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**On the Swedish-Russian parallel corpus and its possible applications (with the focus on several Swedish constructions)**

**О шведско-русском параллельном корпусе и возможностях его применения (на примере некоторых шведских конструкций)**

The paper presents some possible applications of the Swedish-Russian parallel corpus within the Russian National Corpus, which is the third largest language pair of the RNC. They are exemplified by the study of several specific Swedish constructions. Last, but not least, the perspective of multilingual constructicons is considered.

**Keywords**: Swedish, Russian, parallel corpora, construction grammar, constructicon

В статье обсуждаются некоторые применения шведско-русского параллельного корпуса (в настоящее время третья по объёму языковая пара в составе Национального корпуса русского языка) при сопоставительном изучении конструкций, в том числе в контексте развития межъязыковых конструктиконов.

**Ключевые слова**: шведский язык, русский язык, параллельный корпус, грамматика конструкций, конструктикон

1. **1. Introduction**

The Swedish-Russian parallel corpus has been developed since 2016 [Sitchinava, Perkova 2019] and has already become one of the biggest parallel corpora within the RNC: the current size (the version of summer 2020) comprises 12.2 million words, which puts it right after the biggest English-Russian and German-Russian corpora.

The paper presents several case studies based on the cross-linguistic comparison of constructions, which could be seen as a potential step towards building multilingual construction databases known as constructicons [Lyngfelt et al. (eds.) 2018, Boas, Höder 2018] implementing key ideas of Construction grammar. Meanwhile, bilingual text pairs provide a more fine-grained optics for comparing constructions that are more language-specific than various more grammatical categories.

1. **2. Possible applications: several case studies**

In this section, we will focus on several cases of what can be analysed as constructions in terms of Construction Grammar [Goldberg 1995, 2006]. Here, we decided to choose Swedish constructions, as the corpus is currently not well balanced, and its Swedish part is bigger and more representative.

Both Swedish and Russian are languages that have corpus-based constructicons: they are developed by Benjamin Lyngfeldt’s group in Göteborg and Ekaterina Rakhilina´s group in Moscow (which recently went into a more international collaboration with the UiT The Arctic University of Norway)[[1]](#footnote-2). Using the parallel corpus for the purpose of linking these databases to a multilingual contructicon (on these, see [Lyngfelt et al. 2018]) seems to be a very helpful instrument.

In the next section, we show how the corpus can be used in the analysis of two Swedish constructions and their equivalents in Russian.

**2.1. Vimper lagom**

The word *lagom* ‘just enough, just right’ has recently gained its international popularity as an unofficial Swedish trademark, the symbol of Swedish (and wider, Scandinavian or Nordic) lifestyle. Russian has several equivalents that render this meaning rather well: *в меру*, *как раз*, *как(ой) надо*. However, used with imperatives [Olsson 2013], described it can form the construction with the following meaning (translated from Swedish; the definition comes from the constructicon): “it is used to ask someone (Actor) to stop doing or pretending to do a certain thing (Activity)”. Here we have a lexically filled slot (*lagom* is obligatory), while the verb slot allows for some variation. The construction has an evaluative semantic component: the attitude of the speaker is critical, rather negative, which can be reduced neither to just the imperative form or the word *lagom* alone. Moreover, as Olsson [2013] notices, it means not only that one should act in just a moderate *lagom* manner, but rather should stop doing something at all.

A query can be built as follows: **V & imper на расстоянии от 1 до 3 от** (at the distance 1 to 3 from) **lagom**. The distance parameter helps to capture examples with particle verbs or a postposed addressee *du* ‘you’; without this parameter we would get 4 examples, but the extended query returns 7 examples, which is not that bad, considering the relatively low frequency of this construction. The example from Lindgren’s Karlsson story illustrates rather a more compositional reading:  *lägg för dej lagom* ‘put yourself at a more moderate extent’. Other examples seem to fit the construction semantics. Interestingly, one of the examples (4) is of the Russian-Swedish direction: the translator used the construction to render Gogol’s specific expressive colloquial phrases.

(1) *–* ***Fjäska lagom****, fnyser hon.*

— Хватит подлизываться, — фыркнула она. [Annika Thor. En ö i havet (1997) | Анника Тор. Остров в море (М. С. Конобеева, 2006)]

(2) *–* ***Hyckla lagom****!*

– Нечего притворяться!

[Maria Gripe. …och de vita skuggorna i skogen (1984) | Мария Грипе. ...и белые тени в лесу (Анна Зайцева, Ксения Коваленко, 2005)]

(3) ...åja, åja, Gunilla, **lägg** för dej **lagom**, JAG ska väl också ha lite tårta?

Эй, Гунилла, Гунилла, ты слишком много накладываешь себе на тарелку! Я ведь тоже хочу пирога… [Astrid Lindgren. Lillebror och Karlsson på taket (1955) | Астрид Линдгрен. Малыш и Карлсон (Л. Лунгина, 1957-1973)]

(4) Но из угрюмых уст слышны были на сей раз одни однообразно неприятные восклицания: «Ну же, ну, ворона! зевай! зевай!» – и больше ничего.

Men från den buttra munnen hördes denna gång bara enformigt obehagliga rop: ”Så ja, så din kråka! **lata dig lagom**!” och det var allt. [Н. В. Гоголь. Мёртвые души. Том 1 (1842) | Nikolaj Gogol. Döda själar (Staffan Skott, 2014)]

According to [Olsson 2013], the most prominent exemplars of this constructions are *skratta lagom* (*skratta* ‘to laugh’) with a synonym *garva lagom*, *skryt lagom* (skryta ‘to boast’) and *skrik lagom* (*skrika* ‘to shout’). Among other examples, verbs *raljera* ‘to joke ironically’, *jubla* ‘to rejoice’, *smöra* ‘to fawn on’, *håna* ‘to make fun of’, *skälla* ‘to scold’, *”whina”* ‘to whine’, *mobba* ‘to mob’, *klaga* ‘to complain’, *stirra* ‘to stare’, *kaxa* ‘to be cocky’, *tjata* ‘to nag’, *retas* ‘to tease’, *hyckla* ‘to be hypocritical’, *stila* ‘to show off’, *hasta* ‘to hurry up’, *gnälla* ‘to whine’ are mentioned. It can be seen that most of these verbs denote certain speech-related actions or some undesirable behaviour. In the comprehensive Swedish-Russian dictionary [Marklund-Sharapova 2007] only *skrik lagom!* ‘не кричи (ори) так!’ is mentioned in the entry for lagom. Examples from the parallel corpus include verbs *skratta*, *fjäska* ‘to fawn on’, *hyckla*, *skryta*, *tjoa* ‘to yell’. The example from Gogol with *lata sig* ‘to be lazy, to idle’ stands out, but still it seems that the negative connotation has been captured by the translator, and the choice of the Swedish construction is not random due to the shared evaluative semantic component.

In our sample, the Russian equivalents represent several constructions. First of all, reduplication of imperative forms (with a specific intonation) has a similar component of negative evaluation (*смейся-смейся*; *зевай, зевай*). Second, the construction **хватит VP-Imp.Inf**, listed in the Russian constructicon[[2]](#footnote-3), is attested in example 1. Its synonym, **нечего VP-Inf**[[3]](#footnote-4), is illustrated by example 2. Other expressive analogues are *Да ладно тебе!* (related to the construction **ладно Pron-2.Dat VP-Inf**) and *не больно VP-Imper*, where *больно* is metaphorically used as intensifier (=‘Don’t do VP too extensively’).

**2.2. i ADJsuperl laget**

The next construction in our list is again rather specific due to its evaluative component. Its form-meaning relations are more idiomatic, as the fixed lexical component, the word *laget* (*lag*) ‘team’ has a desemantisized meaning here, and the superlative form of the adjective does not fully correspond to the meaning of the construction: “A phenomenon (Theme) has a property (Property) of unreasonable proportions with respect to the (implicit) standard”. In other words, the evaluation related to this implicit standard is what defines the resulting semantics of this construction.

In this case, Marklund-Sharapova [2007] gives more information with several examples: *kjolen är i kortaste laget* ‘юбка коротковата’, *500 kronor är i mesta (minsta) laget* ‘500 крон - это многовато (маловато)’, *i senaste laget* ‘поздновато; в последний момент’. Based on these examples, one might draw a conclusion that Russian attenuative adjectives with the suffix -*оват*- render the desired meaning. Indeed, they are, besides their properly attenuative function, widely used for understatement expressing negative qualities (cf. *плоховатый, глуповатый, трусоватый, скучноватый* lit. 'slightly bad, silly, cowardly, dull’ vs. \**хорошеватый, \*умноватый, \*храброватый, \*интересноватый* lit. ‘slightly good, intelligent, courageous, interesting’ [Kagan, Alexeyenko 2011: 322]).

Let’s look at the examples from the parallel corpus. The query **i на расстоянии 1 от A & supr на расстоянии 1 от laget** is the first option to come with; one can also filter examples with *i senaste laget* as the most frequent collocation, adding **-sen** to the adjective lexeme field. The former query retrieves 12 examples from 10 texts. The three examples with *i senaste laget* are rendered as *в последний момент* ‘at the last moment’/ *поздновато* ‘somewhat late’/ *опоздали* ‘are too late’. The equivalents for several other examples are as follows: ***i högsta laget*** (*hög* ‘high’) - *запредельный*, ***i vekaste laget*** (*vek* ‘weak’) - *слабоватый*, ***i äldsta laget*** (*gammal* ‘old’) - *староватый*, ***i futtigaste laget*** (*futtig* ‘ridiculously small’) - *чепуха*, ***i minsta laget*** (*liten* ‘small, little’) - *совсем маленький*, *меньше некуда*. Finally, two trickier examples are given below: here, the collocation *явная натяжка* ‘an obvious stretch’ and the idiom *шито белыми нитками* ‘completely transparent’ are used to render constructions with the superlatives of *pretentiös* ‘pretentious’ and *genomskinlig* ‘transparent’.

(5) Det vore **i pretentiösaste laget**.

Это было бы явной натяжкой.

[Maria Gripe. …och de vita skuggorna i skogen (1984) | Мария Грипе. ...и белые тени в лесу (Анна Зайцева, Ксения Коваленко, 2005)]

(6) Nej, det var **i genomskinligaste laget**.

Тут все шито белыми нитками.

[Мария Грипе. Тень на каменной скамейке (Елена Ермалинская, Елена Серебро, Ирина Матыцина, Мария Хохлова, 2005)]

It can be seen from the examples that attenuative adjectives are not the only strategy that can be chosen by the translators. However, it should be noticed that in some cases the choice is defined by the context, so the semantics of the adjective plays a crucial role here.

1. **3. Conclusions**

We have presented the Swedish-Russian parallel corpus, a valuable tool for various linguistic studies, showing that it can be successfully used in exploration of language-specific constructions and concepts. The analysis of the Swedish constructions *Vimper + lagom*, and *ADJsuperl laget* shows the perspectives of further exploration of equivalence between constructions from the two languages. The crosslinguistic comparison of constructions shows that a multi-token (“syntactic”) construction can be represented in another language by a derivational model: for example, the Swedish (and other Germanic) compounds are well known to correspond to syntactic units in Russian, whereas the analytical *i ADJsuperl laget* construction has among its equivalents the -*оват-* derivational model. These examples underline transparency of the boundary between constructions and derivation (cf. the idea of Construction Morphology in [Booij 2010]) and call for a wider range of items included in constructicons.

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1. Static versions of these constructicons are available at the Språkbanken’s page with lexical resources: [https://spraakbanken.gu.se/karp/#?mode=konstruktikon&lang=swe](https://spraakbanken.gu.se/karp/" \l "?mode=konstruktikon&lang=swe) (the Swedish constructicon) and [https://spraakbanken.gu.se/karp/#?mode=konstruktikon-rus](https://spraakbanken.gu.se/karp/" \l "?mode=konstruktikon-rus) (the Russian constructicon). A more recent version of the Russian constructicon, still work-in-progress, being extended by more constructions, examples and features, can be currently accessed here: <https://constructicon.github.io/russian/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Its meaning is described as follows: “The construction is used when the speaker wants the interlocutor to stop [some action]Action that is currently taking place. The speaker evaluates this action negatively, as it causes him/her discomfort or seems to the speaker too long.” [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Its meaning is described as follows: “This construction is used when someone is [doing something]Action they should not be doing, e.g. баловать детей ‘spoil children’. The subject tells them to stop. The construction has a negative connotation.” [↑](#footnote-ref-4)