Cross-Linguistic Grammatical Relationship: A Translational Analysis with Reference to English and Tamil

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Abstract
Language is a system of symbols. They represented things are not the things themselves. The symbols of language is varied and complex. The words play the role of symbols. The contribution of linguistics is effective when the speaker and the learner know the symbols. Linguistics has contributed a lot for communication. Previously, during olden days people communicated through signals and gestures. Language is a skill subject unlike history or physics or maths, which are content or knowledge subjects. But even a language like English is taught as a content subject by many teachers, as a body of information and a number of rules and definitions. What is usually taught in the English class room is the meaning of certain words and how certain words are combined to form structures or sentences or sentences. In other words, the rules of grammar and meanings of the words are taught as another theoretical subject. Before discussing the relationship between words and groups of words, it would be profitable to discuss the nature of grammar a little bit, when we use a language we generally feel that the words alone have got meaning but its structure, grammar, etc., don't have any role to play in conveying the meaning. This is because most of the people believe that grammar is a system, which helped the users of the language to arrange the words into a sentence. But this is not enough. Grammar too has meaning. Similarly, the grammatical relationships are also considered as important factor for translating the text. This paper therefore seeks to explore the nature of grammatical relationships and highlight their vital role in translation studies. Understanding language as a system of symbols, and recognising grammar as a meaningful component rather than a mechanical one, enables more effective communication and more accurate translation across languages. This short paper is an attempt to find out grammatical relationships and their role in the place of translation studies.
Keywords: Grammatical Relationship, Translation Studies, Surface Structure, Kernel Sentence.

Introduction

Language as a System of Symbols: Grammar, Meaning, and the Role of Linguistics in Translation Studies. Language is far more than a collection of sounds or printed marks on a page; it is a highly sophisticated system of symbols through which human beings represent their thoughts, emotions, and experiences. These symbols, however, are not the things they refer to. A word like tree is not a tree itself, but a conventional sign agreed upon by a linguistic community to represent that concept. Because of this symbolic nature, language becomes both powerful and complex, enabling layers of meaning, subtle nuances, and creative expression. Words play the central

role as symbols, but the ways in which they are arranged—through grammar, structure, and linguistic patterns—are equally essential in shaping meaning. A crucial point often overlooked is that language is a skill-based subject. Unlike history, physics, or mathematics—which are largely content-driven—language must be learned through practice, exposure, and active use. Yet many classrooms today still teach English as though it were merely a body of rules, definitions, and classifications. Students spend considerable time memorizing meanings of words, definitions of grammar terms, and structural patterns of sentences. As a result, English is often treated as a theoretical subject rather than a living, functional skill. This approach limits the learner's ability to communicate effectively and fails to capture the dynamic nature of language use.

To appreciate the deeper relationship between words and groups of words, it becomes necessary to examine the nature of grammar. Many speakers assume that only words carry meaning, and that grammar merely helps to arrange these words in orderly sequences. This is a misconception. Grammar is not just a framework for arranging words; it actively contributes to meaning. The structure of a sentence can alter its implications, emphasis, and emotional tone. For example, the difference between "The boy chased the dog" and "The dog chased the boy" lies not in vocabulary but in grammatical relationship. Grammar gives shape to meaning, and without it, sentences would be ambiguous, confusing, or impossible to interpret.

These grammatical relationships become especially significant in translation studies. Translation is not a simple act of replacing one word with another. It is an interpretive process that requires careful attention to structure, context, and cultural meaning. A translator must understand not only what the words mean individually but how their arrangement modifies the message. Subtle grammatical features—such as tense, aspect, voice, word order, and agreement—play crucial roles in determining meaning. If these relationships are ignored, the translated text may lose clarity, accuracy, or cultural relevance.

Like human, animals too use language of their own for limited purposes. Communication takes place among animals, birds and insects, but not at the level of human. They have their own style / kind of symbols, signs and gestures as their language. Man is considered superior only for his uniqueness of communication and reasoning when compared to other living organism. The vital difference between man and animal is the faculty of speech and the reasoning power. At present man has advanced in the field of communication, starting from oral to printing form. To have an idea of the past, the most vital requirement is the medium of communication, either spoken or written form. Before discussing the relationship between words and groups of words, it would be profitable to discuss the nature of grammar a little bit, when we use a language we generally feel that the words alone have got meaning but its structure, grammar, etc., don't have any role to play in conveying the meaning. This is because most of the people believe that grammar is a system, which helped the users of the language to arrange the words into a sentence. But this is not enough. Grammar too has meaning. Similarly, the grammatical relationships are also considered as important factor for translating the text. This short paper is an attempt to find out grammatical relationships and their role in the place of translation studies. Let us consider The following sentences in Tamil : (i)Tholka:piyar puttakam, (ii) pa:tti vaittiyam.

Whether the first sentence refers to the book written by Tholka:piyar or possessed by Tholka:piya can be judged only after reading the context. Otherwise, there will be ambious in this construction. The second sentence construction is not of N-N pattern. An understanding of this construction also, that is, whether it refers to the medical treatment explained by the grandmother or the medical treatment underwent by the grandmother, necessitates a study on the context.

English Vs Tamil Grammatical Relationship

In a language, some places one can find similarity in the form or structure but difference in the grammatical relationship. Now, we will see the instances where there is dissimilarity in the structures and yet there is uniformity in their grammatical structure. Previously we saw that the N-N compounds may have varying

cases. Hereafter, we will see how sentences of different structures have same grammatical relationships. In the following constructions the relationship between the words is the same.

1. Aval alaka:ka natanam a:tukira:l
   She dances beautifully.
2. Aval natanattin alaku
   The beauty of her dancing.
3. Aval natanam alaka:ka irrukiratu
   Her dancing is beautiful.
4. Aval alaka:ka natanam a:tuvatu
   Her beautiful dancing.

In the four constructions the object is denoted by the word aval 'she' event is denoted by the word a:tukira:l or a:tuvatu and the abstracts in these constructions are alaku and alaka:ka. There are no particles in these constructions.

The kernel sentences of the above constructions can be 'Aval alaka:ka natanam a:tukira:l' the remaining three sentences are derived from this kernel structure by transformational processes. It is natural that we are posed with a question that even as the grammatical relationship between these words is same how is it that there is difference in the meaning conveyed by these constructions? The first and third constructions differ from the second and fourth constructions in the same that the former constructions have compete sense whereas the later constructions have incomplete sense. Moreover all the above constructions differ from each other in the respect that each construction's importance is accorded to different things. The first construction focuses upon the object (aval 'she's) that their upon the event (a:duvatu, 'dancing') and the second and fourth constructions though incomplete, focus upon the abstract (alaku, 'beauty') and the event (a:duvatu, 'dancing') respectively.

If we have to translate the source material accurately and approximately into the target language, we have to bear in mind that the Kernel structure in any of the world language may be transferred into different surface structure and due to this transformation the nuances of meaning may be changed or focus of the sentence may be altered.

We can derive a number of sentences by effecting different transformation on a single Kernel Structure, for example ; let us see the effect of a few transformations on the following.

1. Karnan villai utaitta:n (Kernel Sentence)
   "Karna broke the bow"
2. Vil karnana:l utaikkappattatu
   "the bow was broken by Karna
3. Karnanin vil utaippu
   "Karna's breaking of bow"
4. Vil karnana:l utaikkappatutal
   "The bow is being broken by Karna
5. Utaikkappataal vil karnann
   "The breaking of bow by Karna"
6. Vil utaipatutal karnan
   "The breaking of the bow was done by Karna"
7. Villai utaittutu Karnan
   "The breaking of the bow of Karna"
8. Villai utaittutu Karnan
   "The bow breaking was done by Karna"
9. Vil utaikkappattatu Karnan
   "It was the bow that was broken by Karna"

From the fact that a number of constructions can be derived out of Kernel sentence through transformations. We come to conclusion that one and the same message can be told in a number of ways. It is because of the fact that one and the same message can be told in a number of ways that we have stylistic differences. The nature of translation depends mainly on the style that is chosen and employed by the translator is transferring the source material into the target language.

Surface Structure

In the following sentences let us discuss the transformations that take place in the transfer of Kernel sentence into the surface structure. A complete and comprehensive discussion of all types of transformations as described by the transformational grammarians will be beneficial for our purpose. However, let us restrict our discussion to only a few types of transformations precisely. An understanding of these will help in the familiarization of the processes that take place in translation and in the estimation of the relationship that exists between the words as well. The transformational rules may be divided into two major categories, namely: 1. The Transformational rules that transfer a single Kernel and 2. The transformational rules that connect two or more Kernels.

The transformation of a single kernel structure into different surface structures in Tamil may be done in either one of the ways given below.

1. Transforming from active voice to passive voice
   Example: transferring the active sentence.
   Millan pazharasam kutittan:n
   Millan drank fruit juice
   Into passive as
   Pazharasam Millan:l kutikkappattatu
   The Fruit juice was drunk by Millan.
2. Transferring the positive sentence into negative sentence.
   Example: transferring the positive sentence
   Millan pazharasam kutitta:n
   Millan drank fruit juice into negative sentence as
   Millan pazhamrasam kutikkavillai
   Millan did not drink juice.
3. Transferring the statement type sentence into interrogative sentence as in the transfer of the statement.
   Example: into Interrogative sentence
   Millan pazharasam kutitta:n
   Millan drank fruit juice
   into Interrogative sentence as
   Millan pazharasam kutitta:na:?
   Did Millan drink Fruit juice?

Of these three types, the active Vs passive type may be transferred into negative type. Similarly, the active Vs passive Vs Negative types of sentences which are statements in nature be transferred into interrogative types.

In the process of Conjunction two or more kernels, we get sentences that have two types of surface structures, namely: 1. The sentence in which all the important words of both the kernels are retained without dropping anything and 2. The compound sentence in the formation of which some parts of a kernel is dropped. When none of the constituent of both the kernels is dropped and when they are conjoined to form new sentences, we get three types of sentences.

1. The conjoining of both the kernels by using the clinics like –um, -a:l,-polutu, etc.,

   Example: Kannanum Karnanum vantanar

   Kanan and Karnan came

   Kannaana:l Karnan vanta:n

   "it is because of Kanan that Karnan came"

   Kannan vantapolutu Karnan vanta:n

   Karnan came when Kanan came.

2. The conjoining of the first kernel with the second kernel using the participles.

   Example: na:nkal pa:rtta ponnu nallaval

   "The girl who we saw was good"

   Aval piranta na:tu Indiya

   "The country where he was born in India"

3. Of the two kernels, one of them will be joined to the other without the usage of any particles.

   Example : aval patippataippa:rtte:n

   "I saw her reading"

   Avan pa:tiyatu ello:rukkum pitittatu

   "His singing was appreciated by one and all"

On the contrary, when two or more kernels join to form compound sentences, we find that some parts of a kernel are dropped in the process. For Example let us see the following construction:

   Purappattu centraval tiumpi varave:yillai

   "She who departed did not turn back at all"

This compound sentence is formed of two kernel sentences as

   Aval purappattuch centra:n

   "She departed"

   Aval tirumpivarave: yillai

   "She did not turn back at all"

In all these constructions, the subject part of the Kernel sentences is dropped. Since there is no necessity to repeat the subject twice, one of them has been deleted. It is not necessary that the subjects alone will be deleted in the formation of compound sentences. Other forms are also deleted.

Example:

   Arjunanaivita Karnan nallavan

   "Karna is better than Arjuna" is a compound sentence which constituted by the two kernels, namely Karnana nallavan "Karna is better"

   Ra:man mikavum nallavan

   "Ram is very good". In these two kernels, there are two predicates "nallavan" and hence one of them has been dropped.

Conclusion

As language is a system of words and sentences, it could be replaced by the user freely. While translating the text from one language to the other language, the process of replacement is operating vehemently. Grammatical replacement is made by the translator to get accurate translation on the basis of the relationships that found in grammatical structure. Ignoring the grammatical relationships found in the language, one cannot do translation successfully.

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