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HOW TO DO SENTENCES WITH NOUNS

Analysing Nominalizations in Soviet Political Discourse

For the last 15 years a new approach to the reading of texts has developed in Germany and in the USSR, known as "Text Grammar", in which greater importance has been given to the formal aspects of the texts¹.

The main interest of Text Grammar is that it is not strictly restricted to the sentence frame, making it possible to take account of the text as a whole and to show its own internal coherence, which, as a result, casts a new light on some linguistic concepts as coreference and anaphora.

However, the major drawback of this approach is that Text Grammar considers the text as a closed system, which alone could give the key to its own description and analysis. A text would thus be a whole with an absolute beginning, without any memory or past, as if nothing else had ever been said or written before.

But there exists "always-already"² something external and prior to the text. The words used in the text have already been said before; they do not come from a virgin past. (This may well be the most important part of Baxtin's ideas.)

I would like to show here that it is possible to find within a text the formal signs of what has been said before and somewhere else, traces of the text's memory. I would like to show, in a manner inspired by Foucault, Althusser and in a way Lacan's approach, that working on syntax paves the way to the memory of the text.

My attempt to reveal the relation between the text and the external elements linked to it will concern anaphora.

It seems to me that in Russian one of the traces of text memory is to be found in what is known as syntactic embedding. Besides completive clauses (see Seriot 1984), I have particularly studied the problem of nominalization.

The method used to describe the nominalizing process will show whether nominalization can be said to establish a link between the text and any specific external elements. My work will therefore focus on syntax, on the epistemological problem of the description of nominalization in Russian, from a corpus of official "argumentative" discourse.

I. IS A NOMINALIZATION AN 'N' (NOUN) OR A 'P' (PROPOSITION)?: A LINGUISTIC APPROACH.

My corpus of selected Soviet official speeches³ was submitted to a computer program consisting in an automatic morpho-syntactic analysis of Russian,

with the aim of establishing the relative frequency of each grammatical category within the texts.

A first result was that nominal forms greatly outnumbered verbal forms: in the most frequent lemmata (>20), there is no verb except *byt'* ('to be').

Secondly it soon appeared that the nominal cases were distributed in a rather regular manner: the genitive case appears with an unusually high frequency in nominals (i.e. nouns and adjectives), when compared for example to the data given in Štejnfeldt's frequency tables (43% to 30% approximately).

It seems to me that research work on lexical statistics applied to Russian has never attempted to find out whether this high frequency of the genitive case is a characteristic of the Russian language as a whole or a specific feature of Soviet political discourse.

This numerical prevalence of the genitive case has already been found in scientific discourse (see Kozak in the U.S.A., Višnjakova in the USSR), where the genitive on the whole follows a preposition (ex: *vsledstvie* + Gen., 'due to'). It was therefore important to determine which syntactic position the lexical items in the genitive case occupy in the corpus in order to know if the genitive was always generated by the same cause.

Two observations could immediately be made:

(1) nominals in the genitive case are to be found mainly in NPs with two nouns: NP ($N_1^k N_2^g$)⁴. (For example, in a 30 page text, *kommunisty*, 'the communists', appears 24 times, once in a PP, 23 times in a NP, in a N_2^g position).

(2) the NP's head N_1^k consists essentially in a nominalization: the NPs of the *rost proizvodstva* type ('the rise of production') are by far more numerous than the *ekonomika našej strany* ones ('the economy of our country').

Ex: *Glavnym istočnikom rosta proizvoditel'nosti truda dolžno byt' povyšenie texničeskogo urovnja proizvodstva na osnove razvitija i vnedrenija novoj texniki i progressivnyx tehnologičeskix processov, širokogo primenenija kompleksnoj mexanizacii i avtomatizacii, a takže uglublenie specializacii i ulučšenie proizvodstvennogo kooperirovanija predprijatij.* (Brežnev)

('The main source of labour productivity increase must be the rise of the technical level of production based on the development and introduction of new techniques and leading technological processes, a wide implementation of composite mechanization and automation, as well as the reinforcement of specialization and the improvement of company productive cooperation.')

I assumed that this statistical anomaly means that, in this type of texts, nominalizations are the linguistic material⁵ support of discursive operations and indicate a special type of relation between the "text", as a

closed, finished product, and its conditions of production, an externality specific to it.

Actually the nominalization (hereafter in abbrev.: Nmz) stands on a borderline between syntax and lexicon, syntax and semantics. The general idea emerging from most linguistic theories dealing with the problem of Nmzs is that the Nmz “stands for” or “is the transformed form of”, or simply “has a certain link with” something other than itself. According to these theories a Nmz is not anything initial or original, but the end-product, the result of operations carried out before the actual expression of the sentence surface structure. I personally think that these operations are not only prior to the sentence, but also to the utterance, to the text itself.

There are thus in a text nouns of a highly peculiar type, differing from other nouns in that they are related to “something else”, which is supposed to be an underlying verbal utterance.

What I would like to know is how a text can include, as internal parts, elements coming from outside and what is the relation between a specific text and these extra-textual elements.

Linguists usually try to explain the transition from a verbal phrase to a Nmz by the help of rules generating grammatical sentences. My approach is different. First of all, in a recognition grammar, I will try to “go back” from the Nmz to this other thing, this extratextual utterance. Then from a discursive point of view, I will try to find out where this underlying utterance originates from.

Can nominalizations be counted?

Having broken up a long corpus of Soviet political speeches into syntactic P-markers, I tried at first to count the Nmzs in the texts. I soon realized that this approach was not the right one: it appeared that counting the Nmzs within a text is a hopeless task.

According to a morphological definition, a Nmz is the noun form of a verb or an adjective. We shall therefore have

– a *nomen actionis*

verb → noun (ex: *učastvovat'* → *učastie*:

‘to participate’ → ‘participation’)

– a *nomen qualitatis*

adjective → noun (ex: *vernoj* → *vernost'*:

‘faithful’ → ‘faithfulness’).

The computer automatic indexing program of Russian which I used operates precisely on this basis of morphological derivation.

So for example the analysis algorithm (i.e. the ordered sequence of

operations to be carried out) automatically derives an *-ost'*-ending abstract noun from the corresponding adjective if the latter exists: the adjective alone will be given in the lemma dictionary, and the *-ost'*-ending noun will be considered as a form of the lemma; for example the noun *istina* ('truth') as a "real noun" or "basic noun" is to be opposed to *istinnost'* ('truthfulness'), as a noun derived from the adjective *istinnyj* ('true').

However, the automatic analyser only operates at the morphemic level and cannot give an explanation for the semantic effects of this derivation. Thus for example the noun *promyšlennost'* ('industry') is analysed as derived from *promyšlennyj* ('industrial'). This is perfectly coherent from a morphological point of view, but induces a parasitic meaning effect corresponding to "industrialness" (i.e. the fact of being industrial), which cannot be the meaning of *promyšlennost'* and therefore it entails that *promyšlennost'* must be recognized as a "real noun".

The counting of morphologically derived nouns only gives information limited to the lexical statistics in the system of the Russian language.

The outlook has thus to be changed: the problem must be dealt with from a syntactic point of view. One must contemplate isolating the derived nouns connected with an underlying verbal utterance from those with a purely nominal behaviour.

But in this perspective we have to take into account certain nouns which, although they are not linked by a derivation process to a verb or an adjective, behave nevertheless as Nmzs of an underlying utterance.

Ex: *Važnym etapom v žizni partii i strany javilsja oktjabr'skij Plenum (1964 goda), kotoryj vyrazil nepreklonnuju volju partii razvivat' i strogo sobljudať leninskie normy partijnoj žizni i principy rukovodstva.* (Brežnev)

('An important stage of the Party's and the country's life was the 1964 october Plenum, which expressed the Party's unwavering will to develop and strictly observe Lenin's rules for the Party's life and leadership principles').

In Russian it is not possible to connect *volja* morphologically to a verb, as it is not possible in English to connect "will" to "want". In French, though, a derivation link can one way or the other be established between:

and *la volonté du Parti de développer les normes*
 or *le Parti a la volonté de développer les normes*
 or *le parti veut développer les normes.*

Besides, in the language system, *volja* has a peculiar syntactic behaviour in that it can govern an infinitive. That is why in Russian

volja partii razvivat' normy
 ('the Party's will to develop the rules')

can be paraphrased as

partija xočet razvivat' normy
 ('the Party wants to develop the rules').

There exist therefore nouns which, without being morphologically connected to a verb or an adjective, can behave in a similar manner to the "morphological" Nmzs, as the NP which they dominate can be paraphrased by a verbal phrase. In this context *volja* ('will') can be considered as a suppletive form to the verb *xotet'* ('to want').

Nevertheless in other cases the N_1 of a NP ($N_1 N_2$) can hardly be considered as the substitutive form for a verbal morphological paradigm although the NP can be paraphrased by a verbal phrase.

Ex: *avtoritet partii* ('the Party's authority').
 One way or the other this NP can be connected to

partija pol'zuetsja avtoritetom
 ('the Party enjoys authority'),

whereas it seems impossible to connect any verbal phrase to, for example:
člen partii ('Party member').

But one soon realizes that the distinction is difficult to establish as a starting point in an automatic indexing process. The formal survey of nouns liable to operate as Nmzs cannot obviously be sufficient. In fact the basic problem is to know whether such and such a Nmz actually refers to something else (to an underlying verbal utterance) outside the text, or if it operates fully as a real noun.

We have now to investigate some linguistic theories on Nmz, insofar as they deal with the link with a possible underlying utterance, in order to find out what these linguistic theories enable us to see (or better to read), but also what they hide, what they leave unseen, illegible.

The choice of a specific linguistic theory conditions the manner of reading and interpreting a text.

Let us choose the following sentence, taken from one of Brežnev's speeches:

V.I. Lenin videl v ètom vyraženie revoljucionnogo duxa partii.
 ('Lenin saw in this the expression of the Party's revolutionary spirit.')

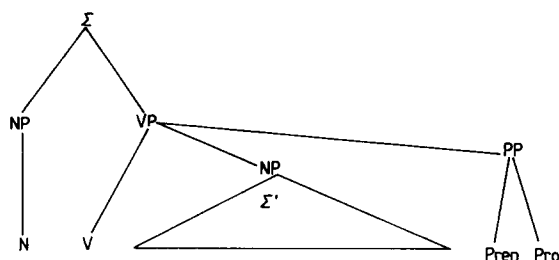
Two theories are in confrontation to explain it.

(1) *The transformationalist hypothesis*

The Nmz *vyraženie* ('expression') is the result of a generalized transformation: the grammar generates a matrix-string and a constituent-string. The constituent-string is transformed or nominalized into a NP which is then embedded as the object or NP_2 of the matrix.

The main point here is that the embedded structure is the transformed form of a full and independent sentence; in the transformed form, it occupies the position of a NP and “functions” (Lyons 1968, 266) as a constituent of the matrix.

The following simplified structure will thus be obtained for the sentence chosen:



Lenin videl $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \Delta \text{ vyražajet revoljucionnyj dux partii v ètom}^6 \\ \text{revoljucionnyj dux partii vyražajetsja} \end{array} \right.$

'Lenin saw $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \Delta \text{ expresses the Party's revolutionary spirit in this} \\ \text{the Party's revolutionary spirit expresses itself} \end{array} \right.$

According to the principle of recurrence, the NP dominated by Σ contains another occurrence of Σ : the NP itself contains, i.e. dominates a sentence.

J. Lyons (1968, 225) establishes a formal distinction between simple sentences and complex sentences: "Any sentence which is generated by a group of rules, at least one of which contains the initial symbol Σ in the right-hand side is a complex sentence; all other sentences are simple."

Therefore if the Nmz *vyraženie* ('expression') is described as being embedded, then it shall be considered as a complex sentence. If, on the other hand, this Nmz is said to be a derived noun and the full NP an expansion of the Nmz, as is done in the Soviet Academy of Sciences' last two grammars (1970 and 1980), it will have to be considered as a simple sentence.

What is at stake is not an exclusively terminological conflict, but the way of reading the utterance, the very possibility of finding in the utterance the traces of its link with something heterogeneous and external to it: is there a Σ within the NP?

However, the exact form of the embedded clause and the distribution of specified and un-specified elements are still unknown.

The transformationalist theory, which in any case explicitly assumes the preservation of meaning of the original sentence, is based on the principle of strict semantic neutrality of the transformation:

predicative sentence \rightarrow Nmz.

These two different surface structures would then just be two syntactic forms expressing in two different ways a single deep structure.

Now things get peculiarly complex when trying to establish the precise form of the initial “constituent” sentence which “generated” the NP including the derived nominal.

In fact the nominalized form does not share all the characteristics of the “initial” sentence, not only because, as a NP, it is no more an independent sentence, but also because a good many verbal traces of the underlying utterance are neutralized in the Nmz.

If therefore one relies on the disembedding process of a Nmz to restore the underlying verbal utterance, one will have to take into account the fact that a nominal phrase such as

razvitie sel'skogo xozjajstva
(‘the development of agriculture’)

when quoted out of its context can “refer to”, “correspond to”:

sel'skoe xozjajstvo razvivaetsja / razvivalos' / razvilos' / budet razvivaetsja / dolžno razvit'sja
(*kto-to*) *razvivaet / razvival / razvil / budet razvivat' / dolžen razvit' sel'skoe xozjajstvo*
(‘agriculture is developing / was developing / developed / will develop / must develop;
(someone) is developing / was developing / developed / will develop / must develop agriculture’).⁷

What did not raise any problem in a top-down grammar is in a bottom-up grammar the cause of great difficulties, since the immediate context of the Nmz in the full utterance does not always give the sufficient information for a satisfactory interpretation.

(2) *The lexicalist theory*, on the opposite, gives a negative answer to the question of whether one must admit the principle of an underlying utterance in order to explain the Nmz as the end-product of the transformation of this sentence into a NP. It therefore considers the nouns morphologically derived from verbs or adjectives as “ordinary” nouns, the only difference between the former and the latter being that they admit or not an infinitive in their respective lexical features (Chomsky 1970).

All the many various NPs from the corpus should then be treated on the same level, that is to say considered as nouns followed by their complements (of various forms). The same analysis would thus be applied to:

volja partii (‘the Party’s will’)
avtoritet partii (‘the Party’s authority’)

and

členy partii ('the Party members').

The lexicalist hypothesis does not assume that there exists an utterance underlying the Nmz, but considers that there are lexical items prior to a noun or a verb. We could for example suggest a lexical archicategory "UKREP-" ("STRENGTH-"), from which could be derived *ukrepljat'*, *ukrepiť*, *ukreplenie*, etc. ('to strengthen' ipf/pf, 'strength', etc.). This approach enables us to throw off the yoke of a strict surface description of grammatical categories (or "parts of speech").

However, what is a great simplification from the linguistic point of view can act as an obstacle and a mask if we consider the issue involved: to establish the link between a text and the externality specific to it by examining how Nmzs work in Russian.

Now let us survey the various theories which are concerned with the Nmz problem and apply them to our corpus.

One possible approach is to divide Nmzs into two categories: those with an entirely nominal form and those which retain entirely or partly the verbal complementation. Thus in Tesnière's syntactic theory the opposition between "living translation" ("translation vivante") and "fixed translation" ("translation figée") can be noted; this opposition depends on whether and to what extent the government characteristics are modified between the source form and the target form.

That is why it is interesting to see what happens to one Nmz in two different occurrences of the same NP (Nmz N₂).

- (1) *Èto bylo vnutrennej i moral'noj potrebnost'ju partii, ee rukovodstva.* (Xruščev)
('That was an internal and moral necessity for the Party, for its leadership').

Restoring the anaphora *ee* (its):

- rukovodstva partii*
(‘the Party leadership’)
- (2) *Sovetskij narod svoim trudom i geroičeskoj bor'boj pod rukovodstvom partii dobilsja bol'six uspexov v socialističeskom stroitel'stve.* (Xruščev)
(‘The Soviet people by its work and heroic struggle under the Party's leadership achieved great success in the building of socialism.’)

By shifting the nouns substituting for the Nmz in the NP (Nmz N₂) in

different contexts it might be shown that in (1) *rukovodstvo* ('leadership') is a fixed Nmz:

| | | |
|----------------------|---|---------------|
| <i>potrebnost'ju</i> | <i>rukovodstva</i> <i>sekretariata</i> <i>rukovodjaščix organov</i> <i>vsex členov</i> | <i>partii</i> |
|----------------------|---|---------------|

(‘a necessity for the Party | leadership
 Secretariat
 leading organs
 (all) members’),

whereas in (2) the same Nmz *rukovodstvo* is not fixed:

| | | |
|------------|--|---------------|
| <i>pod</i> | <i>rukovodstvom</i> <i>voditel'stvom</i> <i>vlijaniem</i> <i>pokrovitel'stvom</i> | <i>partii</i> |
|------------|--|---------------|

(‘under the Party’s | leadership
 direction
 influence
 protection’).

In fact, it is not possible to have:

**pod sekretariatom partii*
 (*‘under the Party’s secretariat’)
 nor *?potrebnost'ju vlijanija partii*
 (?‘a necessity for the Party influence’).

Thus, when comparing two possible occurrences of a Nmz with the same N₂, one can say that the N₂ *partii* (‘Party’s’, ‘Party-’) will be either, in the case of a fixed Nmz, a determiner of *rukovodstvo* (‘leadership’) – and, so, a real deep structure genitive – , or, in the case of a non-fixed Nmz, the subject of an underlying verbal utterance comprising the verb *rukovodit'* (‘to lead’) and thus a deep structure nominative. It follows that the same NP (Nmz N₂) *rukovodstvo partii* (‘the Party’s leadership’ / ‘the Party leadership’) cannot be univocally interpreted without any knowledge of its embedding conditions.

In fact, at this stage, only one characteristic is a definite criterion indicating that the Nmz is not fixed since it retains the same complementation as the verb: the occurrence of a complement in the infinitive.

Ex: *ugrozy ešče bol'she rasširit' voennye dejstvija* (Brežnev)
 (‘the threats to extend military actions even more’)

Ex: *prizyv pokončit' s ostatkami vtoroj mirovoj vojny* (Xruščev)
 ('the call to eliminate the aftermath of the second world war')

But it has to be noted immediately that the occurrence of a complement in the infinitive does not only characterize derived nominals (nouns derived from verbs or adjectives), since genuine non-derived nouns can also be followed by such a complement:

pravo samomu rasporjažat'sja svoej sud'boj (Brežnev)
 ('the right to determine one's own fate').

Obviously *pravo* ('the right') is not morphologically related to a verb. However the NP (N₁ N₂) must here be considered as a transformed structure, at least as "related to", "referring to" an underlying utterance:

N – imet' pravo rasporjažat'sja. . .
 ('N – to have the right – to determine. . .')

These remarks prove the difficulty of selecting and counting the Nmzs of a given corpus.

As a matter of fact Tesnière is concerned with the problem of the lexicon specific to the language system prior to any embedding. There is no room for any ambiguity of interpretation.

However the distinction between fixed Nmz and non-fixed Nmz is not a part of the lexicon as such but it is based on the functioning of the same lexeme either as a "real noun", in a fully nominal form, or as a Nmz, retaining traces of an underlying utterance.

Therefore the same lexeme *žizn'* ('life') can be linked, one way or another, to an underlying utterance in

žizn' ljudej ('people's life')

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| <i>to, kak ljudi</i> | | <i>živut</i> | | <i>(‘the way people live</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | <i>mogut žit’</i> | | <i>may/can live’).</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |

But in *žizn' pokazala, čto* ('life showed that'), *žizn'* ('life') can in no way be related to any

?N živet ('? N lives').

Now it has to be noticed that in the first case *žizn'* ('life') dominates the phrase: NP (N₁ N₂), whereas in the second case it alone constituted the phrase: NP (N).

So interpreting a "morphological" Nmz as a real noun or a "syntactic" Nmz linked with an underlying utterance will partly depend on the type of Nmz embedding.

The Czech linguist Adamec takes into account the mode of embedding.

He distinguishes two possible ways of interpreting a Nmz:

– the “factographic” interpretation, as for example in the following sentence:

Ja rad prixodu Petra

(‘I am pleased of Peter’s arrival’)

where “Peter’s arrival” is an unquestionable fact,

– and the “ideographic” interpretation, as for example in the following sentence:

Ja poprosil ego o podderžke moego proekta

(‘*I asked him – the support – of my project’)

= I asked him to support my project’)

in which *podderžka* (‘the support’) is not “part of facts happening in objective reality, but parts of abstract ideas on facts” (Adamec 1973, 44).

Adamec gives various clues (“transformability criteria”⁸) to decide on the way of reading: “factographic” Nmzs can be converted into clauses starting with *čto*, *kak*, etc., “ideographic” ones into infinitives or clauses starting with *čtoby*, *kogda*, etc.

So the interpretation of the Nmz, according to this author, is based on the embedding context, which is revealed syntactically within the language system.

However, these criteria of interpretation soon become questionable when applied to a real text as opposed to ad hoc artificial sentences. Indeed there are many cases of ambiguous reading of some Nmzs in view of the factographic / ideographic opposition.

Ex: *Poèтому razvitie mirovoj sistemy socializma trebuet tvorčeskogo podxoda k voznikajuščim voprosam na ispytanoj osnove marksizma-leninizma, trebuet obmena opytom i mnenijami.* (Br.)

(‘That is why the development of the worldwide system of socialism requires a creative approach to arising problems, relying on the proved basis of marxism–leninism, requires an exchange of experiences and opinions.’)

Syntactically speaking, it is possible to come to two different transformations:

– with an infinitive

razvivať mirovuju sistemu socializma trebuet. . .

(‘to develop the worldwide system of socialism requires. . .’)

– with a clause starting with *to*, *kak*:

to, kak mirovaja sistema socializma razvivaetsja, trebuet. . .

(‘the way the worldwide system of socialism develops requires. . .’).

The first case would be subjected to an ideographic interpretation: it is only the abstract expression of the fact of “developing the worldwide system

of socialism”, while the second one would be subjected to a factographic reading: “the worldwide system of socialism truly develops, and this fact requires. . .”.

But, as these two transformations are syntactically speaking possible, which criteria justify the choice of one or the other interpretation? This system may be based on an artefact: one has to know how to interpret a Nmz before one can suggest a syntactically correct paraphrasing. “Transformability” is not, therefore, a way to find the right interpretation, but a way to justify one’s finding afterwards. This difficulty of choice, which does not arise in Adamec’s out-of-context examples, is very often met in my corpus.

Vendler’s analysis of Nmz, taken up by Arutjunova (1976) for Russian, is the next interesting stage in that it admits as a principle that reading ambiguities can exist: transformation is considered as a possible means of interpretation, and not as a means of proving afterwards the correctness of an interpretation.

Thus Vendler’s sentence

John’s singing of the Marseillaise surprised me

the literal translation of which by Arutjunova is

penie Džonom Marsel’jezy porazilo menja

can be read in two different ways (“imeet dva pročtenija”, p.65):

- (1) *tot fakt, što Džon pel Marsel’ezu porazil menja*
(‘the fact that John sang the Marseillaise surprised me’)
- (2) *to, kak Džon pel Marsel’ezu, porazil menja*
(‘the way John sang the Marseillaise surprised me’) ⁹.

Finally the lack of embedding context makes it even more difficult to interpret the Nmz. That is easily noticeable in titles, many of which are found in the corpus as NP (Nmz N₂).

Ex: *Rost material’nogo urovnja žizni naroda*
(‘The rise of the standard of living of the people’).

In this particular case a double reading is unavoidable: no formal criterion can help to decide in favour of one interpretation or the other:

– “factographic” interpretation (but with an ambiguous modality):

| | |
|--|--|
| <i>material’nyj uroven’ žizni naroda</i> | <i>rastet</i> <i>dolžen rasti</i> <i>budet rasti</i> |
|--|--|

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| (‘the standard of living of the people | is rising must rise will rise’) |
|--|---------------------------------------|

– or “ideographic” interpretation:

kak (podnimat') material'nyj uroven' žizni naroda?

(‘how (to raise) the standard of living of the people?’).

The NP (Nmz N₂), a form specific to the language system in Russian, only represents a possible underlying utterance. Thus discursive extralinguistic hypotheses will be required to help explain the following title:

Uglublenie protivorečij kapitalističeskoj sistemy

(‘The deepening of the capitalist system’s contradictions’)

as:

- (1) *protivorečija kapitalističeskoj sistemy uglublajutsja / budut uglubljat'sja / dolžny, moguť uglubljat'sja / -it'sja*

(‘The capitalist system’s contradictions are deepening / will deepen / must, can deepen (ipf/pf)’);

or as:

- (2) *kak* | *uglubljat' protivorečija kapitalističeskoj sistemy?*
 | *my* | *možem uglubljat' /-it' protivorečija kapitalističeskoj siste-*
 | *dolžny* | *my?*

(‘how | to deepen | the capitalist system’s contradictions?’).
 | can we deepen |
 | must we deepen |

So, from a study of the link between a Nmz and a possible underlying verbal utterance, we have come to the field of interpretation and enunciation. We have left the level of the language system to reach the level of discourse.

II. ENUNCIATION, POLYPHONY AND HETEROGENEITY

We have just seen how, in most cases, there cannot be a univocal relation between a Nmz and a verbal utterance, supposed to be two surface forms of the same deep structure when a whole real utterance is considered.

The Nmzs in a text written in Russian therefore raise two series of problems:

– how to decide if a Nmz is to be interpreted as a genuine noun or as a form related to an underlying verbal utterance?

–In this second case, whether there is only one underlying verbal utterance for a NP (Nmz N₂) and how to restore it or them?

Nmz, as a phenomenon baffling any mechanistic definition of paraphrastic transformation, is the indication of a problem which lies beyond linguistic theories describing a system: Saussure’s “langue” or Chomsky’s “competence” of an ideal speaker. This problem is the non-homogeneity of the

text surface; it raises, in other terms, the following question: who speaks?

The assumption that there is no change of meaning in the transformation of a verbal utterance into a Nmz cannot help to resolve what we see as a basic problem in the case of continuous discourse and no more of an isolated sentence: the difference in assertive status between two utterances such as:

proizvodstvo rastet vs *rost proizvodstva*
 ('production rises' 'the rise of production').

In fact, if we transform *the rightness of our arguments* into *our arguments are right*, which seems an obviously correct thing to do according to transformationalist theories, we actually get to another "actualising" level of a predicative relation. In other words, there happens a conversion from implicitness to assertion, that is to say the utterer takes charge of the utterance (i.e. adopts the utterance as his own).

As a result there is an assertion lag between a Nmz and a verbal utterance.

The linguistic theories dealing with Nmz do not tackle the lag problem. So transformationalists think that the matrix and the constituent sentence are both equally produced in the same former abstract time¹⁰, since they only examine the end-product, i.e. the grammatical sentence and not the act, the utterance enunciating process. They therefore cannot show at the theoretical level that these two "sentences" are produced in two different times, one previous to the other, with a kind of time lag. In particular, if a Nmz is the product of a verbal utterance transformed into a NP, it remains to be found from where and when the verbal utterance is introduced into the final complete utterance.

The notion of presupposition makes it possible at first glance to convey the idea of an utterance operating on different levels, organized into a hierarchy or, in other words, to reveal heterogeneity and multiplicity in a discourse which may then be questioned as being the "parole" of a single creative subject.

Let us take a simple example from the corpus:

Usililas' bor'ba narodov protiv imperializma. (Br.)
 ('The peoples' struggle against imperialism strengthened').

This utterance can be divided into two "semantic contents":

– the NP *bor'ba narodov protiv imperializma* ('the peoples' struggle against imperialism') would correspond to the following presupposed content:

narody borjutsja protiv imperializma
 ('peoples struggle against imperialism').

– The complete utterance has a "posed" content: the statement concerns a quantitative change (*usilit'sja*: 'to strengthen') of something considered

as already known by the addressee, as being already part of his universe of reference.

To establish this distinction I rely on Ducrot's interpretation of Frege's (1971, 102–126) and Russell's papers (1905, 478–493), in which he uses two main criteria: negation and interrogation (see Ducrot 1972, Chapter 2).

So, neither

– *ne usililas' bor'ba narodov. . .*
 ('the peoples' struggle. . . did not strengthen')

nor

– *usililas' li bor'ba narodov. . .?*
 ('did the peoples' struggle. . . strengthen?')

dispute the presupposed content, which is a statement about *narody* ('the peoples').

The addressee is therefore the prisoner of a choice: either to refuse altogether to be involved in the discourse or to accept that "the peoples struggle against imperialism" is true, this acceptance being a prerequisite without which the discourse can't go on.

Let us now take an example in which the Nmz is part of the predicate, and not of the subject.

Ves' opyt razvitija SSSR podtverždaet žiznennost' i vernost' nacional'noj politiki partii. (Br.)
 ('The whole development experience of the USSR confirms the vitality and truthfulness of the Party's national policy.')

One can distinguish here (cf. Berrendonner 1977) the truth which the utterer assumes responsibility for and warrants, or "locutor-truth" (L-true), and a universal truth, admitted by all (\emptyset -true). The statement *nacional'naja politika partii žiznenna i verna* ('the Party's national policy is vital and true'), true for the locutor, is presupposed. The discursive process consists in having the utterance assumed by the utterer (L-true) gain universal truth status (\emptyset -true). The segment *ves' opyt razvitija SSSR* ('the whole development experience of the USSR') added to the argumentative verb *podtverždat'* ('to confirm') expresses here the fact which enables the presupposed content to gain universal truth value.

In our point of view an utterance with *podtverždat'* ('to confirm') plus a Nmz can only be considered as a reply, as an utterance fitted into an imaginary dialogue, in which a co-locutor would have questioned a L-truth. An utterance with *podtverždat'* followed by a Nmz would then be basically the refutation of a contradictory implicit previous utterance. This refutation would imply the transformation of a L-truth into a \emptyset -truth through a fact *x* and an argumentative verb.

This explanation is even more fruitful when applied to the surface scheme Nmz – V – Nmz.

Ex: *Oderžannye sovetskim narodom vsemirno-istoričeskie pobedy javljajutsja samym ubeditel'nyim dokazatel'stvom pravil'nogo primenenija i tvorčeskogo razvitiija marksistsko-leninskoj teorii.* (Xruščev)

(‘The Soviet people’s worldwide historical victories are the most convincing proof of the truthful application and creative development of the marxist-leninist theory.’)

What in the former example was a fact *x* is now a proposition, the universal truthfulness of which is presupposed, implied (because of its syntactic position as grammatical subject).

The whole argument being based on the presupposed content
sovetskij narod oderžal vsemirno-istoričeskie pobedy
 (‘the Soviet people won worldwide historical victories’),
 the refutation of the opposite utterance is based on a content which is itself presupposed (there is a change from a fact to the presupposed assertion of a “state of things”). In this way the utterer brings his interlocutor to accept conclusions which he imposed to him previously by rendering them undisputable.

Thus several protagonists take a part in the process of enunciating the utterances: there is first the “imaginary detractor”, who remains at an abstract level, deprived of any reference; secondly there is the “ideal addressee”, as opposed to the actual receivers of the discourse; the “ideal addressee” can be defined as the one who accepts the presupposed content of every sentence in order to let the discourse go on: he is the one who memorizes the presupposed contents.

These few remarks, engendered by the special “behaviour” of the Nmz “at the righthand side” of the argumentative verb when the presupposition effect is considered, show that the text is not a closed space, but includes some form of heterogeneity. The point in consideration is that a text is not a “parole”, creating a discursive universe out of nothing, an “Adamic” language. In fact the utterance can be split up and divided, bears traces of enunciation which can be related to another subjective space, assumed as previous and external to the “continuous” discourse enunciation space, appearing through verbs conjugated as personal forms in main or independent clauses.

This lag, or discrepancy, between enunciative levels must not be likened to a “polyphony” in Baxtin’s sense: the various sources of enunciation are not equal “voices”, answering each other in a “dialogical” form. Although the utterance, being heterogeneous, bears the mark of an “other”, this otherness can only be held back at implicit level. That is why we should not use here the word “polyphony”, but rather “heterotopy”,

which renders the idea of several hierarchically organized enunciative spaces.

The presupposition theory often helps to justify “argumentative strategies”, according to which a speaker would choose to say in a presupposed way utterances he does not want to appear responsible for.

More interestingly one can notice that Nmz can refer, in an un-stated way, to an utterance drawn from previous discourse or functioning as such, and this is not necessarily consciously wanted by the utterer.

In the corpus we note an essential observation: the prevailing number of nominalized forms compared to the corresponding number of verbal forms for the same lemma.

So in Brežnev’s text are found:

| | | | |
|-----|--|----------|------------|
| | <i>razvitie</i> (‘development’) | 74 times | |
| but | <i>razvivať</i> (‘to develop’, transitive, ipf.) | 9 times | } 22 times |
| | <i>razvit’</i> (‘to develop’, trans., pf) | once | |
| | <i>razvivať’sja</i> (‘to develop’, intr., ipf) | 11 times | |
| | <i>razvit’’sja</i> (‘to develop’, intr., pf) | once | |

This is statistically how the statement lag shows in the case of some verbs.

Let us take as an example the following (shortened) utterance:

Razvitie vnutripartijnoj demokratii sdelalo partiju ešče bolee boe-sposobnoj. (Xruščev)
 (‘The development of democracy inside the Party increased even more the Party’s capacity to fight’).

The transformation of

{ *N razvivaet / razvil vnutripartijnuju demokratiju*
vnutripartijnaja demokratija razvivaetsja / razvilas’
 (‘N develops / has developed democracy inside the Party
 democracy inside the Party develops / has developed’)

into the NP *razvitie vnutripartijnoj demokratii* (‘the development of democracy inside the Party’) causes an effect of obviousness, of “*déjà là*” (‘being already there’).

The utterer therefore has at his disposal a reified predicative relation which he can use as an object of his discourse, because it appears not to be produced in and by the discourse, but to refer to a thing rooted in reality. Then he only has to put this named thing into the empty space (the grammatical subject’s place) existing in the only statement he assumes responsibility for:

N sdelalo. . . (‘N increased. . .’),

thus basing his argumentation on something allegedly undisputable.

That brings us to the question of finding out the enunciative source of

un-stated utterances. And here comes up the notion of memory.

Arutjunova (1976, 68) relates the presupposed truth of an utterance to the sentence “actual division” into theme / rheme. Thus presupposition of truthfulness in an utterance can just be bringing back “as a theme” an utterance already used in the text as a rheme. This is particularly obvious as far as Nmzs are concerned: a Nmz plays the part of the anaphora of a previous utterance in the left-hand side context.

Arutjunova gives the following example, where the Nmz does not exactly “presuppose” an utterance, but only recalls it: (1976, 66)

Aleša poljubil Veru. Ego ljubov' vznikla s pervogo vzgljada.
(‘Aliosha fell in love with Vera. His love was born at first sight.’)

Here the Nmz recalls what has just been said, it functions as an anaphora of what, having been said, does not have to be said again, but simply needs to be named.

However there is one question Arutjunova does not ask: of what the Nmz of an utterance which has not been previously stated in the text can be the anaphora?

In the following scientific text:

The deflection of the galvanometer indicates the passage of an electric current. (Pêcheux 1982, 116)

the Nmz *deflection* can be interpreted either as the anaphora of a previous utterance in the text stating that the galvanometer’s needle moves, or as an implication relation:

{ (if) the galvanometer’s needle moves
(then) (this) indicates
(that) the electric current passes.

Here the two underlying utterances are not pre-stated. They just form a “proposition”, independently of statement level.

But, on the other hand, in

*Uspexi socialističeskogo proizvodstva v Sovetskom Sojuze (. . .)
svidetel'stvujut o velikoj sile i žiznennosti marksizma-leninizma.*
(Brežnev)

(‘The successes of socialist production in the Soviet Union testify to the great strength and vitality of marxism-leninism.’)

the utterance underlying the first Nmz is pre-stated, although it has been neither stated nor proved previously in the text:

*socialističeskoe proizvodstvo v Sovetskom Sojuze dostiglo
uspexov*
(‘socialist production in the Soviet Union achieved successes’).

This pseudo-anaphora is the memory of another text prior and external to the present one. The fact that a previous utterance is introduced into a text in form of NP reifies it, makes it become an object. As a result the utterer is caught in a universe of discourse by ready-made referents no more questionable than the reference of nouns which make up everyday discourse.

CONCLUSION

Every case of syntactic embedding, of which Nmz is but a particular case, may reveal in a text, depending on the characteristics of each natural language, a heterogeneous surface where elements of various origin mix and articulate with one another.

I think that at the language system level only a "continuist" approach would properly explain the nominalizing process and the NP (N₁ N₂) in general: instead of trying to choose clearly between two alternatives, such as "real noun" vs "syntactic Nmz", or "factographic" vs "ideographic" interpretations, the assumption has to be made that there is a progressive, gradual change, a shift N → Nmz → proposition. In other words: every NP (N₁ N₂) retains to some extent the trace of a predicative relation.

The specific problem raised by NPs containing a syntactic Nmz thus concerns the predicative functioning of nouns, or else the predicative relations without a verb, given the fact that these relations are un-stated, and therefore implicit.

In a language such as Russian, Nmzs are a source of ambiguity. Being the marks of former discourse, of which they are but pale (un-stated) reflections, they open the text to externality and heterogeneity, breaking what could appear to be a flawless monophony.

NOTES

¹ See:

– Slakta, D.: 1980, *Sémiologie et grammaire de texte: pour une théorie des pratiques discursives*, Thèse de Doctorat, Université de Paris-X.

– Petöfi, J.S., and Reiser, H.: 1973, *Studies in Text-Grammar*, Reidel, Dordrecht (= *Foundations of language*, Vol. 19).

– 'Lingvistika teksta', *Novoe v zarubežnoj lingvistike*, vyp. VIII, Progress, Moskva, 1978 (An important bibliography is given at the end of this book).

– *Sintaksis teksta*, AN SSSR, Nauka, Moskva, 1979.

– *Struktura teksta*, AN SSSR, Nauka, Moskva, 1980.

– *Aspekty obščej i častnoj lingvističeskoj teorii teksta*, Nauka, Moskva, 1982.

– Gal'perin, I.R.: 1981, *Tekst kak ob'ekt lingvističeskogo issledovanija*, Nauka, Moskva.

² "Toujours-déjà" is an expression borrowed from Althusser's philosophical tradition in France.

³ N.S. Xruščev's last activity report to the USCP (1961) and L.I. Brežnev's first activity report (1966). For further details see Seriot (1985).

⁴ «g» stands for "genitive", «k» stands for "any case".

⁵ For a survey of works concerning the relation between discourse and its material realizations in the language system, see Henry (1977), Pêcheux (1982).

⁶ Δ is a "dummy element", representing a deleted constituent.

⁷ The encoding process is not symmetrical to the decoding one. For example, what of the determination of the adjective? Does the phrase *partijnoe rukovodstvo* refer to *rukovodstvo partii* ('the Party leadership') or to *rukovodstvo partiej* ('the leadership of the Party')?

⁸ *Transformiruemoŝt'*.

⁹ This sentence cannot in any way be translated as such into French, in which one has to choose between two possible translations, and thus break up the ambiguity:

* *Le chant de La Marseillaise par John m'a étonné*

→ *Le fait que John ait chanté La Marseillaise m'a étonné*

→ *La façon dont John a chanté La Marseillaise m'a étonné.*

¹⁰ "Abstract time" must be here considered as a metalinguistic term, and not as a "real" temporality, see Fuchs (1980, p. 432).

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