Translation of German and English Human-Denoting Compound Nouns into Russian

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Abstract

The authors provide a comparative analysis of human-denoting compound nouns in the word-building systems of the German, English and Russian languages. The analysis of the given group of words is carried out on the onomasiological basis pursuing the goal of revealing general and specific tendencies in the development of the given word-building categories of kindred and non-kindred languages. The qualitative and quantitative analysis of the given phenomena is aimed at revealing the general tendencies in the word-building system of human-denoting compound nouns (especially names of a man as a doer of an action) in the German, English and Russian languages, and also the regularities of their translation in the contrastive aspect. Among the word-building types the authors have singled out general and specific word-building meanings compound nouns of the given languages possess. Having analyzed the word-building meanings the authors single out two groups of compound human-denoting nouns (compound nouns based on action, compound nouns based on an attribute) and carry out their structural and semantic analysis to reveal the regularities of word-building of complex lexical units and their further translation. The authors also provide a table summarizing the received results.

1. Introduction

A whole set of translation regularities regarding the corresponding word-building transformations has been revealed as the result of comparative-contrastive analysis of the word-building systems of the Russian, German and English languages. This very fact arouses interest from the point of view of revealing the characteristic features which vividly manifest themselves in translations of compound nouns from German and English into the Russian language, since in many cases the direct structural correspondences haven’t been observed.

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Significant elements of the language as the phenomena of lexis, grammar or word-building find themselves in particular kind of relations which render the peculiarities of identical objects and situations. Thus, the problem of similarities and differences of the linguistic manifestation of the non-linguistic phenomena is closely connected with interlingual equivalence (Gladrov & Rayevskiy, 1994). Essential divergence in the ways rendering the lexical meanings by means of word-building constructions in non-kindred languages both in qualitative and quantitative aspects implies certain difficulties in carrying out a complex comparative analysis of the given relations. Taking into account this fact we have come to the decision to analyze the translation transformations of certain types and relations rendered by compound nouns the translation of which has been included into lexicographical literature.

In the framework of the given paper the essence of interlingual equivalence or translation adequacy of a word structure is of some interest in terms of interlingual comparison. The translation adequacy in this case is understood as the correspondence between the linguistic phenomena of the original language and the structures of the translation language: forms, content, structure of the original text, etc. We might consider as equivalent the kind of the translation which corresponds to the original at all linguistic levels and brings to solve the informational-communicational tasks which the original text implies. In such a case the translation is seen as the middle ground between the rendered content and the corresponding linguistic construction. To achieve the equivalent translation one might use the translation transformations viewed as restructurized original text elements aiming at achieving the translation equivalence.

In some cases, when it is not possible to render some shades of meaning and stylistic peculiarities as precisely as possible one might use interlingual compensations representing elements at different linguistic levels. Since in the retrospective of researches carried out on compound words (Asher, 1993) the positions of different linguistic schools and the characteristic word-building peculiarities of European linguistic system have been investigated, we are going to make a research of certain word-building types of human-denoting compound words and the ways of their rendering in compared languages.

2. Experimental observations on the ways of translation of human-denoting compound nouns

In the center of attention there lie the structural and semantic characteristics of compound words and transformations which help to achieve adequacy when doing the translation of such structures in the compared languages.

The word-building types human-denoting compounds in the compared languages are represented by the model \(X(X)'= N\), with \(X\) representing the stem of any part of speech and \(N\) representing a noun which has a common word-building meaning of a person. We should also mention that in the Russian language these are noun clusters while in the German and English languages these structures are presented by attributive compounds with the second component denoting a person (more information about noun clusters in (Markov, 1981; Nikolayev, 2009). The order of the components in the Russian noun cluster is flexible and the formation of such type of structures hasn’t been finished yet. The Russian National Corpus clearly illustrates this phenomenon (http://ruscorpora.ru), which is based on the similarity between Russian semantic noun clusters and appositions. English and German human-denoting compound nouns are represented by typical attributive compounds which is fortified by contextual illustrations provided by COSMAS II (http://cosmas2.ids-mannheim.de) and British National Corpus (http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk).

Further on we are going to provide the analysis of the Russian translation equivalents for human-denoting compound nouns of German and English in accordance with the onomasiological subgroups singled out while making an analysis of German, English and Russian compound nouns. Since the translation transformations are strongly influenced by semantic, grammatical and word-building peculiarities of the corresponding language (Kussmaul, 1989) we will analyze the peculiar features of the corresponding structures in the compared languages.

2.1 Processual onomasiological attribute

While analyzing human-denoting compound nouns we ascertained that a big number of Russian lexical items are deprived of processual onomasiological attribute, which is compensated by the presence of linguistic structures like “relative adjective+noun”: Leiharbeiter (Germ.) – ‘временный рабочий’ (Rus.) (a temporary); Scheinasylant
The first component of the given compound nouns of the German language is formed from the corresponding verbs performs the role of an attribute towards the second component, the stem of which is formed by the noun.

We might observe that the structures rendering the processual attribute in English and German are similar; “relative adjective+noun” and a single noun: Leiharbeiter (Germ.) – a temporary (Engl.) - временный рабочий (Rus.); Scheinasyllant (Germ.) – a bogus refugee (Engl.) - мнимый (кажущийся) беженец (Rus.).

In the case when the processual meaning is rendered by the verbal component with the meaning of an abstract process the German human-denoting compound nouns are translated with the help of Russian syntactic structures specifying the semantics of a human-denoting compound with the help of periphrasis: “the person who pretends to be a refugee”, “not a true refugee”

2.2 The purposive onomasiological attribute, rendered in the German and English languages by the attributive compound noun “noun + noun”, also doesn’t have any analogies in the Russian language: Karrierefrau (Germ.) – career woman (Engl.) - ‘женщина, занимающаяся карьерой или имеющая большие успехи в профессиональной деятельности’, ‘женщина, целью которой является достижение высокого положения в общественной иерархии или продвижение по карьерной лестнице’ (Rus.) (‘a woman doing her career or having big achievements in the professional sphere’, ‘a woman whose goal is to achieve a high position in social hierarchy or a career progression”).

The attributive compounds of the German and English languages consisting of two noun stems often serve the equivalents to the Russian word-groups. The above-mentioned compound nouns can also be translated into the Russian language with the help of semantic noun clusters: Beratungsingenieur (Germ.) – инженер-консультант (Rus.) (consulting engineer); Rettungsschwimmer (Germ.) - пловец-спасатель (Rus.) (swimmer and rescuer (Engl.)), master-builder (Engl.) – строитель-подрядчик (Rus.), fighter-pilot (Engl.) – летчик-истребитель (Rus.).

2.3 Causative onomasiological attribute.

Among Russian human-denoting compound nouns there haven’t been noticed any regular word-building means to render the causative onomasiological attribute, which is a characteristic feature of the German language, and which is to a lesser degree characteristic of English. Such compound nouns have the Russian correspondences in the form of expanded and non-expanded word-groups and periphrases: Unfalltote (Germ.) – ‘кто-либо, погибший в результате несчастного случая’ (Rus.), лицо, лишившееся жизни в результате катастрофы’ (somebody fallen a victim of a casualty’); Verkehrstote (Germ.) – ‘лицо, пострадавшее в результате дорожной катастрофы (и умершее от полученных травм) (Rus.), ’жертва дорожно-транспортного происшествия’ (somebody who has been hurt in an accident’), disaster victim (Engl.) – ‘жертва стихийного бедствия’ (Rus.) (‘a victim of a disaster’), air-crash victim (Engl.) – ‘жертва авиакатастрофы’ (Rus.) (‘a victim of a plane-crash’), admass (Engl.) – ‘жертва рекламы’ (Rus.) (‘a victim of advertisement’), ‘люди, попадающие под влияние рекламы’ (Rus.) (‘people influenced by advertising’).

2.4 Differentiation of the mode and manner of action, reflected in word-building types of German human-denoting compound nouns, is also carried out with the help of a periphrasis: Triebtueter (Germ.) – ‘человек, совершивший преступление под влиянием какого-либо сильного фактора (полового инстинкта, например)’ (Rus.) (‘a person committing a crime under the influence of some factor’ (ex.sexual desire)); Einzelkaufmann (Germ.)– лицо, занимающееся торговой деятельностью в одиночку’ (Rus.) (‘somebody doing trade single-handedly’); Gelegenheitsarbeiter (Germ.) – ‘рабочий, жующий на случайный заработок, не имеющий постоянной работы’ (Rus.) (‘a worker living on occasional income, not having a permanent job’).

Compound nouns of such kind haven’t been singled out in the English language.

It’s noteworthy that the attributes of professional/non-professional and temporary/permanent job in the German language are expressed by the components of the attributive compounds: Amateur (Germ.) – ‘любитель’ (Rus.); Berufs-, Profi– (Germ.) – ‘профессионал’ (Rus.); -fachmann, -spezialist – ‘специалист, профессионал’ (Rus.). In the English language such attributes are also rendered with the help of components of attributive compounds:
amateur (Engl.) – ‘любитель’ (Rus.) (amateur can be a noun as well as an adjective) and adjectives: professional (Engl.) – ‘профессионаял’ (Rus.).

The word-building means for rendering such relations between components can be identified as the Russian semantic noun clusters, compound nouns and word-groups, including the structures like “attributive adjective+noun”: Amateurfilm eller (Germ.) – ‘кинематографист-любитель’ (Rus.) (‘amateur cinematographer’); Tennisprofi (Germ.) – ‘теннисист-профессионал’ (Rus.) (‘professional tennis-player’); Berufsmusiker (Germ.) – professional musician – ‘художник-любитель’ (Rus.), amateur astronomer (Engl.) – любитель-астроном (Rus.), car-enthusiast (Engl.) – автолюбитель (Rus.), film buff (Engl.) – любитель кино (Rus.)

Russian semantic noun clusters denoting a person and not having structural translation equivalents, in their turn, are rendered in the German language with the help of different kinds of attributive compounds (see above: тенницист-профессионал и Tennisprofi (Germ.), автолюбитель и car-enthusiast (Engl.)). Unfortunately, German and English copulative human-denoting compounds which to a higher degree correspond to the Russian noun clusters from the semantic and syntactic point of view are too insignificant and small in number to make any conclusions.

2.5 Manageable object and the manager

In the English, German and Russian languages there is a word-building structure Noun+Noun meaning “a manageable object and the manager”, the second component of which is represented by a verbal suffixal noun: Buroleiter (Germ.) – ‘руководитель бюро’ (Rus.), company management (Engl.) – ‘руководство компании’ (Rus.), baby minder/baby sitter (Engl.) – ‘приходящая няня, останавливающая детей за плату’ (Rus.), and transliteration as a way of translation is also coming into usage ‘бэбиситтер’ (Rus.).

The attribute of an object in German words is mainly expressed by nouns, while in the Russian language it can be rendered by a clipped form of an adjective: авторруководитель – ‘человек, руководящий автотранспортным предприятием’ (Rus.) (‘a head of a motor transport enterprise’). The first component of the word авторруководитель is expressed by a clipped form of an adjective. From the point of view of word-building the shortened formations in combination with suffixation like биоритмолог (‘a specialist in biorhythmology’) correspond to the German compounds formed by the model “Noun+Noun” on the basis of the rendered meaning. Within the framework of such word-building type they represent intercapable word-building elements.

The main word-building models in this onomasiological subgroup in the Russian and German languages are quite homogeneous: in both cases we deal with the combination of semi-affixes and nouns. It’s worthy to note that there is some difference in the stylistic characteristics of such formations – the compound words of the German language, as a rule, have an additional deflated feature.

Among the word-building meanings singled out above there have been observed international words denoting a group of people doing the same kind of activity which were borrowed from different languages but have undergone almost no assimilation in the target language (neither in the German, nor English or Russian): Drogenmafia (Germ.) – drug mafia (Engl.) – наркокартель (Rus.).

2.6 Semantic transformations

The comparison of human-denoting nouns built with the help of semantic transformation of particular components constituting compound words is of a special interest to linguists.

Such word-building homonyms of the German language are formed by the following model “a complex naming unit of a phenomena, object, animal” → «human-denoting noun»: Hemmschuh (Germ.) - ‘stop block’ (Engl.) - ‘тормозной башмак, тормоз’ (Rus.) → Hemmschuh (Germ.) - ‘а person who thwarts progress’ (Engl.) - ‘тормозной башмак, тормоз, человек, тормозящий какие-либо изменения’ (Rus.); Schiesshudenfigur (Germ.) - ‘clay pigeon’ (Engl.) - ‘фигура в будке для стрельбы или тире, по которой стреляют’ (Rus.) → Schiesshudenfigur (Germ.) - ‘cокшот’ (Engl.) - ‘человек, над которым все смеются, которого никто не воспринимает всерьез’ (Rus.) etc. In the English language we can observe similar parallels: sunshine (‘sun rays, sunlight, happiness, cheerfulness’) (Engl.) - Sonnenscheines (Germ.) – солнце (Rus.) → Sunshine (darling, dear) –
mein Liebe (Germ.) – солнце мое (Rus.), oil painting (‘a painting done in oil colours’) (Engl.) – Ölgemälde (Germ.) - ‘картина, написанная маслом’ (Rus.) → oil painting (‘a very beautiful person’) (Engl.) – bildschöner Mann (Germ.) - ‘писанный красавец’ (Rus.). As we can see, Russian equivalents to the German and English compound words are presented in the form of word groups, including the structures “relative adjective + noun” and a periphrasis.

It is interesting to note that in the Russian language an example of transferred meaning is the word ‘интерптичка’ (‘interchick’) (‘about a woman of the street who charges money for her services’), which is formed by merging of an apocopic stem and a noun denoting a woman (птичка > “птичка”). A distinguishing feature of this compound is the usage of the apocopic form of the word интернациональный – интер- (international – inter-), performing the role of a semi-affix like авто-, кино- as the first component of a compound word, and the second component птичка, as has been said before, is used to denote a woman in a figurative sense. We might assume that the given word was formed on the analogy with the famous Russian movie “Intergirl” (“Interdevochka”), which has become a common noun to denote a woman of the street.

To render the corresponding word-building and lexical meaning in the compared languages one uses interlingual equivalents in the form of structural correspondences or such intercapable variants which allow to reach the most adequate translation of the compound human-denoting nouns and which are characteristic of the word-building system of the given language.

In the Russian language this subgroup is represented by structurally homogeneous units: the first component is the apocopic form of an adjective, and the second one is the lexical unit undergoing semantic changes. At this, the first component predetermines the field of functioning for the second (base) component. The most number of such formations are referred to nonce formations and have some additional colouring. As a rule, the functioning of such compound words is connected the colloquial speech.

Below are given the marked kinds of the correspondences within the onomasiological subgroups of the German and English language. The examples of human-denoting compound nouns are collected in table 1 “Word-building meanings of human-denoting compound nouns and interlingual means of their translation”. The search for ways of the translation of German and English human-denoting compound nouns into the Russian language is seriously complicated in the text.

Thus, German and English compound words may have the Russian equivalent in the form of
- a compound word;
- a simplex;
- analogous lexical item in the form of a word-group: «adjective + noun»;
- substantivized participle;
- periphrasis on the basis of the semantic transformation «a person, who… ».

Table 1. «Word-building meanings of human-denoting compound nouns and interlingual means of their translation. German and English languages» (HDCN - human-denoting compound noun)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Onomasiological subgroup</th>
<th>Original structure</th>
<th>Russian equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HDCN by the action and object subjected to it (concrete or abstract object)</td>
<td>Steuerzahler – taxpayer</td>
<td>налогоплательщик</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDCN by the action and its result (the direct or indirect result)</td>
<td>Tierpfleger – animal lover</td>
<td>человек, заботящийся о животных или ухаживающий за ними</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDCN by the action and the place of the action</td>
<td>Panikmacher - scaremonger</td>
<td>паникер</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDCN by the action and the attribute of the action</td>
<td>Computerhersteller – computer manufacturer Afrikareisende</td>
<td>производитель компьютеров путешествующий по Африке</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDCN by the action and the sphere of the action: field of science, technology,</td>
<td>Gerichtsvorsitzende – court chairman Wahrsager - soothsayer</td>
<td>председатель в суде ясновидец, предсказатель</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krebsforscher - cancer researcher</td>
<td>исследователь в области</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Conclusions

So, among the translation equivalents there were singled out the following ones:
- a compound word;
- a simplex;
- analogous lexical item in the form of a word-group: «adjective + noun»;
- substantivized participle;
- periphrasis on the basis of the semantic transformation «a person, who... ».

To render the content of German and English compound nouns in most cases it is not always possible to use a compound word (ex., der Fernsehliebling (Germ.) – matinee idol (Engl.) - ‘любимец зрителей’ (Rus.), der Filmautor (Germ.) – scriptwriter (Engl.) - ‘автор фильма, сценарист’ (Rus.)). The translation of the word der Fernsehkoch (Germ.) – TV chef (Engl.) as ‘телефовар’ (Rus.) should necessarily be accompanied by the description in the form of a periphrasis ‘повар, приготовляющий пищу на глазах у зрителей в телестудии’ (Rus.) (‘a chef cooking food in front of a live audience in a TV studio’). German and English attributive compound words have as an equivalent a Russian compound word the first component of which is a semi-affix.

So, interlingual correspondences may be intercapable and interlevel phenomena of the linguistic system in general. German and English human-denoting compound nouns are most often translated as descriptions or attributive word groups. The identification of the corresponding Russian structures is seriously complicated. Equivalent translation is characteristic only for noun clusters and semi-affixed structures having similar meanings in the compared languages (ex.: Filmproduzent (Germ.) – filmmaker (Engl.) – кинопроизводитель (Rus.), Filmregisseur (Germ.) – movie director (Engl.) – кинорежиссер (Rus.)). Besides, human-denoting compound nouns may be translated with the help of different variants of compound nouns depending on the context and linguistic peculiarities of the target language.

References


