

Title: Why the Prince Was Happy?

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Grammatical gender occupies a specific place in the cognitive perception and metaphorical thinking of native speakers and it is integrated in their systems of associations, expectations, and motivations. The grammatical structure of the Russian language permits the utilization of meanings, nuances, and connotations which are implied and exposed through the masculine, feminine and neuter endings of nominal forms. Initially A. Potebnia (1968), and then L. Shcherba (1957), R. Jakobson (1985) and V. Vinogradov (1986) showed that the semantic meanings of images in poetic language are grounded in personification, which in turn is based on the Russian gender classification of nouns.

In highly inflected languages such as Russian, the formal grammatical category of gender serves as the primary repository of biological gender (Rojavin 2000). The semantic meanings of the male and female biological genders in Russian usually correlate with masculine and feminine grammatical genders. At the same time, inanimate nouns can acquire a quasi-gender based on grammatical gender classification. The corresponding semantic category in the English language, however, is not expressed through morphology. In English, the main bearers of information regarding biological sex are anaphoric pronouns (Curzan 2003). Personification in English is not allied with linguistic phenomena, but rather with cultural, historical, and poetic traditions, as well as conventions. Metaphors present in belles-letters depend principally on the attitudes and emotions of the author (Lloyd, Warfel 1986).

The repercussions of word choice and, consequently, grammatical gender are evident in two quite different translations (К. Чуковского и П. Сергеева и Г. Нужи́на) of *The Happy Prince*, by Oscar Wilde. This paper will show how the grammatical genders chosen in each translation change the semantics and the plot of the story, evoking separate and distinct connotations and associations.

References

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