

ANALYSIS OF TRANSLATION OF THE NON-FINITE FORM OF THE ENGLISH VERB

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Annotation: *This article analyzes the translation of non-finite forms of English verbs into several languages, emphasizing their structural and functional characteristics. The research examines the translation of infinitives, gerunds, and participles into target languages, assessing the difficulties translators encounter in maintaining semantic, grammatical, and stylistic subtleties. The essay elucidates ways for addressing disparities in language systems and underscores the significance of context in attaining precise and natural translations through examples and comparative study. The results enhance comprehension of verb forms in translation studies and offer pragmatic suggestions for translators.*

Keywords: *Non-finite verbs, infinitive, gerund, participle, translation studies, linguistic structures, comparative analysis, verb form translation, translation problems, English grammar.*

Introduction. A notable characteristic of English is its propensity for nominally expressed predications. This phenomena has been seen and thoroughly examined by numerous linguists, such as G. O. Curme in his 1931 grammar publication. The topic has been extensively discussed by Czech linguists, primarily V. Mathesius, followed by Vachek, Dušková, and others. Vachek asserts in his work that “Mathesius repeatedly emphasized the significant role of a finite verb in effective Czech style and highlighted that this style is characteristically resistant to intricate nominal constructions, which are relatively prevalent in proficient English style” [1, pp. 63]. This issue signifies a substantial structural disparity, possibly resulting in complications during translations between the two languages. The issue is exacerbated by the variations in the methods employed to adhere to the functional sentence perspective. The linear arrangement of a clause is relative and language-specific, whereas the interpretative arrangement is absolute; alterations in thematic structure can modify the meaning of a clause or impede its interpretation. The inherent interest in disparities and the desire to observe how current perceptions of the issue manifest among prospective English educators led to a study initiative funded by the Internal Grant of TUL. While the teacher training program does not primarily emphasize translation, it ought to furnish students with at least some understanding of translation challenges, as it is sometimes presumed that an individual possessing a certification in

a foreign language is inherently qualified as a translator. Translation necessitates talents that extend much beyond ordinary proficiency or fluency in two languages. Nonetheless, foreign language educators will likely be required to perform this in their future professions. A mandatory optional course is provided, which was utilized to collect data for the relevant study.

1 The Aims of the Study

The study aimed to achieve two objectives. The first objective was to examine the challenges, if any, that students have while translating non-finite verb formulations. It is presumed, based on the aforementioned arguments, that students will err while translating the examined structures. It is essential to identify which non-finite verb phrases pose the greatest challenges for students. Upon establishment, it becomes feasible to investigate the origins of these errors, which was the secondary objective of the research project. Only then can we enhance pupils' understanding of issues that may subsequently aid in preventing errors. This study did not endeavor to do a quality analysis of the translations executed by the students, which would have necessitated a significantly more intricate approach. To achieve the objectives, it was essential to define the subject matter of the study, specifically the nature of non-finite verb phrases and their classification. Non-finite verb phrases do not syntactically operate as verbs; instead, they typically possess nominal characteristics, as previously noted, serving as a way of condensing (nominalisation), which is characteristic of English. Their non-finite nature stems from the absence of grammatical agreement with a subject and the lack of tense marking. Concerning the classification of non-finite verb phrases, numerous grammar reference texts either neglect the topic entirely or address it inconsistently, typically scattered throughout various sections of the book. For our objectives, we will employ the classification by Leech and Svartvik [2], which will be modified and expanded in accordance with the studies by Quirk et al. [3] and Dušková [4]. Leech and Svartvik [2, pp. 413] categorize non-finite verb phrases into "the infinitive, -ing participle, and -ed participle" without further elaboration on the subject. Quirk et al. [3, pp. 237-239] similarly imply the same set of non-finite phrases, elaborating on significant characteristics of non-finite verb phrases, which encompass their ability to manifest in both active and passive forms. With the exception of the –ed participle, they can convey a formal distinction between perfective/nonperfective and progressive/nonprogressive aspects. Dušková [4, pp. 268-271] employs this comprehensive classification, distinguishing between two types of –ing forms: the gerund, which consistently operates as a noun, and the present participle. She designates the –ed form as the "past participle." In this research, we shall delineate the following non-finite verb forms: the infinitive, gerund, present participle, and past participle, along with their appropriate forms: passive, progressive, or perfect.

2 Methods and procedures applied

In accordance with the aforementioned objectives, the study was required to be conducted in multiple phases. Initially, it was essential to identify the regions of difficulty, followed by their classification for analytical purposes. Analysis results enabled the identification of error sources, allowing for the proposal of accurate translations and corrective measures.

2.1 Determining the areas of difficulties

The initial step has been completed with the selection of the topic: the emphasis on non-finite verb phrases. This decision was predicated on the previously articulated significant distinctions between the two languages and the observation that, aside from the infinitive, non-finite verb phrases are not actively employed in contemporary Czech. It is also expected that pupils may encounter difficulties in additional domains. The selection of these areas was informed by professional sources [5, 6, 7, and 8] as well as our substantial pedagogical experience. These challenges primarily arise from the distinct characteristics of the two languages, with Czech being synthetic and English analytic, which is further manifested in the divergent selection of methods to adhere to the principles of Functional Sentence Perspective (FSP). They specifically encompass errors in word order, selection of voice (active or passive), the application of articles, and existential constructions.

2.1.1 Preparation of the test translation

The essential objective of this phase was the selection of the text for translation. Initially, it was necessary to incorporate a sufficient number of non-finite verb phrases. Conversely, it was essential for the text to refrain from imposing more explicit demands on the students. We employed Nord's model of text analysis in translation for this aim. Nord [9] delineates two categories of factors pertinent to text analysis for translation: external factors, which encompass sender, intention, recipient, medium, time, motive, and text function; and internal factors, which include subject matter, content, presupposition, non-verbal elements, lexis, sentence structure, and suprasegmental features. The objective was to choose a text that would challenge only one feature (sentence structure) while being neutral in all other aspects, allowing pupils to concentrate on the specific structures without being hindered by extraneous challenges. A selection of texts from BBC News was made based on the aforementioned criteria, incorporating the specified non-finite structures along with several other constructions that commonly present challenges, such as existential structures and raised subjects. The collection comprised three pieces published by BBC News in November 2014, totaling seven standard pages. Students were not expected to translate everything; only the sentences with the relevant grammatical elements were highlighted and translated. The remaining text supplied background and coherence. The pupils were consequently instructed to translate roughly 3 standard pages of text.

2.1.2 Administration of the test translation

The participants in this study were enrolled in a mandatory elective course titled “Translation Seminar.” Due to the considerable length of the text for translation, students voluntarily prepared it at home and submitted their translations by email. It was analyzed, evaluated, and subsequently discussed in detail during class. The class discussion encompassed the exploration of potential reasons of the encountered problems and a collaborative effort in producing an accurate translation. A total of 23 students engaged in the study.

3 The analysis of the test translation

As previously stated, non-finite verb phrases were categorized according to their form rather than their function in a specific sentence context. Their function was, however, examined throughout the analysis of the translations, and the causes of the errors were investigated. Owing to spatial constraints, it was unfeasible to incorporate all students' translations for every relevant structure. Only the samples exhibiting the maximum information value were selected, as displayed in the following format: Initially, the source sentence is displayed in bold font, followed by examples of student translations that emphasize the translation of the non-finite verb phrase. The entire item concludes with a proposed accurate translation, developed during a "feedback and discussion" lesson with the students, presented in bold letters and enclosed in brackets.

3.1 Infinitive

The text contained 11 present infinitives: 6 serving an adverbial function (infinitives of purpose) and 5 serving a nominal function (as objects), together with 5 perfect forms also in a nominal function. Neither passive nor progressive forms were incorporated. Overall, infinitive forms presented the fewest challenges; the sole concern was the incorrect selection of temporal reference, namely the usage of the present tense instead of the past tense in Czech.

3.2 Gerund

The text contained seven present forms of the gerund, two in the passive voice, and three in perfect forms. All gerund forms served as objects. Students appeared to have minimal difficulties when the non-finite noun clause functioning as an object was not preceded by a preposition (He claimed having seen him before.). The presence of a preposition appeared to be fairly evident, as it definitely conveyed the relationship, mostly temporal in nature. Issues arose in the structures where the preposition conveyed a spectrum of potential linkages. The scenario became increasingly complex for the pupils if a noun corresponding to the meaning conveyed by a gerund form was absent in Czech.

3.3 Participle forms

The text contained 12 active present participle forms and 11 past participle forms. When serving as adjectives in an attributive position (pertaining to the

increasing number of Europeans engaged in combat in Syria), they posed no issues. They, however, created issues when employed in their actual "participle" (clause condensing) role. The task was again less challenging, similar to the gerund, when the relationship between clauses was evident, primarily in terms of adverbial functions of time and condition. Students encountered the greatest difficulty with the structure when no explicit subordination or coordination was indicated. When participles serve as clause condensers, they frequently operate as adverbials, and for the students, this association may be so strong that none of them recognizes that, in this case, a relationship of coordination is most appropriate. The prevalence of nonfinite clauses in insubordinate rather than coordinate relationships within sentences is corroborated by Carter and McCarthy [10, pp. 546], who assert that "Non-finite clauses can normally only be subordinate, and typically combine with finite ones in sentences." Quirk [3] and Dušková [4] also delineate their application in the context of coordinating. This relationship should thus be a focal point for advanced English students, as it may be unfamiliar to them. A comparable issue is exemplified by the following case. The majority of students endeavored to preserve the source structure to the greatest extent possible, either by explicitly articulating a relationship that was nonexistent (*skupinu povstalců, jak se připravují k boji*) or by employing literal translation with participles, which are now considered archaic and thus unnatural (*narovnaní v řadách, sjednocení do řad...*). A dedicated debate may be allocated to the translation of the term "shakily," which, however, would be beyond the parameters of this work.

3.4 Other problems

The study largely concentrated on the translation of non-finite verb phrases, but it also examined the aforementioned structural errors. The primary issue in this area appeared to be noncompliance with the FSP. Students often replicated the word order and clause sequence, unaware that this practice contravened the inherent pattern of communicative dynamism, which progresses from known material to new insights. The final issue addressed in this article is a construction featuring a raising-to-subject verb alongside a non-finite subordinate phrase in the infinitive form. Despite the prior discussion of the infinitive at the article's outset, it has been determined to address this specific structure alone, as it exemplifies a unique application of the infinitive. Raising generally denotes a phenomenon in which a certain verb phrase possesses a dependant that does not semantically align with it, but is instead semantically associated with an embedding verb phrase. Czech raising is not utilized, thus pupils could not employ word-for-word translation and needed to understand this issue to address it effectively, a capability possessed by only a few of them. The initial two examples demonstrate that the students either failed to comprehend the concept or altered it in their translations without realizing it. The subsequent two instances demonstrate the selection of an incorrect structure that yet conveys the intended idea.

Conclusion

This paper aims to provide insight into the translation skill of in-service teacher trainees at the Department of English of FP TUL regarding non-finite verb phrases. The selection of the study's focus is motivated by the contrast between English and Czech, characterized by the predominantly nominal nature of English, which exhibits a notably higher degree of condensation and a complex system of non-finite verb phrases, in contrast to the verbal nature of Czech. The students' proficiency was evaluated using a meticulously crafted translation test. The hypothesis that non-finite verb phrases create challenges in translating from English to Czech has been validated, albeit not to the anticipated degree. The students encountered minimal issues with the temporal reference of perfect forms in non-finite verb phrases and appeared to face few challenges when these phrases were employed in nominal or adjectival roles, provided a corresponding noun or adjective was available in Czech. They effectively addressed participle forms employed as clause condensers where the relationship to the remainder of the sentence was distinctly subordinate and adverbial, or when the condensed structure served as a relative clause. The students had considerable challenges when a non-finite phrase functioning as a condenser required translation through coordination, or when its relationship to the remainder of the sentence was ambiguous or unclear. Generally, the primary source of significant challenges was outside of non-finite structures. The primary issue was the noncompliance with the FSP due to inadequate understanding of article functions and the use and purpose of the passive voice. Another issue students had with included forms with a raising-to-subject verb. Insights into the areas that students struggle with are invaluable, as they enable teachers to concentrate on these challenges and collaboratively address them with the students. These collaborative analyses and hunts for appropriate solutions are essential sources of advancement and enhancement.

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