



PATTERNS OF GRAMMATICAL CHANGE IN THE ENGLISH-RUSSIAN TRANSLATION OF “THEY CAME TO BAGHDAD” BY AGATHA CHRISTIE

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Annotation. This article explores the complexities of grammatical restructuring in literary translation, focusing on Agatha Christie’s novel **They Came to Baghdad**. By examining various grammatical transformations—such as replacements of parts of speech, tense shifts, and syntactic restructuring—the study demonstrates how these techniques are essential for achieving naturalness in the target language. The analysis highlights that translation is a creative process of bridging linguistic differences to preserve the authorial intent and narrative flow.

Key words: grammatical transformation, literary translation, replacement, syntactic restructuring, language norms.

Аннотация. В данной статье рассматриваются сложности грамматической реструктуризации в художественном переводе на примере романа Агаты Кристи «Они приехали в Багдад». Анализируя различные грамматические трансформации — такие как замена частей речи, изменение временных форм и синтаксическая переработка, — исследование показывает, что эти техники необходимы для достижения естественности звучания текста на целевом языке. Работа подчеркивает, что перевод — это творческий процесс преодоления лингвистических различий для сохранения авторского замысла и динамики повествования.

Ключевые слова: грамматическая трансформация, художественный перевод, замена, синтаксическая переработка, языковые нормы.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqola badiiy tarjimadagi grammatik qayta qurish murakkabliklarini Agata Kristining «Bag‘dodga kelishdi» romani misolida tahlil qiladi. Grammatik transformatsiyalarning turli usullari — so‘z turkumlarini

almashtirish, zamon shakllarini o'zgartirish va sintaktik qayta ishlash — orqali matnning tarjima tilida tabiiy yangrashi uchun ularning o'rni ochib beriladi. Tadqiqot tarjima nafaqat lingvistik farqlarni yengish, balki muallif niyati va hikoya dinamikasini saqlab qolishga qaratilgan ijodiy jarayon ekanligini ta'kidlaydi.

Kalit so'zlar: grammatik transformatsiya, badiiy tarjima, almashtirish, sintaktik qayta ishlash, til normalari.

Introduction.

The process of translation is far more than a mere substitution of words between a Source Language (SL) and a Target Language (TL). It is a complex act of cross-cultural mediation that requires a deep understanding of grammatical, stylistic, and lexical norms. As a translator, one serves as a vital bridge between two cultures, ensuring that the original intent is preserved while adapting to the unique structural requirements of the target language. The translator's task is to navigate the tension between "source-text fidelity" and "target-text naturalness." According to Lawrence Venuti's theory of *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995), there is often a push for "fluency" in translation—a strategy that attempts to make the translation read as if it were an original work.[1] This requires a profound command of grammatical shifting. Whether dealing with the morphological richness of Russian or the analytical rigidity of English language.

Modern translation studies have identified that translated texts often exhibit systematic differences from original texts. Mona Baker (1993, 1996) famously defined this through the concept of "universals of translation," including simplification, explicitation, and normalization. These tendencies reveal how translators instinctively adjust texts to make them more accessible to the target audience.[2;3]

However, the nature of this adjustment changes drastically when moving from written translation to simultaneous interpreting. Daniel Gile's "Effort Model" (2009) provides an indispensable framework here, arguing that interpreters work under

extreme time pressure and cognitive strain. They must balance listening, memory retrieval, production, and coordination in real-time.[4] This cognitive load explains why interpretations often feature hesitation markers, shorter sentences, and a more verbal, spontaneous style compared to written translations.

They Came to Baghdad (1951) is quite different from Agatha Christie's usual "locked-room" detective stories. Instead of a classic puzzle, she experiments with a fast-paced international spy adventure. The main character, Victoria Jones, is a fresh change for the author. She is independent, smart, and makes her own decisions, which makes her much more relatable than many of Christie's earlier female leads. The story is full of excitement, travel, and conspiracies, so it moves along very quickly.

What is most interesting is that Christie used specific tropes in this book that later became famous in the James Bond series. For example, the scene where a character checks their hotel room to see if someone has been snooping is exactly the same as a famous scene in Ian Fleming's *Casino Royale*, even though Christie wrote it two years before Fleming published his first spy novel.

In translation process we need to use grammatical transformation as each language has their own structure and grammatical rules. If a translator will only use or translate literally the result translated text may sound unnatural and reader could not catch the meaning. This is really important when translating such great books like "They came to Baghdad" as they share different culture, customs and mostly related to one period in the history.

In most cases, a translator relies on grammatical changes or transformations to adapt sentence structures, syntactic rules and part of speech from the source language to fit the natural flow and grammar of target language. They are used to insure some really crucial parts of target language and aim to: preserve right meaning- ensuring that the deep core message remains rightly even when we can not find right exact equivalent; to fit target norms- making sure the translated text sounds

idiomatically stylistically appropriate-because sometimes in each language use grammatical features to make stylistically vivid atmosphere in books especially in fiction or adventures. So this is also essential because native speakers have to understand and catch every written idea; furthermore, translators may change the whole sentence from simple into complex or from turning an English passive construction into an active in Russian just to make sure that translation is done in the way that it would be understandable to the reader.

Moreover, we have various types of grammatical transformations which are used in translating the novel by Agatha Christie:

1. Replacement of Word Forms- is one of the common transformations which used by translators and it is often used to bridge the gap between English and Russian tense relations and structures.[6] For example: What we know is that in the past two years, many of the best scientists have disappeared.[5]- Мы знаем, что за последние два года многие из лучших учёных исчезли. As we see here in translation process, translator used **прошедшее время** just past tense without Present perfect because in Russian grammar it will sound natural as present perfect tense does not exist. Or in other example: Victoria could not help thinking that Dr. Rathbone was fooling himself.[5]- Виктория не могла отделаться от мысли, что доктор Рэтбоун обманывает себя. Here, the Past Continuous **was fooling** is replaced by the Russian present tense **обманывает**. This transformation is necessary to maintain the aspect of simultaneity; because the thought is concurrent with the observation, the Russian present tense captures the immediacy of the character's realization far better than a past tense would.

2. Replacement of Sentence Structure Elements and syntactic Structure- These transformations are often referred to as "syntactic restructuring." [6]They involve changing the syntactic functions of words, such as shifting from passive to active voice or condensing idiomatic phrases. As an example: I'll make sure he gets in touch as soon as he's here.[5]- Я прослежу, чтобы он связался с вами, как только

приедет. The original contains an idiomatic structure ("make sure") The translator replaces this with a single verb predicate (*прослежу*), which is a common syntactic restructuring. This transformation ensures that the target text sounds idiomatic rather than like a translation of dictionary definitions.

Or another example: Machines and people from all over the world are being sent there.[5]- This is a classic passive-to-active voice transformation. In English, the passive is a convenient way to hide who did the action. However, in Russian, active constructions are often more natural in a narrative flow. By making the "people" the subject, the translator achieves a clearer and more dynamic communicative perspective.

3. Part of Speech Replacement - replacing parts of speech is an effective way to avoid literalism, especially when the target language lacks a corresponding structure or when a different part of speech provides better stylistic impact. This transformation is also really popular because it aims natural sounding of the text. For instance, Well, perhaps. Can I see dr Rathbone, please? The young men smiled in a tired way. We do not interrupt. I tell you all about everything. Then write your name.[5]- Ну, пожалуй. Можно мне доктора Рэтбоуна, пожалуйста? Молодые люди устало улыбнулись. Мы не будем перебивать. Я вам всё расскажу. А потом напишите своё имя.

The English phrase "in a tired way" (adverbial phrase) is replaced by the Russian adverb (*устало*). This adheres to the principle of using concise linguistic units to express manner. Attempting to translate "in a tired way" literally would result in a wordy and unnatural Russian sentence. This transformation effectively compacts the meaning and aligns with the typical structure of Russian descriptive prose.

As demonstrated, these transformations allow the translator to respect the "functional sentence perspective." By replacing word forms, shifting sentence elements, and converting parts of speech, the translator ensures that Christie's They

Came to Baghdad retains its suspenseful and natural tone in Russian. These techniques prove that, as noted in translation theory, the "pure" form of a single transformation is rare; usually, they are combined to ensure the target text sounds as if it were an original work.

In conclusion, translating a book is never just about swapping one language for another. As we've seen with Agatha Christie's *They Came to Baghdad*, the translator has to be a bit of an architect. You can't just translate word-for-word because every language has its own "logic"-the way it builds sentences, handles time, or describes actions.

By using grammatical transformations-like changing the tense, flipping a passive sentence to an active one, or turning a noun into a verb-the translator makes sure the story doesn't just make sense, but actually feels like a natural story in Russian. It's all about keeping the original spirit, suspense, and pace of the book alive for a new audience. At the end of the day, a great translation is one where the reader forgets they are reading a translation at all, and just gets lost in the story.

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