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Translating Deontic Modality: Semantic and Formal Convergences and Discrepancies

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Abstract. Modality is a challenging phenomenon for translators since languages have modality systems that differ in terms of the degree of grammaticalization. The article aims to analyze and summarize strategies used in translating deontic modal operators from Russian into English. Based on the theory of modality developed within Functional Linguistics, the article is intended to analyze the deontic modal forms in the presidential addresses delivered in 2015–2022 in an attempt to explore formal and semantic convergences and discrepancies between the Russian and English parallel texts. To achieve this purpose, the research seeks to identify modal operators used to express deontic meanings in Russian and English, to reveal semantic and formal similarities and discrepancies between the deontic modal forms in the parallel texts, and to summarize translation strategies employed to render the Russian deontic modal forms into English. The novelty of the research is due to scrutinizing discrepancies between deontic modal forms in the Russian and English texts and analyzing translation choices. The article contributes to the research on deontic modal operators that need to be thoroughly investigated in Russian and English due to semantic and syntactic differences among the Germanic and Slavic languages. Three types of translation strategies were identified: semantic and grammatical equivalence, grammatical transformation, semantic and grammatical transformation. The results can be used in training translators and preparing manuals for translation courses.

Keywords: modal meanings, presidential addresses, modal auxiliaries, translation strategies

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Деонтическая модальность: стратегии перевода

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Аннотация. Перевод модальных операторов является нелегкой переводческой задачей, поскольку категория модальности в различных языках отличается разной степенью грамматикализации. В настоящей статье ставится цель выявить стратегии передачи деонтических модальных операторов с русского языка на английский. На основе теории модальности, разработанной в рамках функциональной лингвистики, в работе анализируются средства деонтической модальности в русскоязычных и англоязычных текстах обращений российского президента к народу (2015–2022 гг.) с целью установления формальных и семантических сходств и различий. Для достижения поставленной цели выявляются лексические единицы, используемые для выражения деонтических значений в русском и английском текстах, семантические и формальные сходства и различия, а также стратегии, используемые для передачи модальных операторов с русского языка на английский. Статья вносит вклад в исследование деонтической модальности, средства реализации которой различаются в славянских и германских языках и требуют детального анализа с целью исключения ошибок при переводе текстов. Новизна исследования связана с выявлением различий в выражении деонтической модальности в русском и английском текстах и анализе переводческих решений. Были установлены три переводческие стратегии, используемые при переводе средств деонтической модальности в текстах президентских обращений на английский язык: формально-семантическая эквивалентность; грамматическая трансформация; семантико-грамматическая трансформация. Результаты анализа могут быть использованы в процессе подготовки переводчиков и разработке практикумов п переводу.

Ключевые слова: модальные значения, обращение президента, модальные глаголы, стратегии перевода

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Introduction

All world languages differ in their grammatical structures, semantics and other parameters, but modality exists in all the languages being a universal functional semantic category that expresses different attitudes of the utterance to reality and different types of subjective qualifications. Modality that “refers to the relationship between the uttered proposition and the world” [1. P. 75] is a linguistic feature of any text, being a source of considerable difficulty for translators due to the subtle and complex nature of the meanings modal items convey [2].

Although the category of modality has attracted attention of researchers for more than two hundred years, issues on its nature, functions and features remain open. The scientific paradigm establishes those research areas that are in demand in a certain period in the development of scientific thought. In this regard translation studies have opened up new perspectives for the study of the modal component of the text.

Modality is a challenging phenomenon for translators from Slavic into Germanic languages since they have modality systems that differ in terms of the degree of grammaticalization. While in the Germanic languages, the key modal operators are modal verbs, in most Slavic languages, including Russian, these are predicates, adjectives, adverbs, particles, notional verbs, etc. What is more, the English modal verbs as well modal verbs in other Germanic languages convey several modal meanings which are difficult to distinguish (e.g., *shall* serves a wide repertoire of semantic functions: from imposing prohibitions and obligations to granting rights).

Deontic modality has received little attention in the literature. While recent works have begun to fill this gap for Germanic languages [3–6], there is still little research on deontic modality in other languages, including Russian.

In addition, to the best of my knowledge, semantic and formal discrepancies between the deontic modal operators in Russian and other languages, including English, have been rarely treated in linguistic literature which makes the study of this issue relevant. In addition, modal meanings are one of the key ones for humans, and play a crucial role within the system of modality which requires investigation into modality both from intralinguistic and interlinguistic perspectives.

Thus, the aim of this article is to carry out a contrastive analysis of deontic modal forms in the parallel texts of presidential addresses delivered in 2015–2022 in order to identify similarities and discrepancies between them in terms of deontic modality realizations. Presidential addresses to the nation are of particular importance for the study of deontic modality as being aimed at a behavioral code of prohibitions and requirements. The presidential speeches, including those delivered on crucial events contain a wide repertoire of obligations, prohibitions, requests, with a varying degree of deontic modality.

Thus, **the research purpose** is to carry out a contrastive analysis of deontic modal forms in the parallel texts of presidential addresses delivered in 2015–2022 in order to identify similarities and discrepancies between them in terms of deontic modality realizations. Presidential addresses to the nation are of particular importance for the study of deontic modality as being aimed at a behavioral code of prohibitions and requirements. The presidential speeches, including those delivered on crucial events contain a wide repertoire of obligations, prohibitions, requests, with a varying degree of deontic modality.

To achieve the purpose set in the present study, the research seeks answers to the following questions: (1) What lexical items are used to express deontic

modal meanings in Russian and English? (2) Are there any semantic and formal similarities and discrepancies between the deontic modal forms in the parallel texts? (3) What translation strategies are employed to render Russian deontic modal forms into English?

A contrastive analysis of the Russian and English parallel texts will provide evidence of difficulties in mediating between two languages.

Materials and research methods

For the purpose of the present study, six transcripts of presidential addresses to the nation delivered in 2015–2022 were derived from the website *www.kremlin.ru*. The *www.kremlin.ru* is the official website of the Russian President launched in January 2000. The website publishes all content issued by the Presidential Press Service in Russian and English. As K. Malmkjær put it, parallel corpora provide a contrastive view of characteristics of translated texts, based on which target language norms can be revealed and summarized [33].

As the study aims to compare how deontic modality is realized linguistically in the parallel texts, the methods of quantitative and contrastive analysis were applied. The transcripts of the presidential emergency addresses were downloaded from the *kremlin.ru* website, converted to the Microsoft DOCS format and analyzed to calculate the linguistic means used to realize deontic modality. Through the contrastive study between the Russian and English modal systems, an attempt was made to build up an analytical framework and find similarities and discrepancies between the modal forms in the parallel texts.

All deontic statements found in the Russian and English texts were divided into three groups by the type of deontic modal functions, i.e. (1) indicating permission (deontic possibility), (2) indicating obligation (deontic necessity), and (3) indicating prohibition. Examples of each type of deontic modal functions are presented below.

Literature review

Deontic modality as a universal linguistic phenomenon

In systemic functional linguistics, language is considered to be a semantic system serving three functions such as ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The interpersonal function deals with the use of language in order to maintain the relation with people, to influence their behavior, or to express own views. This function is realized through the mood and modality systems.

Modality belongs to the key linguistic categories and expresses different types of relations between the utterance and reality established by the speaker. It is “the manner in which the meaning of a clause is qualified so as to reflect the speaker´s judgment of the likelihood of the proposition it expresses being true” [7. P. 219]. Modality can be also considered as an explicit means of expressing speaker’s point of view towards the propositional content.

Lyons has distinguished between three types of modality: epistemic (modes of knowing), deontic (modes of obligation), and alethic (modes of truth) [8]. Deontic modality means that the speaker "intervene(s) in the speech event by laying obligations or giving permission" [9. P. 382]. As Lyons put it, "when we impose upon someone the obligation to perform or to refrain from performing a particular act, we are clearly not describing either his present or future performance of that act. There is a sense in which the sentence we utter can be said to express a proposition; but it is not a proposition which describes the act itself. What it describes is the state-of-affairs that will obtain if the act in question is performed" [8. P. 823].

Deontic modality is not limited to obligation. Deontic-modified utterances also carry permission "related to possibility in same way that obligation is related to necessity" [8. P. 832]. Obligation and permission are considered to be the links of one chain, since permission for one person means obligation for another one. The semantics of permission is therefore traditionally included in the field of deontics. Permission does not exclude obligation, but the latter implies permission [10. P. 182]. Prototypically, deontic possibility or permission is granted by an authority — norms or a speaker [11]. Along with the restrictions imposed by rules (obligation), there are restrictions imposed for utility reasons considered in terms of positive consequences of an action for the speaker: *Of course, we cannot change past events, but we* ***must*** *at least admit them openly and honestly.* The action is required for society (social utility) and forms the core of deontic modality [12].

According to Sytko, the deontic-modified utterance contains two planes — propositional and deontic [13; 14]. The first one is a linguistic embodiment of a situation and an action that is required, forbidden, or allowed to perform. The action is always determined by the situation. A certain reason arising in the situation requires a transformation of the potential into the actual. This reason is a source that limits the area of possible worlds to one world. The modal source can be considered a driving force for creating a different situation. It determines the type of propositional operator (mandatory, forbidden or allowed). Deontic modality can be therefore determined by external or internal factors — normative and situational circumstances with a varying degree of intensity of imposed obligations: universal (laws, social rules) or individual (conventional rules, modal duty, needs, desires, intentions, etc.) norms.

Deontic modal operators in English and Russian

Deontic modal operators in English. The key exponents of modality are a set of modal forms that create modal systems [15]. In the Germanic languages, the key members of this system are modal verbs that are used to make assessments, to interpret what we are speaking about, or to express our attitudes [16]. In English, these modal forms include eight central modal verbs (*should, can, could, may, might, shall, should, must*). Alongside the central modals are periphrastic expressions capable of conveying modal meanings (e.g., *have to*, *have the right to, be to, will*

be able to, it is necessary, it is allowed, it is prohibited). Below is an analysis of the semantics of the modal forms used in the English texts under study to convey the deontic modal meanings.

Should. As Palmer put it, the modal verb *should* is "essentially an independent modal, with no past time reference, yet it is formally the past tense of shall and for must and ought to" [15. P. 13]. Its key use is to express tentative inference and obligation which means that the speaker expresses his/her attitude towards a certain statement. The obligation conveyed by *should* is weak and polite. It is often associated with moral rather than legal necessity. Its semantics involves an idea of a certain correct line of development of events or behavior distinguished from other possible ones. The negative form (*should not*) is used to "negate the proposition, just as *mustn't* does — there is a necessity not to act" [15. P. 125].

May. The modal verb *may* is used to ask for permission, to give permission, to confer a power, and to impose prohibition (*may* + *not*). The modal verb *may* expresses both deontic and epistemic types of possibility. The latter is considered to be primary and the most common sense of *may* [17–19].

Can. The modal verb expresses permission, ability, or possibility [20–21]. The meanings of permission and possibility are shared with the modal *may.* In Palmer's theory the modal verb *can* is categorized in terms of deontic possibility as indicating permission [22].

Must. When using *must* to express obligation or deontic necessity, "the speaker expresses his/her authority to advocate certain behavior of someone else or his/her own." [7. P. 224–225]. In contrast to should, *must* conveys strong obligation, requirement and prohibition (*must* + *not*). Strong obligation is manifested when "the consequences are more severe if the obligation is not fulfilled" [23. P. 242]. Categorical imperatives are characterized by the lack of alternative behavior. Prohibitions can be formulated as a duty not to perform certain actions. The statement is built by the formula: *Subject S in situation A is prohibited from performing action P.*

The periphrastic verbal forms *have to* and *will be able to* are semantically close to the modal verbs *must* and *can* and perform suppletive functions in relation to them.

Have to. The modal verbs *must* and *have to* are usually described in terms of internal vs. external obligation. While the verb *must* defines the exigency of doing something, the periphrastics *have to* conveys the meaning of an obligation imposed by someone else. The type of modality it conveys depends only on objective reality and is not connected with mental representations of the speaker.

Be able to. This periphrastics is used to describe abilities and possibilities whenever *can* is used. This marker is always employed in tenses where *can* has no corresponding form. The semantics of this operator is similar to the one of *can*: ability which implies deontic possibility.

Other lexical items used as deontic modal operators in English are not frequent due to the well-developed system of modal verbs typical of the Germanic languages.

Among them are adjectives (e.g., *necessary, obligatory, advisable*), nouns (e.g., *obligation, necessity*), participles (e.g., *allowed, permitted*, *recommended, required, obliged*), and notional verbs (e.g., *require, recommend, allow, permit, recommend*).

Deontic modal operators in Russian. Russian lacks the developed morphological system of modal verbs. According to Sytko, the issue of prototypical deontic modality means in Russian remains debatable [13]. However, the predicates such as *nado/nuzhno* 'necessary', *mozhno* 'allowed', *nelzya, zapreshcheno* 'not allowed' and *dolzhen* 'obliged' are mentioned by all researchers of deontic modality in Russian.

Vinogradov, who formulated the modality theory for the Russian language, claimed that in Russian there is a special repertoire of predicative expressions that convey modal assessments and form combinations of denominatives with infinitives: *pora* 'it's time', *dolzhno* 'you are obliged', *nadobno* 'it is necessary', *suzhdeno* 'it is prescribed' [24].

The most commonly used deontic predicates *nado* 'need', *dolzhno* 'have to' and *sleduet* 'should' conveys different nuances of obligation. The predicate *dolzhen* means that the need for performing the action is determined by external factors. The failure to perform it entails sanctions. The predicate *nado* indicates the need for performing the action and is associated with the achievement of a certain goal. The failure means that the goal has not been achieved. The predicate *sleduet* conveys the meaning of the need to perform the action following the rules for achieving the goal. If the subject does not comply with these rules, the behavior is regarded as irrational.

Among other lexical items used to realize the category of deontic modality in the Russian language are the adjectives *obyazatel'nyj* 'obligatory', *nadlezhashchij* 'proper', *prinuditel'nyj* 'compulsory', the nouns *obyazannost* 'obligation', neobhodimost 'necessity', *otvetstvennost* 'responsibility', the notional verbs *prihoditsya* 'need', *polagaetsya* 'need', *dopuskaetsya* 'allowed', and some other adjectival predicates (e.g., *obyazan* 'obliged', *vynuzhden* 'forced'). These operators form a set of explicit markers of deontic modality, while the implicit ones are grammatical structures with imperative mood, independent infinitives (e.g., *ne vhodit'* 'don't enter'), or present tense verbal forms.

Interesting is the analysis conducted by Dobrovolskij and Zalizniak who found a large group of Russian words and phrases that convey the evaluative meaning and are used to render English and German deontic modal verbs: *khorosho by* 'it would be nice', *neplokho by* 'it would not be bad', *luchshe by* 'it would be better', *naprasno* 'needlessly', *zrya* 'it was a bad idea', *stoit* 'it is worth', *ne meshaet* 'it would be advisable' [25]. The relationship of deontic modality and evaluation emphasized by D.O. Dobrovolskij and A.A. Zalizniak is in line with J. Nuyts et al.'s theory of deontic modality which claims that permission and obligation are typically expressed by modal auxiliaries and non-auxiliary expressions which convey deontic meanings, yet they do not involve permissions or obligations: *He'd better not say such things in public* [3].

This article is intended to show that differences in the Russian and English modality systems influence the translation choices at the formal and semantic levels. The goal is to scrutinize the translation strategies used in the translation of Russian deontic modal operators into English, thus helping to identify translation patterns.

Previous research on deontic modal forms across languages

Being a universal category, deontic modality may semantically or formally vary from one language to another. This variation can create discrepancies which make the translation process challengeable.

M. Baker (1992) found that modality between English and Arabic translation is a problem due to the fact that English modals are grammatical, while the Arabic ones are a mixture of grammatical and lexical resources. The Arabic language possesses a richer system of lexical and grammatical means to express various nuances of modality [26]. Abdel-Fattah's study was also aimed to investigate problems encountered when translating deontic modals from English into Arabic by examining deontic modals in these languages through examples. The researcher suggested techniques to ease the difficulty deontic modals pose and emphasized the role of backgrounds in arriving at interpretations of the meanings of deontic modals. Abdel-Fattah claimed that Arabic tends to use imperatives to convey deontic meaning, and most Arabic modals tend to be dynamic or epistemic. The deontic meaning is weak which influences the translator's treatment of Arabic and English deontic modals [27]. According to Lian and Jiang, in Chinese the great majority of modal operators are high value modal verbs, while in English texts, median and low value modal verbs, such as *shall, may* and *should* are used in order to standardize people's behavior in a relatively gentle tone rather than in an enforced way [28]. Pei and Li explored the distribution of semantic meanings of deontic modal verbs in Chinese civil legislation and its English versions and showed that the values of Chinese and English modal verbs are significantly different. They concluded that the frequency of modal verbs in the Chinese and English corpora reflects the divergence of cultures and the choice of modal verbs demonstrates the negotiability, compromise and humanity of Chinese civil legislation which conforms to its interpersonal function [29]. On the Hungarian and English corpora, Imre and Beno revealed that in contrast to English, in Hungarian the synthetic means od deontic modality are dominant. The researchers found that "52 % of the modal meanings are expressed with morphologically compound verbs containing suffixes, bound morphemes in Hungarian translated texts" [30. P. 374]. M.P. Jascot and A. Wiltos' contrastive study focused on how deontic modality is expressed in the Polish and English versions of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. They revealed a diversity of modal verbs in the English text and a tendency to construct pseudo-descriptive sentences (whose

modality is the result of conventionalization) in the Polish one [31]. As have been mentioned above, Russian and English also have different systems of deontic modality which create obstacles when translating from one language into another. These differences were explored by O. Boginskaya who carried out a contrastive analysis of modal markers as tools employed to express deontic modality in the three parallel legal texts in English, Russian and French in order to identify similarities and discrepancies from the perspective of deontic modality expression. It was revealed that French and Russian have more in common than French and English or Russian and English in terms of the deontic modality [32].

Results and discussion

All deontic statements found in the corpus were divided into three groups by the type of deontic function they perform: indicating deontic possibility, indicating deontic necessity and indicating prohibition. Examples of each deontic function are presented and analyzed below.

Deontic possibility

In the Russian texts under study, to express permissions the modal verbs *smogut, mogut* were used. Here is an example from the text.

(3) *... vse voennosluzhashchie ukrainskoj armii, kotorye vypolnyat eto trebovanie,* ***smogut*** *besprepyatstvenno pokinut' zonu boevyh dejstvij i vernut'sya k svoim sem'yam.* '… the military personnel of the Ukrainian army who do this **will be able** to freely leave the zone of hostilities and return to their families'.

Deontic modality exhibited by the modal *smogut* is rendered with the English periphrastic form *be able to* which is used to describe ability whenever *can* is used. It should be noted that both Russian and English modal operators convey the meaning of future possibility. As Leech and Coates claimed, ability implies possibility: if someone has the ability to do something, then it is possible [21]. The Russian President here is the deontic source that permits the referent of the subject noun phrase to perform the action expressed by the proposition. The example, therefore, features both semantic and grammatical equivalence in terms of deontic modality realization.

(4) *Bolee togo, nam pryamo zayavili, chto yuridicheski obyazyvayushchie garantii bezopasnosti* ***mogut*** *imet' tol'ko chleny Severoatlanticheskogo al'yansa.* 'Furthermore, it was made explicitly clear to us that only NATO members **can** have legally binding security guarantees'.

The Russian modal verb *могут* used to give permission is rendered with the English modal verb *can* that conveys the same meaning — it grants permission to perform the action expressed by the proposition.

To express possibility determined by external factors rather than speaker's ability, the modal predicate *можно* is employed:

(5) *Poetomu s polnym na to osnovaniem, uverenno* ***mozhno*** *skazat', chto ves' tak nazyvaemyj zapadnyj blok, sformirovannyj SSHA po svoemu obrazu i podobiyu, ves' on celikom i est' ta samaya «imperiya lzhi».* 'Therefore, one **can** say with good reason and confidence that the whole so-called Western bloc formed by the United States in its own image and likeness is, in its entirety, the very same "empire of lies".'

As can be seen from the example, the predicate that expresses deontic possibility based on the speaker's right to make a certain conclusion is rendered with the English modal verb *can* that conveys the same meaning. It may be also categorized as indicating permission granted by external circumstances (the situation in which the speaker is delivering his address). Both sentences are impersonal, which indicates that the translator opts for semantic and grammatical equivalence.

Deontic necessity

Obligations in the Russian texts are imposed with several modal operators: *должен, следует*, *приходится*, *нужно* and *необходимо.* Here is an example from the corpus.

(6) *Konechno, sobytij proshlogo uzhe ne izmenit', no my* ***dolzhny*** *hotya by skazat' o nih pryamo i chestno, bez vsyakih ogovorok da i bez vsyakoj politicheskoj okraski.* 'Of course, we cannot change past events, but we **must** at least admit them openly and honestly, without any reservations or politicking'.

The deontic modality realized through the use of the Russian predicate *должны* is rendered with the English deontic modal verb *must* which expresses obligation. Here we deal with semantic discrepancy: despite the fact that in both utterances the deontic operator clearly indicates the need to tell about past events, in the Russian one this need is determined by external factors and does not depend on the speaker's will, while in the English utterance it is connected with mental representations of the speaker.

(7) ***Dolzhen*** *obratit'sya i k voennosluzhashchim vooruzhyonnyh sil Ukrainy.* 'I **would also like** to address the military personnel of the Ukrainian Armed Forces'.

In this example, deontic modality (subject's internal need) is rendered with the phrase *would like to* used to express the speaker's intention. The deontic meaning is explicitly expressed only in the Russian version while in the translation the deontic modal component is de-emphasized. The shift from the modal to non-modal form distorts the nuance of meaning in the utterance. However, the translation corresponds to the source unit semantically: both sentences convey the need determined by internal factors — speaker's internal determinants.

In the following examples, the translation strategy has been chosen so that to ensure both the semantic and formal equivalence of the source and target texts.

(8) *Odnako delat' eto* ***sledovalo*** *professional'no, plavno, terpelivo, s uchyotom i uvazheniem interesov vsekh stran i pri ponimanii svoej otvetstvennosti.* 'However, this **should** have been done professionally, smoothly, patiently, and with due regard and respect for the interests of all states and one's own responsibility'.

Both Russian and English modal operators express criticism of the failure to commit certain actions in the past. In Russian, this construction has the form *sledovalo* + Simple Infinitive, while in English — *should* + have + Perfect Infinitive.

(9) ***Prihoditsya*** *napominat' eti fakty, a to nekotorye zapadnye kollegi ne lyubyat vspominat' te sobytiya.* 'I **have to** recall these facts, because some Western colleagues prefer to forget them'.

The periphrastics *have to* expresses the need to perform the action due to some external circumstances. The same meaning is conveyed by the Russian notional verb *prihoditsya.* The utterance means that the circumstances that force the speaker to perform the action are external and so powerful that it is impossible to resist them. However, the Russian verb *prihoditsya* conveys the semantic component "negative attitude to the action". Despite the fact that the subject does not want to perform the action, he still decides on the need to do it. The English modal operator *have to* lacks this meaning. The Russian construction is impersonal, while the English one features the first-person subject. In addition, the notional verb in the Russian text is rendered with the modal verb in the English one, which indicates the presence of semantic and grammatical transformations.

In the following example, deontic necessity actualized with the Russian notional verb *ponadobitsya* is rendered with the English adjectival construction *be necessary to* which actualizes the necessity to implement changes in the country.

(10) *No vsyo zhe voznikaet vopros*: *zachem v tekh i bez togo slozhnyh usloviyah ponadobilos' takim obrazom eshchyo bol'she raskachivat' stranu?* 'But one may wonder: why **was it necessary** to rock the country even more in that already complicated situation?'.

The example features a formal (syntactic) rather than semantic transformation.

The same can be observed in (11), where only the semantic equivalence can be observed: the translator renders the lexical item of the predicate *neobhodimo* with the past form of the English periphrastic modal *have to.*

(11) ***Neobhodimo*** *bylo nemedlenno prekratit' etot koshmar — genocid v otnoshenii prozhivayushchih tam millionov lyudej, kotorye nadeyutsya tol'ko na Rossiyu, nadeyutsya tol'ko na nas s vami.* 'We **had to** stop that atrocity, that genocide of the millions of people who live there and who pinned their hopes on Russia, on all of us'.

This rendering changes the syntactic structure of the Russian impersonal sentence into the personal one in the English text.

Prohibition

Prohibitions in the Russian texts were conferred with three types of lexical item, including the predicates *nelzya* ('not allowed'), *ne dolzhen* ('must not') and *ne nado* ('need not').

The modal predicate *нельзя* was translated with the English negative form of the modal verb *should* which conveys weak prohibition and is used when the speaker does not advice or recommend doing something.

(12) *Odnako nashe predlozhenie bylo s poroga otvergnuto*: ***nel'zya*** *pozvolit' Rossii ogranichivat' deyatel'nost' NATO ...* 'However, our proposal was rejected right off the bat on the pretext that Russia **should not** be allowed to put limits on NATO activities'.

English *should not* is not comparable to Russian *нельзя* in its deontic strength. Moral duty rather than strong prohibition is generally conveyed by *should*. Having chosen this verb, the translator shifts the focus: the original sentence means direct prohibition, while the translation emphasizes strong advice not to allow Russia to put limits on NATO activities.

In the following example, the deontic modal verb *should* in its negative form is used to render the meaning of the negative modal predicate *dolzhen* which conveys stronger prohibition.

(13) *Drugimi slovami, vybor sposobov obespecheniya bezopasnosti* ***ne dolzhen*** *sozdavat' ugrozy dlya drugih gosudarstv, a vstuplenie Ukrainy v NATO — eto pryamaya ugroza bezopasnosti Rossii.* 'In other words, the choice of pathways towards ensuring security **should not** pose a threat to other states, whereas Ukraine joining NATO is a direct threat to Russia's security.'

In (14), the deontic meaning conveyed by the negative form of the predicate *dolzhny* is rendered with the modal verb *can* preceded by the negative pronoun *no* used to impose prohibition.

(14) *... soobrazheniya tekushchej politicheskoj kon"yunktury, kakimi by effektnymi, vyigryshnymi oni ni kazalis' v konkretnyj moment vremeni ni pri kakih obstoyatel'stvah* ***ne dolzhny*** *i ne mogut byt' polozheny v osnovu bazovyh principov gosudarstvennosti.* '… **no** political factors, however impressive or profitable they may seem at any given moment, **can** or may be used as the fundamental principles of statehood'.

The above examples are not coherent with each other in terms of deontic modal strength. The Russian modal operator carries stronger modality. The speaker refuses permission to use political factors as the fundamental principles of statehood.

The contrastive analysis of deontic modal operators in the parallel texts has revealed similarities and discrepancies presented in Table

The comparison of the lexical items used to express deontic modality identified irregularities at both semantic and syntactic levels.

Table

Russian and English deontic modal forms: results of the contrastive analysis

Russian	English
smogut, mogut	will be able to
	can
	may
dolzhen	must
	would like to
	have to
	should
mozhno	can
ponadobitsya	necessary
sleduet	should
prihoditsya	have to
neobhodimo	
nuzhno	
nelzya	should not no + may
ne dolzhen	
ne nado	should not

Source: compiled by Olga A. Boginskaya

In order to express permission and possibility in the Russian texts only the modal verbs *smogut* and *mogut* were used. They were translated into English with the periphrastics *will be able to and* the modal verbs *can* and *may*. Obligations were imposed with several modal operators: the predicates *dolzhen,*d *sleduet*, *nuzhno* and *neobhodimo* and the notional verb *prihoditsya* translated into English with a wide repertoire of modal and non-modal forms: *must, have to, should,* and *would like to.* Prohibitions were conferred with three lexical items, including the predicates *nelzya, ne nado,* and *ne dolzhen*. They were rendered into English with the negative forms of the modal verbs *should* and *may.*

Thus, three types of translation strategies were identified in the study: 1) semantic and grammatical equivalence, 2) semantic transformation, 3) semantic and grammatical transformation.

Conclusions

This study has attempted to offer an account of deontic modals across the Russian and English versions of the presidential addresses to the nation delivered in 2015–2022. The main objective of this article has been to detect key modality

features and linguistic means that convey deontic modal meanings by examining the parallel texts from the perspective of a contrastive analysis.

The need to study deontic modality has arisen due to formal and semantic discrepancies between modal expressions in different languages. The negotiation of such semantic difficulties is a challenge for translators.

There is a greater diversity of modal verbs in the English text, which is typical of the Germanic languages. Despite the fact that Russian modality is not as grammaticalized as the English one, Russian proves to possess a number of lexical deontic modal forms which enhance the stylistic variation. Translators should properly understand the modal systems of source and target languages and distinctions that each modal operator displays. This is crucial particularly taking into account that English modal forms are extremely messy, and lack basic meanings.

The present study has offered only a glimpse into this problem by looking at some instances of semantic and formal discrepancies between the two languages. While analyzing the Russian and English texts, many questions have appeared which can become starting points for further research and encourage the investigation into the issue of deontic modality within the translation studies.

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