idea of cultural specificity, social and daily activities of people as factors of worldview formation.

The answer to the key question “How language units can be compared?” is more complicated. The scholars have been discussing on the priority of unilateral (one-way) or bilateral (two-way) comparison, and thereafter the choice of the *tertium comparationis* (basis of comparison). The alternative of the approach to comparison is caused by scholars theory, the subject matter, expected research results and so on.

One can hardly affirm that the unilateral approach is ineffective for language teaching, translation theory, and other fields of applied linguistics. However, applying unilateral approach to the theoretical linguistics faces a number of obstacles that lead to getting less effective results of the study.

The priority now is given to the bilateral approach of cross-language comparison. Many linguists have the opinion that the results of bilateral comparison are slightly relative because of epistemological basis of the selected scientific paradigm and some variability and relativity of the chosen tertium compationis. The basic of comparison is defined as “an objective, not belonging to any of the compared languages unit” [10, p. 144], or “a system of characteristics and rules that exists regardless of individual languages, and is taken hypothetically-heuristically” [6, p. 173], or “unified language as the totality of abstracted definitions that can explain the structure of all languages regardless of their typological differences” [13, p. 40], or “common basis reflecting distinctive features” [8, p. 15] and others.

However, most scholars are fully confident that a tertium comparationis should be an initial basis for comparison. Being general and universal, it can serve like a specific standard, an indicator of the adequacy of the structural language characteristics. The tertium comparationis is viewed as a certain scientific artefact aiming at designing systems of identities (a kind of equivalent phenomena). It is a starting point of comparison. This system of equivalents may have a different structure, and a different degree of generalization and abstraction depending on the specific features of compared languages or linguistic units and the purpose of comparison.

The propriety of a tertium comparationis choice is determined by (1) the linguistic nature of compared units, (2) their position in language system, (3) the degree of their intralanguage theoretical explications, (4) the aspects of contrastive study, (5) specific tasks of comparison, (6) the

methodological background, (7) the typological features of compared languages.

Comparing the verb systems in the Ukrainian and English languages, it is necessary to proceed from the understanding the language as the primary means of communication, closely related to social production and cognitive activities of people, as a sign system which indirectly and naturally expresses the ratio between the elements of reality and their reflections in the minds. In this case, the tertium comparationis can be defined as a generalized linguistic verbal (semantic and grammatical) category “process”. This category is an “umbrella notion” (a term that provides a super-set of grouping of related semantic and grammatical aspects) expressing complicated categorical characteristics of the compared Ukrainian and English verbs.

It should be emphasized that categorization is one of the most fundamental concepts of human consciousness. It is the theoretical reflection of human world perception reflected by words meanings. Linguistic category is supposed to be the most general concept resulting from abstraction of objects and their distinctive characteristics.

The most scholars hold views that cognition is always asymmetric, people tend to perceive “some fragments of reality as if through a magnifying glass, and others - as if through inverted binoculars” [14, p. 23]. Categorical meanings and formed on their basis categories are considered to be meanings having been perceived through a magnifying glass because of their importance for the formation of a national language worldview. The system and structure of grammatical categories is the central link in the language structure reflecting the specific relationship between language, thinking, and typological features of individual languages and language groups.

It is significant that modern linguistics qualifies category as “one of the central key notion in language theory (along with the form, meaning and function)” [6, p. 13]. The phenomenon of categorization covers all levels of the language system within which there are various categories. The basis of category is formed by different in degree of abstraction characteristics known as categorical. The range of linguistic categories in modern linguistics is rather complicated. Studying the categorical notions in cross-language comparison is seemed to be promising. The generalized, abstract nature of categorical feature, being in most cases universal, can serve as a reliable basis for comparison, ensuring effective bilateral approach to linguistic units. This is confirmed by a number of works on comparative linguistics conceptually oriented to revealing language means of expression related to specific linguistic categories.

Providing the verbal category “process” with the status of *tertium comparationis*, we qualify it (like the majority of other verbal categories) as a generalized abstract model being expressed through two aspects: semantic and grammatical. Each of them is the total of categorical (semantic) variants represented by sufficient set of distinctive features. Semantic and grammatical aspects of the category “process” are sufficiently completed. It is obviously that intersection and interconnection of certain principles, related to logical semantics, onomasiology, cognitive science and functional grammar, give reason for identifying the category “process” as functional-semantic. This approach allows forming the functional-semantic field not only by verbal lexemes, but multiword nominations of the action and states that correspond to the conception of functional-semantic fields. Traditionally, they are suggested to be an alternative representation of language system to compare with traditional level language model.

There is no doubt that cognitive, pragmatic (communicative-functional) approach to the classification of parts of speech seemed to be a good

ground for scientific research in the field of language nomination and functionalism, especially in terms of modern scientific research in the fields of psycholinguistics and ethnolinguistics. However, the traditional approach to understanding the category “process” as a concept covering only one-word nominations is concerned to have more grounds for bilateral cross-language comparison.

Such identifying the verbal category “process” in the context of the proposed comparative study allows to take into consideration a number of methodological components of the chosen approach to the cross-language analysis, including: 1) putting the single-level linguistic units into the field of study, (2) the principle of systematic contrastive researches, 3) using of previous results of intralanguage study of the processing as a system-building phenomenon, 4) bilateral approach to comparison of subject matter, 5) focusing on the complex verb cross-language study directed to lexical-semantic paradigms, and formal syntax syntagmatics.

The wide structure of the category “process” makes possible to distinguish some kind of mini-tertium comparationis relevant to the identifying similarities and differences in paradigmatic and syntagmatic Ukrainian and English verbal system presentation.

Lexical-semantic paradigms of the Ukrainian and English verbal system is represented by the most significant for semantic component of the category “process” fragments being defined as subcategories: “processing action”, “processing state”, and “processing relation”. These subcategories have ranking structure. They are formed by a number of microcategories like “action-sound”, “action-movement”, “action-professional activity”, “state- psychological state”, “state- physiological state” etc.

These microcategories are considered to build the correlated lexical-semantical fields. The central and peripheral parts of these fields, being

filled with the Ukrainian and English verbs, reflect something common and specific in the processing reality perception. The gaps in the cross-language fields are caused by two factors: extra-linguistic and, not least, interlanguage structural laws.

To determine syntagmatical correlative and lacunary relations of Ukrainian and English verbal systems, it is possible to investigate the following aspects: (1) syntagmatic stratification of the verbs as notional lexemes, (2) formalization of syntagmatics, and (3) clause-generating potential of the Ukrainian and English verbs related to the identified microcategories.

Conclusion

To sum up, multilanguage studies rely on the using contrastive method aimed at identifying language differences regardless of their genitive and typological groups. The scholars distinguish unilateral and bilateral approaches to the contrastive analysis. The bilateral approach is supposed to be more efficient. The crucial stage of bilateral contrastive analysis is considered as the choice of a tertium comparationis -non-linguistic concept having been formulated deductively by metalanguage.

To compare Ukrainian and English verb systems, the category “process” is suggested to be a tertium comparationis in cross-language research. This category is believed to be theoretically well-grounded in terms of linguistic ontology, not only resulted from naive constructs. The category “process” is qualified as generalized abstract model having integrative nature and two-side representation - lexical semantics of verbs, and set of grammatical (morphological, derivational, syntactic) categories.

Semantic and grammatical aspects of the category “process” in each of the compared languages are revealed by the unique, peculiar to each of the language combinations that act as an indissoluble unity, and together form the lingual nature of the mentioned category. The category “process” serves

some kind of “umbrella” abstraction towards understanding the categorical systems of the verb as a universal language unit.

The category “process”, having been appointed tertium comparationis in cross-language comparative analysis of Ukrainian and English verbal systems, is considered to have the following basic distinctive features: (1) proper intralanguage theoretical explication, (2) non-linguistic, abstract, generalized nature of the concept that is different from the subject matter, (3) the capacity to bind the lexical- semantic and syntactic-formal aspects of the study, (4) ensuring the comparability of the studied Ukrainian and English verbal systems.

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