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Introduced in Translation:
Encoding Interclausal Relations in Old Church Slavonic

A comprehensive account of pragmatic resources of any language is hardly possible without an analysis of the ubiquitous "small words" that mark the constituent's information status, clarify or emphasize relations between clauses, and otherwise help the listener navigate through the discourse. Yet the meaning of discourse particles and conditions on their use are extremely hard to define. The task of precise analysis is especially challenging in the case of ancient languages, where textual evidence tends to be both limited in scope and severely restricted in genre and register. This paper explores the encoding of interclausal relations by discourse connectors in Old Church Slavonic translations of the New Testament, relying on mismatches between the original and the translation as crucial evidence for differences in the pragmatic organization of discourse.

Old Church Slavonic translations of the New Testament are known to follow closely the language of the original, to the extent that a number of Old Church Slavonic constructions, such as the dative absolute and praesens historicum, have been argued to be a result of direct calquing of Greek structures (MacRobert 1986; Uspenskij 2002: 57-62, inter alia). The tendency of the translation to copy the original in every detail makes discrepancies in the rendering of interclausal relations particularly remarkable. I focus on three major types of such discrepancy.

The first – by far the most frequent type – involves the use of an interclausal connector that does not correspond to an explicit marker in the original. Interclausal connectors introduced in the Old Church Slavonic translation include *i* 'and', *bo* 'since', *že* 'as for', and *nŭ* 'but'. Some of the connectors are introduced regularly in specific constructions (for example, constructions with participles are commonly rendered in the translation by coordinated finite verb forms); others have no structural motivation, cf. example (1).

(1) a. *élegon*   *dé :*   *en têi heortêi,*   *hína*   *thórubos*
       say:IMPF.3PL   PRT not in   ART feast:DAT   so.that not   riot:NOM
       génētai   *en tôi laôi*   (Matt 26.5)
       happen:SUBJ.AOR.MID.3SG   in   ART people:DAT.SG

    b. *g~lxǫ*   *že nŭ ne vŭ prazdĭnikŭ da ne mlĭva*
       say:IMPF.3PL   PRT but not in   feast:ACC   PRT not riot:NOM
       bǫdetĭ   *vĭ*   *ljudexŭ*
       be:FUT.3SG   in   people:LOC
       'But they said: [but] not on a feast day lest there be an uproar among the people'

Secondly, in rare cases, the Old Church Slavonic translation omits an interclausal connector that is present in the original. Compared to the first type of discrepancy, such examples are rare, and mostly restricted to specific contexts. For example, the majority of examples where the translation omits the particle *gàr* 'since' describe sequences of events within a narrative, as in (2).

(2) a. élegen   **gàr**   autôi   (Mark 5.8)
        say:IMPF.3SG   PRT   him:DAT
    b. g~la   emu
        say:AOR.3SG   him:DAT
        [And cried with a loud voice and said What have I to do with thee Jesus thou
        Son of the most high God I adjure thee by God that thou torment me not]
        '(For) he told him' [Come out of the man thou unclean spirit]

The distribution of such omissions suggests that they were most likely due to a
difference in the use of the Greek connector and its Old Church Slavonic equivalent.
For example, the common translational equivalent of Greek *gàr* – the Old Church
Slavonic particle *bo* 'since' – is rarely attested in descriptions of event sequences
without a strong causal relation; instead, it is commonly introduced in rhetorical
sections (e.g., where the connector relates parts of an argument).

    The third type of discrepancy involves a seemingly "unusual" choice of an
interclausal connector. While most Greek connectors have regular translational
equivalents (*dè ~ že, gàr ~ bo, mèn ~ že*, etc.), such correspondences are far from
absolute (cf. Brock 1976 for similar observations on Old Syriac particles). Greek *gàr*,
for example, sometimes seems to correspond to connectors other than *bo* 'since' (3a vs.
3b). On closer inspection, however, the majority of such cases turn out to be due to
discrepancies between different NT manuscripts. In particular, *gàr* in the Tischendorf
version corresponds with some regularity to *dè* in the Byzantine text-type (cf. 3b); the
latter is commonly assumed to stand closer to the original from which the Old Church
Slavonic translation was made (Metzger 1963, 1968, inter alia).

(3) a. *élegon*   **gár**   (Mark 14.2; Tischendorf)
        say:IMPF.3PL   PRT
    b. *g~laxǫ*   **že**
        say:IMPF.3PL   PRT
    c. *elegon*   *de*   (Mark 14.2; Byzantine)
        say:IMPF.3PL   PRT
        'For they were saying'

In sum, the use of interclausal connectors in NT Greek and Old Church Slavonic differs
in systematic ways. Most remarkably, the way interclausal connectors are introduced
into the Old Church Slavonic text points to the translator's concern with making some
of the implicit rhetorical relations explicit. The abundant "insertion" of interclausal
connectors most likely points to an affinity of the style of the Old Church Slavonic
translation with the style of Classical (and Byzantine) Greek rhetorical prose,
distinguishing it more sharply from the unsophisticated language of the Greek New
Testament. Symptomatically, manuscripts of the Greek New Testament differ
considerably in the use of interclausal connectors, suggesting that the "insertion" of
explicit connectors characterized both the work of NT translators and the Greek text's
transmission (cf. Elliott 1976 on Attic influence in NT editing).

    On the other hand, instances of omission of an interclausal connector seem to be
restricted to specific types of context, and provide important evidence for differences in
pragmatic conditions on the use of seemingly equivalent Greek and Old Church
Slavonic connectors.