

Comparative Analysis of Voice in Russian and English Languages

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Abstract: This article is devoted to a comparative analysis of the voice in Russian and English. The work examines the grammatical features of voice constructions, compares voice systems.

Key words: voice, grammar, English language, Russian language, syntax.

The grammatical category of voice (diathesis) is one of the most important components of the syntactic and semantic structure of a sentence. It determines the relationship between the subject of an action and the action itself, as well as between the action and the object. Voice is realized differently in Russian and English, which is due to differences in the types of languages - Russian is an inflectional language, and English is an analytical language. The purpose of this article is to comprehensively examine the categories of voice in the two languages, identify their common and distinctive features, determine the difficulties of translating voice constructions, and present practical examples.

Voice as a grammatical category plays an important role in expressing the relationship between an action and its participants. It reflects how the subject and object are involved in the action. Voice is realized differently in Russian and English, which is due to differences in grammatical systems and historical and cultural features of these languages. The purpose of this article is to identify similarities and differences in the voice systems of Russian and English, as well as to identify difficulties that arise when translating voice constructions.

Voice (from the Greek diathesis) is a grammatical category expressing the relationship between the subject and the predicate in terms of the subject's participation in the designated action. The most common types of voice are active and passive. Also, in some languages, a distinction is made between the middle voice, reflexive and impersonal forms.

In grammar, voice is expressed by various morphological and syntactic means. In Russian, with the help of verbal suffixes and the reflexive particle "-ся", in English, with the help of analytical forms with the verb to be and participles.

Classification of voices:

Active - the subject acts as the initiator of the action.

Passive - the subject experiences the action.

Medial - the subject simultaneously acts and experiences the result.

Reflexive - the subject returns the action to itself.

Impersonal - the subject is not grammatically expressed.

Almost all of the above types function in Russian, while in English, mainly active and passive.

Voice in Russian: morphology and syntax

Russian is characterized by a rich inflectional system, allowing morphological expression of voice.

Voice forms in Russian

Voice	Example	Comment
Active	Mom washes the dishes	Subject is actively acting
Passive	The dishes are washed by Mom	The object becomes the subject
Reflexive	The car is washed	Verb with particle -ся
Impersonal	No smoking here	No expressed subject

Reflexive forms in Russian play a polysemantic role: they can be passive, reciprocal, or denote an action without a subject.

Voice in English: an analytical approach

In English, the voice is formed analytically, using the auxiliary verb to be in the appropriate tense form and the past participle.

Passive voice forms in English

Time	Active form	Passive form
Present Simple	They write a letters	Letters are written
Past Simple	He cleaned the room	The room was cleaned
Future Simple	She will paint the wall	The wall will be pained
Present Perfect	They have built a bridge	A bridge has been built

Additional type — get-passive, expressing the spontaneity or effectiveness of the action:

He got fired.

She got hurt.

Comparative analysis

The main differences between the voice in Russian and English are due to the grammatical structure:

Comparison of voices in Russian and English

Parameter	Russian language	English language
Language type	Inflectional	Analytical
Passive expression	Suffixes, -ся	To be + V3
Presence of reflexive verbs	Yes	No (meaning is conveyed lexically)
Impersonal forms	Common	Limited (it, one)
Word order	Flexible	Rigid (SVO)

Examples of translation difficulties:

Русск.: «Книга читается легко» → **Англ.:** The book is easy to read (непрямой пассив).

Русск.: «Здание строится» → **Англ.:** The building is being built.

При переводе с русского языка на английский и наоборот возникают трудности, связанные с отсутствием прямых эквивалентов. Например, возвратные глаголы требуют перефразирования:

Русск.: «Дверь открывается» → **Англ.:** The door opens или The door is opened — в зависимости от контекста.

Некоторые конструкции вообще не имеют залоговой формы в английском:

Русск.: «Здесь не курят» → **Англ.:** No smoking here или Smoking is not allowed.

The problem of maintaining stylistic neutrality arises: the passive voice in English is more often used in formal and written style, while in Russian it is also used in colloquial speech. Thus, the category of voice demonstrates both the universality of grammatical functions and deep differences in the linguistic picture of the world. In Russian, there is a morphological richness and flexibility of voice forms, while English demonstrates a standardized analytical approach. These differences make the category of voice especially important in translation and teaching. Understanding the systemic features of both languages contributes not only to increasing the accuracy of communication, but also to a better understanding of the mechanisms of expressing action in language.

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