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The Russian Words for Anxiety Revisited

Abstract
This paper deals with the Russian words for worry and anxiety. The analysis focuses on the word families of *bespokoit'* and *trevoga*. It is based on data from the Russian-English and English-Russian subcorpora of the *Russian National Corpus*. These data support the hypothesis that the words in the *bespokoit'* family involve a greater degree of intellectual assessment of the situation, whereas the words in the *trevoga* family point to a more intense and less uniform emotional experience. At the same time, the study helped verify certain details of earlier descriptions that had been obtained without parallel corpora.

The choice of a translation equivalent in each particular case depends not only on semantics but also on the overall translation strategy and the individual preferences of the translator. Nevertheless, certain general patterns can be observed. For example, with the word *bespokoit'sja*, as with the English word *worry*, it is important that the subject is thinking over the situation and considering that it may take a turn for the worse. In the case of *trevoga*, as with *anxiety*, a key element is that the subject lacks important knowledge about the situation and therefore does not know what can be done to prevent negative developments. The words *vstrevožit'* and *vstrevožit'sja*, like the English word *alarmed*, are characterized by a sudden realization that something bad might happen and that some action must be taken in response.

Key words
Russian language, semantics, translation, parallel corpora, lexicographic portrait

1. Preliminary remarks

The intended object of the present paper is the family of Russian words for uneasiness over some impending or anticipated event: *bespokojstvo*, *trevoga*, *bespokoit'(sja)*, *trevožit'(sja)*, *bespokojnyj*, *trevožnyj* as well as their prefixal derivatives. Most of them are polysemous.

The development of corpus linguistics and the appearance of electronic parallel corpora of the Russian language have made it possible to study the semantics of Russian lexical units under the assumption that one may regard translation equivalents of a linguistic unit extracted from real texts as a source of information about its semantics. In what follows, I seek to validate, disprove or improve the semantic analysis of the words under consideration obtained without recourse to parallel corpora.

It should be remembered that the choice of translation counterparts for key words of a given text strongly depends on the strategy followed by the translator. Individual translator solutions may be based on different considerations depending on the goals that the translator sets themself. Generally speaking, one can distinguish between two approaches to translation. One is predominantly source-oriented and tries to bring across everything that the author 'meant' ('had in mind', 'wanted to say'). To this end, a translator may insert notes, commentaries, etc. Such a translation gives the readers a more or less complete understanding of the semantic content of the original yet does not give them a direct impression of the text. The other approach is predominantly oriented towards the readers and strives to make the translation create the same impression on the foreign-language speaker that the original has on the native speaker (this approach is used by certain translators of fiction).

The choice of strategy is determined by the translator's aims, and there is no universal strategy that is applicable in all cases. This is particularly true of literary translations (not only fiction in the strict sense of the word: also drama, verse, non-fiction and many non-literary genres). When a translator comes across an expression that is repeated several times throughout the text, they can go by its general meaning and try to select an equivalent that would best bring across the meaning of the original in each particular context ("contextual meaning strategy"), or they can choose a single equivalent of the expression and try to use it in all contexts wherever contextual usage warrants ("form strategy", or the "formal equivalence approach"[1]). The result of the form strategy is a concordance between the source text and the translation with respect to a given expression, which takes place when this expression in the original is translated in each of its occurrences with the same expression; therefore, one may also refer to the form strategy as concordance strategy.

In the case of the contextual meaning strategy, there often arises a variety of different translations of a single word, especially if the latter has no direct equiv-

[1] Formal equivalence approach, a term coined by Eugene Nida, tends to emphasize fidelity to the lexical details and grammatical structure of the original language (Nida & Taber, 1969, p. 200).

alent in the target language and the translator must choose each time an equivalent that best expresses, in their opinion, the aspects of meaning that are the most significant in the given context. This may break the reader's impression especially as the constant repetition of a word might be part of the author's intent.[2]

Yet translations following the contextual meaning strategy may be of great use when one seeks to analyze the semantics of the corresponding expression. In each individual case, the translator has to decide what implicit aspects of its meaning can be sacrificed and what aspects are important for the meaning of the sentence or the text as a whole. These shifts lead to the emphasis of specific aspects of meaning and help to see relevant semantic components of the expression under consideration.

The concordance strategy often allows expressing author's intention in a better way than the contextual meaning strategy (although forced concordance, where the condition "Wherever contextual usage warrants" is ignored and normal usage is violated, gives the translation an "unnatural" and "wooden" sound[3]). However, it is less useful for the purpose of semantic analysis since it does not emphasize different semantic components of the original expression.

In addition, it should be taken into account that some translators choose unusual equivalents, which may be considered their individual stylistic trait.

Having this in mind, we can analyze the data from the RNC (https://ruscorpora.ru/en).

2. Apresjan on the Russian words for 'worry' and 'anxiety'

Apresjan made a subtle analysis of the above-mentioned Russian words. He proposed the following explication of the verbs denoting the emotions in ques-

[2] It is significant that Constance Garnett in her translation of Chekhov's short story *Toska* (included in the *Russian National Corpus*, RNC) renders the Russian language-specific word *toska* the same throughout (although she follows the contextual meaning strategy in most cases). Here, this emotion is at the center of attention (in this short work, the word occurs six times, not counting the title), and a variation of translations would have disrupted the author's intentions. Garnett translated the story's title as *Misery*, and this is also the translation that she gives in five cases out of six (in the remaining case, she slightly changes the syntactic structure and uses the related adjective *miserable*). Her translations of *toska* in other works show a great variance of equivalents: *yearning*, *despondency*, *anguish*, *misery*, *depression*, *dejection*, *distress*, *agony*, *restlessness*, *trouble*, *misgivings*, etc. (Shmelev, 2020, p. 663).

[3] See (Beekman & Callow, 1989, p. 152).

tion, namely, *bespokoit'sja* ***1***[4], *volnovat'sja* ***1*** and *trevožit'sja*: 'To have unpleasant feeling that is usually felt when a person does not know something important about the situation regarding this person and this person fears (*on opasaetsja*) that the situation has changed or may change for the worse' (Apresjan, 2004). His explication of *bespokoit'sja* ***1*** in (Apresjan, 2014) is virtually the same: *A1 bespokoitsa iz-za A2* 'A1 (a person) has unpleasant feeling as is usually felt when a person does not know something important about A2 (a situation) regarding this person and this person fears (*on opasaetsja*) that the situation has changed or may change for the worse.'

Some other explications go along the same lines: *bespokoit'* ***1*** and *trevožit'* ***1***: 'To cause an unpleasant feeling that is usually felt when a person does not know something important about the situation regarding this person and this person fears (*on opasaetsja*) that the situation has changed or may change for the worse' (Apresjan, 2004); *A1 bespokoit A2*: 'A1 (a situation) causes an unpleasant feeling in A2 (a person), the feeling that is usually felt when a person does not know something important about the situation regarding this person and this person fears (*on opasaetsja*) that the situation has changed or may change for the worse' (Apresjan, 2014); *bespokojstvo* ***1***: 'An unpleasant feeling that is usually felt when a person does not know something important about the situation regarding this person and this person fears (*on opasaetsja*) that the situation has changed or may change for the worse' (Apresjan, 2014).

We can notice that these explications contain the verb *opasat'sja* 'to fear'. In accordance with observations in (Zaliznjak & Mikaèljan, 2023), *opasenie* (the substantive form of the verb *opasat'sja*) involves a mental attitude rather than emotional state. I will illustrate this point with the following example. On the evening of the day of Resurrection, the disciples were meeting together behind locked doors "for fear of the Jews" (according to the Synodal translation, *iz opasenija ot Iudeev*). They clearly understood what they were afraid of and what can be done to avoid bad things that might happen (they locked the doors). The words *trevoga* or *bespokojstvo* (instead of *opasenie*) would be totally inappropriate in this context because their focus is on the emotional state rather than mental attitude and the subject does not know what could be done to avoid bad things that might happen. However, as the above explications suggest, they are also linked with an on-going thinking process.

Let us also cite explications Apresjan suggested for some other lexical meanings of the words under consideration:

[4] The numerals (1, 2, etc.) indicate distinct lexemes, not senses of a single lexeme, following Apresjan's lexicographic notation.

- **Bespokoit′sja 2**: *A1 bespokoitsa ob A2*
  'A1 (a person) thinks about A2 (a situation) or the condition of A2 (a person) and try to ensure that they meet normal standards' (Apresjan, 2014).
- **Bespokoit′ 2** and **trevožit′ 2**:
  'to cause somebody (a minor) inconvenience or to disturb somebody's peace' (Apresjan, 2004).
- **Bespokoit′ 2.1**: *A1 bespokoit A2 delaja A3*
  'A1 (a person) disturbs the peace or comfort of A2 by the actions A3 because these actions suggest that A2 has to react somehow' (Apresjan, 2014).
- **bespokojstvo 2**:
  'A situation that requires a person who is in this situation to do actions that are inconvenient for this person or disturb this person's peace' (Apresjan, 2014).

3. Russian-English subcorpus

In what follows, I will discuss the evidence provided by the Russian-English and English-Russian subcorpora of the RNC with special reference to the former.[5] I will begin by looking at different ways of translating the words under consideration when these words appear in the original Russian text. In addition to the data of the Russian-English subcorpus of the RNC, I will refer to the text of *Cancer Ward* by Alexander Solzhenitsyn although it is not included into the RNC. The reason is that the words for 'worry' and 'anxiety' are of great importance for *Cancer Ward* (they may be called key words of the novel). Suffice it to say that Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 of *Cancer Ward* are entitled *Patients' Worries* (*Trevogi bol'nyx*) and *Doctors' Worries* (*Trevogi vračej*), respectively.

I will begin with the verb *bespokoit'sja* (in various lexical meanings). The verb is relatively frequent in the Russian-English subcorpus (592 samples in the corpus of 17,934,957 words as of February 2025, that is, 33 ipm). Translations of this word vary greatly, and the variation of its translations not only shows its high language specificity, but also helps to verify its semantic analysis. The inevitable loss of meaning during the translation of this word into English leads to the emphasis of specific aspects of meaning. The most common equivalent in the subcorpus

[5] The expressions under consideration in the examples extracted from RNC (as well as from *Cancer Ward*) are boldfaced throughout this article.

(used 250 times out of the 592 occurrences of the verb *bespokoit′sja* in the original Russian texts) is the verb *to worry* (and *worried*). This word suggests a long-term thinking process related both to present and future. The subject notices certain signs in present that cause them to think that something bad may be happening or may happen in the future. It is often linked to thinking about someone else as in (1) and (2); however, the verb *bespokoit′sja* may also be used when one is supposed to think about oneself as in (3) and (4):

(1) Ja mučitel′no načala za **nego bespokoit′sja**.
'I started **to worry about him**.' [Fedor Dostoevsky. Netochka Nezvanova (Jane Kentish, 1985)]

(2) – **Ne bespokojsja za neë**, gospoža. S takoj farmakis (koldun′ej) ničego ne slučitsja.
'**Do not worry about her**, Mistress. Nothing can happen to a pharmakis, a sorceress, like her.' [Ivan Yefremov. Thais of Athens (Maria K., 2011)]

(3) Ty že molod, Kolja. A **za operaciju ne bespokojsja**. Ved' u našego doktora vse vyxodit xorošo.
'You're a brick, lad. And **don't worry about the operation**. Our doctor is a magician.' [Dmitry Medvedev. Stout hearts (David Skvirsky, 1961)]

(4) – **O den′gax ne bespokojtes′**! – dobavila Margarita Tixonovna.
'"**Don't worry about money**!" Margarita Tikhonovna added.' [Mikhail Elizarov. The Librarian (Andrew Bromfield, 2015)]

Other translation equivalents that one can see in the Russian-English subcorpus of the RNC are *uneasy*, *anxious* (one could add to it constructions with the words *anxiously* and *anxiety*), *alarmed*, *afraid*, *(to) fear*, *to concern oneself* (and *concerned*), *to disturb oneself* (and *disturbed*), *nervous*, etc. These words emphasize different aspects of the meaning of *bespokoit'sja*. E.g., the word *anxious* (used 36 times as an equivalent of *bespokoit'sja*) emphasizes the component 'A1 does not know something important about the situation' as in (5), (6), (7):

(5) — Kak žal′, čto ja eë ne preduvedomil! Očen′ budet **bespokoit′sja** …
'What a pity I did not tell her! She will be dreadfully **anxious**…' [Fedor Dostoevsky. The Brothers Karamazov (parts 3–4) (Constance Garnett, 1912)]

(6) — V čëm delo? — pričityvala Lida. — Počemu ego net, ja **bespokojus′**.
'What on earth is the matter,' Lydia kept **worrying**. 'Why doesn't he come? I'm **anxious**.' [Vladimir Nabokov. Despair (Dmitri Nabokov, Vladimir Nabokov, 1965)]

(7) Mama do six por ne prišla, ja **bespokojus′**.
'My mother still hasn't come back. I'm quite **anxious**.' [Vasily Grossman. Life and fate. Part 2 (Robert Chandler, 1985)]

The word *uneasy* is even a more common translation equivalent of *bespokoit'sja* (it occurs as an equivalent of *bespokoit'sja* 86 times); in particular, Constance Garnett uses it consistently. The word *uneasy* emphasizes the component 'A1 has unpleasant feeling' as in (8) and (9):

(8) — Da čto s toboj, Vasja? — zakričal on nakonec, edva dogonjaja ego. — Neuželi ty tak **bespokoiš′sja**?..
'"Why, what is the matter with you, Vasya?" he cried at last, hardly able to keep up with him. "Can you really be so **uneasy**?"' [Fedor Dostoevsky. A Faint Heart (Constance Garnett, 1918)]

(9) Èto **bespokoit** muža, **volnuet**, deržit v postojannoj **trevoge**; on ljubit svoju mat′, očen′ ljubit. Nu, i ja **bespokojus′**. **Duša bolit**.
'That **worries** my husband; it **troubles** him and keeps him in constant **agitation**; he loves his mother, loves her dearly. So I am **uneasy**, too, **my soul is in pain**.' [Anton Chekhov. The New Villa (Constance Garnett, 1900–1930)]

An important feature of *bespokoit'sja* is its tendency towards negative polarity. In more than half cases (344), the verb immediately follows the negative particle *ne*. In addition, there are examples with some distance between the particle *ne* and the verb (*ne nado bespokoit'sja*, *ne stoit bespokoit'sja*, *ne očen′ bespokoilsja*, etc.), e.g.:

(10) — **Ne stoit bespokoit′sja**, prokurator, — skazal Afranij …
'"**No need to worry**, Procurator," said Aphranius…' [Mikhail Bulgakov. Master and Margarita (Richard Pevear, Larissa Volokhonsky, 1979)]

(11) — Ja **ne bespokojus′**, — veselo skazal Mostovskoj, — ja **ne sobirajus′ bespokoit′sja**.
''I'm **quite calm**,' said Mostovskoy brightly. 'I've **got nothing to worry about**.'' [Vasily Grossman. Life and fate. Part 2 (Robert Chandler, 1985)]

It is worth noting that there is no clear borderline between *bespokoit'sja **1*** and *bespokoit'sja **2*** especially under negation. Such constructions deny that the subject (A1) is in the process of ongoing thinking about the situation in question; that is why A1 neither feels uneasy because of the situation (as *bespokoit'sja **1*** would suggest) nor tries to improve the situation (as *bespokoit'sja **2*** would suggest); so the distinction *bespokoit'sja **1*** and *bespokoit'sja **2*** is being blurred. In other words, *Ne bespokojtes'* 'Don't worry' may imply either 'Don't be uneasy' or 'No need to act' (or both), and it is often unclear which reading is meant (so, it is rather vagueness than ambiguity). However, in some cases, the difference becomes quite clear. In *The Dream* (filmed by Mikhail Romm in 1941), Anna (who works as a servant for madam Rosa Skorokhod, a Jewish shop and lodging-house owner) wrote in her matrimonial ad, "The Jews need not worry (*Evreev prosjat ne bespokoit'sja*)," and Rosa Skorokhod (played by Faina Ranevskaya) says, "The Jews are not worried (*Evrei ne bespokojatsja*)." In the ad, it is clearly *bespokoit'sja **2***, but Rosa prefers to interpret it as *bespokoit'sja **1***.

In half cases (296 out of 592), the verb *bespokoit'sja* is used in the imperative form immediately following the negative particle *ne*. This reinforces the observation that *bespokoit'sja **1*** is often used in negative sentences in the imperative form (Apresjan, 2014). The most common translation of that construction (regardless of the lexical meaning of the verb) is *Don't worry* (100 samples). Sometimes translators choose other equivalents, e.g., *Don't disturb yourself*. Needless to say that Constance Garnett often translates the construction as *Don't be uneasy* (38 samples)[6], e.g.:

(12) — **Ne bespokojsja**, nynešnij raz ničego ne proizojdët.
'**Don't be uneasy**, nothing will happen this time.' [Fedor Dostoevsky. The Brothers Karamazov (parts 3–4) (Constance Garnett, 1912)]

(13) — A teper' **ne bespokojtes′**, ja i sama ne budu gljadet' na vas, a budu vniz smotret'.
'But **don't be uneasy**, I won't look at you now. I'll look down.' [Fedor Dostoevsky. The Possessed, or The Devils (Constance Garnett, 1913)]

[6] Sometimes other translators choose this equivalent as well.

(14) — **Ne bespokojtes′**, Rodion Romanovič, esli b ja xlopotal v svoju vygodu, to ne stal by tak prjamo vyskazyvat′sja…
‘Don’t be uneasy, Rodion Romanovitch, if I were working for my own advantage, I would not have spoken out so directly.’ [Fedor Dostoevsky. Crime and Punishment (Constance Garnett, 1914)]

However, sometimes (not so often though) she uses other constructions, e. g. *Don’t worry (yourself)*, *Don’t trouble (yourself)*, *Don’t disturb yourself*, *Don’t be frightened*, *Don’t be anxious*, *Don’t distress yourself*, etc. (her choice of an equivalent in each particular case seems arbitrary).

One should also mention the construction with the verb *izvolit′* ‘to desire’ (a little obsolete) in the imperative form, namely, *Ne izvol′te bespokoit′sja* (literally, ‘Do not desire to worry’). Common translations are again *Don’t worry* with some marker of politeness, e.g.:

(15) — **Ne izvol′te bespokoit′sja**, messir, — otozvalsja Azazello…
‘**Kindly do not worry**, Messire,’ responded Azazello…’ [Mikhail Bulgakov. Master and Margarita (Richard Pevear, Larissa Volokhonsky, 1979)]

(16) Gosudarynja, **ne izvol′te bespokoit′sja** — svernëm my šeju ètomu Artamoše.
‘Your Highness, **please don’t worry** — we’ll throttle that Artamosha.’ [Vladimir Sorokin. Day of the Oprichnik (Jamey Gambrell, 2011)]

Again, Constance Garnett often renders *Ne izvol′te bespokoit′sja* as *Don’t be uneasy*.

It should be observed that there are two prefixed derivatives semantically linked to *bespokoit′sja **1*** and *bespokoit′sja **2***, namely, *obespokoennyj* ‘worried’ (passive participle derived from the causative perfective verb *obespokoit′ <X-a>* ‘to cause <X> to start worrying’), which means roughly the same as *bespokoit′sja **1*** (that is, it refers to unpleasant feeling caused by thinking about some situation, which may change to the worse)[7], and *pobespokoit′sja <o čëm-libo>* ‘to take care <of smth>’ (that is, the verb is semantically linked to *bespokoit′sja **2***).

Various forms of the verb *obespokoit′* (mainly the participle *obespokoennyj*) occur in the Russian-English subcorpus of the RNC 85 times. A common translation is *to worry* (*worried*); it appears in the subcorpus 13 times, e.g.:

[7] It should be mentioned that this word, contrary to *bespokoit′sja*, does not show negative polarity.

(17) Vo vremja razgovora u starogo Genri byl očen' **obespokoennyj** vid.
'Throughout the conversation old Henry looked very **worried**.' [Ilya Ilf, Evgeny Petrov. Little Golden America (Charles Malamuth, 1944)]

(18) Vstrevšie nas molodye i zagorelye rostovskie čekisty byli **obespokoeny**.
'The young, tan Rostov Chekists who met us were **worried**.' [Vladimir Sorokin. Bro (Jamey Gambrell, 2011)]

However, *to disturb* (*disturbed*) is even more frequent (32 samples), e. g.:

(19) Tol'ko teper', **obespokoennyj** krasotoj i tajnoj, ogljadevšis', obnaružil Sëmka, čto meždu stenami i polom ne prjamoj ugol, a strogoe, pravil'noe zakruglenie želobom vnutr'.
'Only now, **disturbed** by the beauty and mystery, did Syomka look round and discover that instead of a right angle between the walls and the floor, there was an even line of masonry curving inwards.' [Vasili Shukshin. A Master Craftsman (Kathleen Mary Cook, 1980)]

(20) On byl potrjasën i **obespokoen**.
'He was in shock and **disturbed**.' [Vladimir Sorokin. Bro (Jamey Gambrell, 2011)]

Translators often choose that equivalent when the feeling is caused by some external situation.

One should also mention *trouble* and *troubled* (it occurs as a translation equivalent of *obespokoit'* and *obespokoennyj* 10 times). Other translation equivalents occur much less frequently.

As for the verb *pobespokoit'sja*, it turned out that its frequency in the Russian-English subcorpus was very low, which was contrary to my expectations since the word is commonly used in modern Russian discourse (consider: *Skoro zima, nado pobespokoit'sja o drovax* 'Winter is coming, we must think about the firewood'). One can find there three examples only, of which only one corresponds to its conventional meaning in modern Russian:

(21) Kak-to v xolodnyj zimnij den′ ja zametil, čto Ivanov, tol′ko čto pribyvšij v lager′, vse žmëtsja k kostru, droža ot xoloda. Ja podošël k nemu i uvidel, čto pidžak ego byl nadet na goloe telo. Tixij, skromnyj čelovek, on ne ščadil svoego zdorov′ja radi vypolnenija zadanija. Posle ètogo slučaja my,

konečno, **pobespokoilis′** ob odežde dlja našego zdolbunovskogo svjaznogo.

'One frosty day in winter I noticed that Ivanov, who had just arrived in the camp, was huddled up with cold at one of the fires. I went up to him and saw that he wore nothing beneath his jacket. Quiet and unassuming he did not stint his health where the fulfilment of an assignment was concerned. Naturally, we **saw to it** that our Zdolbunovo messenger was given adequate clothes.' [Dmitry Medvedev. Stout hearts (David Skvirsky, 1961)]

As for the verb *trevožit'sja*, it is much less frequent in the Russian-English subcorpus than *bespokoit'sja* (93 samples, that is, only a little more than 5 ipm). Common translation equivalents of *trevožit'sja* are virtually the same as the equivalents of *bespokoit'sja*, namely, *worry* (including the form *worried*), *alarm* (including the form *alarmed*), *anxious* (plus *anxiously* plus *anxiety*). The examples are not numerous; but in general, the translators chose the equivalents along the same line as for *bespokoit'sja*. E.g., *anxious*, *anxiously* or *anxiety* are sometimes used to indicate the subject does not know something important about the situation as in (22):

(22) — Pëtr Lavrent′evič, — tože vpolgolosa sprosil Štrum, — kak tam Mad′jarov, blagopolučen? Pišet on vam? Ja inogda očen′ **trevožus′**, sam ne znaju otčego.

'Pyotr Lavrentyevich,' asked Viktor in the same hushed voice, 'how's Madyarov? Is he all right? Have you heard from him? Sometimes I get very **anxious**. I don't know why.' [Vasily Grossman. Life and fate. Part 2 (Robert Chandler, 1985)]

The verb *vstrevožit'sja* and the passive participle *vstrevožennyj* (derived from the causative verb *vstrevožit′*) deserve special attention.

The verb *vstrevožit'sja* refers to the starting point of the emotional state *trevožit'sja*. A typical scenario assumes that the subject has just become aware of some event and thinks that it is necessary to act immediately, otherwise something bad may happen; however, the subject does not know exactly what can be done. One might expect that a common translation equivalent of *vstrevožit'sja* would be *alarm* or *alarmed* since the semantic features of *vstrevožit'sja* correspond to the essential elements of the emotional *alarm*: the suddenness, the mobilization to action, the awareness of an impending danger, the need to act immediately, and an element of uncertainty since the alarmed person does not

have a clear plan of action (Wierzbicka, 1999, p. 81). This hypothesis is only partially correct: *vstrevožit'sja* is often translated as *alarm* or *alarmed* (18 times out of 43), but this is not the only translation equivalent. As a rule, *alarm* or *alarmed* are chosen when the starting point of the emotional state is in focus (sometimes, this idea of starting point is strengthened by such words as *to become*, *suddenly*, etc.), e.g.:

(23) Dobrodušnaja fel′dšerica Praskov′ja Fëdorovna navestila poèta vo vremja grozy, **vstrevožilas′**, vidja, čto on plačet, zakryla štoru, čtoby molnii ne pugali bol′nogo, listki podnjala s polu i s nimi pobežala za vračom.
'The good-natured nurse Praskovya Fyodorovna visited the poet during the storm, **became alarmed** on seeing him weeping, closed the blinds so that the lightning would not frighten the patient, picked up the pages from the floor, and ran with them for the doctor.' [Mikhail Bulgakov. Master and Margarita (Richard Pevear, Larissa Volokhonsky, 1979)]

(24) Rebjata, vidimo, rasskazali o žurnale doma, roditeli **vstrevožilis′**, i razrazilsja skandal.
'…some of the boys talked about the magazine at home, their parents grew **alarmed** and a row erupted.' [Vladimir Bukovsky. To build the castle. My life as a dissenter (Michael Scammell, 1979)]

However, some translators regard the words like *to become* as sufficient means to convey the idea of starting point:

(25) Verxovnaja žrica vynula iz čaški nemnogo temnoj mazi, krestoobrazno pročertila eju Tais meždu grudej, pod nimi i obvela soski. Na kože vystupila sinevataja okraska. Tais **vstrevožilas′**, ne ostanutsja li pjatna.
'The high priestess took a little bit of dark ointment from the cup and drew a cross between Thais' breasts, then underlined the breasts and circled the nipples. The skin became bluish. Thais **became worried** about whether the stains would last.' [Ivan Yefremov. Thais of Athens (Maria K., 2011)]

As for the passive participle *vstrevožennyj*, it means roughly the same as *trevožit'sja* (that is, it refers to the same emotional state, maybe with a slight accent on the starting point of the state). However, it occurs in the Russian texts from the Russian-English subcorpus a little more frequently (namely, there are 128 samples of *vstrevožennyj* in the subcorpus). The words *alarm* and *alarmed*

are used as translation equivalents 30 times (they are the most frequent equivalents). Beside them, other equivalents occur: *anxious* (and *in… anxiety*), *agitated* (and *agitation*), *disturbed*, *frightened*, *worried*, *troubled*, *upset*, *distressed*. As one can see, most of them presuppose an external cause of the emotional state.

The causative verbs *bespokoit'* and *trevožit'* are polysemous as one can see from the above explications of *bespokoit' **1***, *trevožit' **1*** and *bespokoit' **2***, *trevožit' **2***. The verbs *bespokoit'* and *trevožit'* are semantically very close in both lexical meanings; however, they behave slightly differently in different contexts.

The verbs *bespokoit' **1*** and *trevožit' **1*** differ in perspective. The verb *bespokoit' **1*** puts emphasis on the resulting emotional state whereas *trevožit' **1*** draws attention to the cause of the emotional state. Accordingly, *bespokoit' **1*** is used less frequently than *bespokoit'sja **1*** (the latter refers to the emotional state directly) whereas *trevožit' **1*** (which refers to the causation) is used more frequently than *trevožit'sja*; cf. (Apresjan, 2004).

The translation equivalents of the verbs *bespokoit' **1*** and *trevožit' **1*** are generally the same as those of the verbs *bespokoit'sja **1*** and *trevožit'sja*. A relatively common translation for *bespokoit' **1*** is *worry*, and for *trevožit' **1*** – *worry* and *alarm*. However, overall, the materials from the Russian-English subcorpus of the *Russian National Corpus* (RNC) do not provide reliable additional information about the semantics of the verbs under consideration.

Much more interesting are the Russian-English subcorpus data related to the verbs *bespokoit' **2*** and *trevožit' **2***.

When someone deliberately and briefly interrupts another person's peace or activity in order to ask for a small favor, the verb *bespokoit'* is more commonly used (according to the numbering of meanings adopted in [Apresjan, 2014], it is *bespokoit' **2.1***). Although Apresjan (2004) writes that in this type of usage *bespokoit'* and *trevožit'* are completely synonymous, the texts show that *trevožit'* is not commonly used in this context. In *Cancer Ward*, the orderly Elizaveta Anatolyevna says to Dr. Dontsova (head of the radiology department):

(26) Ljudmila Afanas'evna! — skazala ona, čuť izgibajas' v izvinenie, kak èto byvaet u povyšenno vežlivyx ljudej. — Mne očeň nelovko **bespokoit'** vas po melkomu povodu, no veď prosto berët otčajanie! – veď net že trjapok, sovsem net!

"Ludmila Afanasyevna," she said, slightly bowing her head in apology, as excessively polite people sometimes do, "I'm sorry **to trouble** you with such a small thing, but it really is enough to drive one to despair. There are no cleaning rags, absolutely none."

The verb *trevožit′* instead of *bespokoit′* would seem completely inappropriate to many native speakers of Russian in this context. It would be perceived not as a disruption of peace, but as the causation of an emotional state of anxiety (i.e., as *trevožit′* ***1***). This is also true for many examples in the RNC in which the verb *bespokoit′* ***2.1*** is used, e.g.:

(27) Emu kazalos′, čto delo, po kotoromu on prišël, nastol′ko neznačitel′no, čto iz-za nego sovestno **bespokoit′** takogo vidnogo sedogo graždanina, kakim byl Ippolit Matveevič.
'He felt his business was so insignificant that it was shameful **to disturb** such a distinguished-looking grey-haired citizen as Vorobyaninov.' [Ilya Ilf, Evgeny Petrov. The Twelve Chairs (John Richardson, 1961)]

(28) …ja bojalsja tebja **bespokoit′**.
'…I didn't dare **to disturb** you.' [Aleksandr Kuprin. Olesya (Stepan Apresyan, 1982)]

(29) Prostite, – skazala Sof′ja Aleksandrovna, – očen' neudobno vas bespokoit′, no sročnoe delo… Vy ne mogli by vyzvat′ k telefonu Polinu Aleksandrovnu?
'"I'm very sorry **to disturb** you," Sofya Alexandrovna said, "but it's urgent… I wonder if you could please ask Polina Alexandrovna to come to the phone?"' [Anatoly Rybakov. Children of the Arbat (Harold Shukman, 1989)]

That said, it is possible that intuitions differ among native speakers. In some texts included in the Russian-English subcorpus of the RNC, the verb *trevožit′* ***2*** is used, for example:

(30) Ja posetitelja takogo, kak vy, bez sekretarja doložit′ ne mogu, a k tomu že i sami, osoblivo daveča, zakazali ix ne **trevožit′** ni dlja kogo, poka tam polkovnik, a Gavrila Ardalionyč bez doklada idët.
'No, no! I can't announce a visitor like yourself without the secretary. Besides the general said he was not to be **disturbed** — he is with the Colonel C—. Gavrila Ardalionovitch goes in without announcing.' [Fedor Dostoevsky. The Idiot (Eva Martin, 1915)]

But there is a situation where replacing *bespokoit′* ***2.1*** with *trevožit′* ***2*** is entirely impossible. This concerns the use of *bespokoit′* ***2.1*** as a formula of politeness

when addressing someone, especially on the telephone; this often carries a shade of servility (cf. Apresjan, 2004; 2014)., e.g.:

(31) No Dubenkov okazalsja uslužlivym i dobrodušnym čelovekom. On zvonil Štrumu po telefonu i govoril: — **Bespokoit** Dubenkov. Ja ne pomešal, Viktor Pavlovič?
'In fact, and Dubyonkov was very decent obliging. When he phoned Viktor, he said: "Dubyonkov **speaking**. I hope I'm not disturbing you, Viktor Pavlovich?"' [Vasily Grossman. Life and Fate, Part 3 (Robert Chandler, 1985)]

At the same time, the perfective correlate of *trevožit' **2***, namely, *potrevožit'*, is quite acceptable, e.g.:

(32) — My **potrevožili** vas, madam Dunčil′, — otnessja k dame konferans′e, — vot po kakomu povodu: my xoteli vas sprosit′, est′ li eščë u vašego supruga valjuta?
'We **have troubled** you, Madame Dunchil,' the master of ceremonies adverted to the lady, 'with regard to the following: we wanted to ask you, does your husband have any more currency?' [Mikhail Bulgakov. The Master and Margarita (Richard Pevear, Larissa Volokhonsky, 1979)]

Finally, one can turn to the nouns *bespokojstvo* and *trevoga*. Both nouns are polysemous. According to Apresjan (2014), the word *bespokojstvo* has two meanings: *bespokojstvo **1*** and *bespokojstvo **2***, corresponding to *bespokoit' **1*** and *bespokoit' **2.1***, respectively. The word *trevoga* has a meaning corresponding to the verb *trevožit' **1*** (in Apresjan, 2004, this is labeled *trevoga **1***), but it lacks a meaning corresponding to *trevožit' **2***. However, *trevoga* has a distinct meaning realized in expressions like *vozdušnaja trevoga* 'air alert', *požarnaja trevoga* 'fire alarm', and idioms such as *bit' trevogu* 'to sound the alarm.' This polysemy must be kept in mind when analyzing the words *bespokojstvo* and *trevoga* in the Russian-English subcorpus and their translation equivalents.

Both *bespokojstvo* in its two lexical meanings and *trevoga **1*** exhibit a wide range of translation equivalents. This is already apparent from the translation of typical phrases involving these words. For instance, the phrase *sil'noe bespokojstvo* (meaning *bespokojstvo **1***) occurs four times in the RNC and has four different translations: *intense uneasiness*, *great restlessness*, *strong anxiety*, and, within the expression *v sil'nom bespokojstve*, it is rendered as *much agitated*.

With regard to these words, translators generally follow a context-sensitive strategy[8]. Even Pevear and Volokhonsky, in translating *trevoga* and *bespokojstvo* in *The Master and Margarita*, consistently rely on a contextual meaning approach, although they usually follow a concordance-based strategy when translating key words of a literary work. For example, the word *toska* in *Crime and Punishment* and in *The Master and Margarita* is regularly rendered as *anguish*, despite the frequent semantic shift this entails (see Shmelev, 2020, pp. 663–664). Thus, the word *trevoga*, which appears 14 times in the novel (specifically in reference to an internal state), is translated sometimes as *alarm* (more often), sometimes as *anxiety*. The word *bespokojstvo* (seven occurrences) is also translated in various ways. Also, it is worth considering their translations of the highly characteristic phrase *vpast' v bespokojstvo* from *The Master and Margarita*:

(a) *Ivan **vpal v bespokojstvo** – Ivan **became anxious***
(b) *A vy ne **vpadete v bespokojstvo?** – You're not going **to get upset?***
(c) *Ivan **ne vpal v bespokojstvo**, kak i obeščal… – Ivan **did not get upset**, as he had promised…*
(d) *…neizvestno otčego **vpal v tosku i bespokojstvo** – …for some unknown reason, **lapsed into anxiety and uneasiness***
(e) *Ivanuška **vpal v bespokojstvo** – Ivanushka **fell into anxiety***

4. English-Russian subcorpus

Generally speaking, the analysis of the occurrence of the words under investigation in translated texts is often even a more effective research tool than the analysis of the translation equivalents of these words. The translation of language-specific words in the original is a problem that the translator, as a rule, reflects on, and thus the translator's individual preferences play a great role in the solution of such problems. Moreover, the translator's grounds for choosing a particular solution "may be superficial understanding, the influence of bilingual dictionaries, or even the desire to give the translated text a veneer of 'foreignness' to make the reader perceive the text as a translation" (Mixajlov, 2005, p. 381). Thus, when the original language is Russian, the parallel corpus sometimes gives us insufficient informa-

[8] The terms *contextual meaning strategy* and *context-sensitive strategy* are treated as synonymous throughout this paper.

tion about the semantics of Russian lexical units. In contrast, the appearance of linguistic units in a translation most often results from an unconscious decision of the translator that reflects his spontaneous linguistic activity. In other words, translation into Russian is close to everyday linguistic activity of speakers of Russian. An occurrence of a given Russian expression in translation, more often than not, reflects a 'naïve' choice of words. By studying why a translator uses a given word, we are often able to uncover some of the latter's semantic characteristics that went unnoticed during the analysis of original texts.

Indeed, not all material in the English-Russian subcorpus of the RNC is relevant for such analysis. When a translator follows the concordance strategy, the choice of the Russian word is determined by the usage in the original rather than by the semantic features of the Russian words. For example, the subcorpus includes Lemony Snicket's *The Ersatz Elevator*. In this novel, considerable attention is given to metalinguistic reflection on the word *anxious* and its semantic differences from *nervous*. The importance of the word *anxious* in the text compels the translator to follow the concordance strategy and to consistently choose the same word — *trevoga* or its derivatives — to translate *anxious* (often contrasted with *nervous*). Apparently, *trevoga* and its derivatives are perceived by the translator (and likely by many other Russian native speakers) as the closest equivalents to English *anxious*. Abandoning the concordance strategy in favor of a contextual semantic one would have been impossible here, as it would completely undermine the basis for the metalinguistic reflection that plays an important role in the novel.

The verb *bespokoit'sja* appears 1,060 times in the English-Russian subcorpus of the RNC, which is about the same frequency as in the Russian-English subcorpus. In exactly half the examples (530 occurrences), it is used as a translation of the English verb *worry*. This confirms the hypothesis that *bespokoit'sja* is associated with the subject's thoughts that something bad may happen.

In approximately half the cases, the verb directly follows the negative particle *ne* or is separated from it by a few words. This supports the hypothesis of a rudimentary negative polarity in the verb *bespokoit'sja*.

The English-Russian subcorpus data show that the description in Apresjan (2014), according to which only *bespokoit'sja* ***2*** (in which the prepositional phrase with *o* marks the object of effort) can govern a prepositional-case group with *o*, and not *bespokoit'sja* ***1***, is not entirely accurate.[9] There are quite a few

[9] Such government was actually noted for the verb *bespokoit'sja* ***1*** in (Apresjan, 2004, p. 27): "All three synonyms [*bespokoit'sja* ***1***, *trevožit'sja*, *volnovat'sja* ***1***] in their imperfective forms also govern prepositional phrases of the type o kom-libo or o čëm-libo with a similar meaning; cf. — *Varen'ka, Varen'ka, — laskovo zagovorila Sof'ja Aleksandrovna, — obo mne* ***bespokoiš'sja****, dobraja*

examples in the subcorpus where it is specifically *bespokoit'sja **1*** (as seen from the English original) that governs a prepositional phrase with *o*, and in these cases, the phrase indicates the cause of the emotional state. Compare, e.g.:

(33) And then he began **to worry about the time**.
'No zatem on načal **bespokoit′sja o tom, skol′ko vremeni prošlo**.' [Clive Staples Lewis. The Chronicles of Narnia. The Voyage of the 'Dawn Treader' (G. A. Ostrovskaja, 1991)]

(34) "I hope he's all right," said Christopher Robin. "**I've been wondering about** him. I expect Piglet's with him…"
'— Ja nadejus′, on živ i zdorov, — skazal Kristofer Robin. — **Ja nemnogo bespokojus′ o** něm. Interesno, Pjatačok s nim ili net?' [A. A. Milne. Winnie-the-Pooh (B. Zaxoder, 1960)]

(35) I **am a little worried about** the extra expense of this, but if you do not think it justified for the sake of safety, let me know and I will alter my arrangements accordingly.
'Ja **nemnožko bespokojus′ o** dopolnitel′nyx rasxodax, no esli vy ne sočtete, čto oni opravdany soobraženijami predostorožnosti, dajte mne znat′, i ja izmenju svoi plany.' [Dorothy L. Sayers. Strong Poison (M. M. Lanina, 2007)]

(36) I **am getting quite uneasy about** him, though why I should I do not know, but I do wish that he would write, if it were only a single line.
'Očen′ **bespokojus′ o** něm, xotja, sobstvenno, ne znaju, počemu: xorošo bylo by, esli by on napisal xoť odnu stročku.' [Bram Stoker. Dracula (N. Sardrova, 1912)]

(37) I **had worried about** how I'd go about undressing, how, if he wasn't going to help, I'd do what so many girls did in the movies, take off my shirt, drop my pants, and just stand there, stark-naked, arms hanging down, meaning: This is who I am, this is how I'm made, here, take me, I'm yours. But his move had solved the problem.

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*ty duša. Obo mne **bespokoit'sja** ne nado*. '– Varenka, Varenka,' Sofya Alexandrovna began tenderly, 'you're worrying about me, you kind soul. There's no need to worry about me.' (A. Rybakov. Children of the Arbat)."

‘Ja **bespokoilsja o tom,** kak budu razdevat′sja, esli on ne pomožet, kak budu delat′ to, čto stol′ko devušek delali v kino, snimu futbolku, stjanu trusy, i budu stojat′ tam, v čëm mat′ rodila, opustiv ruki po bokam, kak by govorja: Èto ja, tak ja sozdan, vot, beri menja, ja tvoj. No ego dejstvija rešili problemu.’ [André Aciman. Call me by your name (V. P. Dimirova, 2019)]

(38) The MGB reported the anxieties of the Jews in Soviet Ukraine, who understood that the policy must come from the top, and **worried that** “no one can say what form this is going to take.”
‘MGB raportoval o straxax evreev v Sovetskoj Ukraine, kotorye ponimali, čto ukazanija, dolžno byt′, spuščeny sverxu, i **bespokoilis′ o tom, čto** “nikto ne znaet, kakuju formu èto primet”’. [Timothy D. Snyder. Bloodlands. Europe between Hitler and Stalin (L. Zurnadži, 2015)]

(39) He says they **were all very dubious about** what sort of reception they would get.
‘Džordž Xarrison rasskazyvaet, čto rebjata **očen′ bespokoilis′ o** tom, kak ix vstretjat.’ [Davies Hunter. The Beatles (A. Gryzunova, 2017)]

(40) Despite putting a brave face on things for everyone else’s benefit at Garden Lodge, privately I **began to get very anxious about** my own health. I thought I could be HIV positive as well.
‘Pered obitateljami Garden Lodž ja xrabrilsja, no v glubine duši **bespokoilsja o** sobstvennom zdorov′e. Ja podozreval, čto tože mogu byt′ VIČ-položitel′nym. [Jim Hutton. Mercury and Me (V. Gerstle, 2019)]

(41) Wilson’s **thoughts were with** the little girl rushed to emergency in critical condition.
‘Uilson **bespokoilas′ o** malen′koj devočke vsego devjati let, kotoruju uvezli na skoroj pomošči v kritičeskom sostojanii… [Rosie Dimanno. ‘There’s a man with a gun!’ (Inosmi.ru, 2018)]

There are also numerous examples of the causative verb *obespokoit'*, most often in the participial form *obespokoennyj*, 229 in total. In fewer than half (around a third — 75), the direct stimulus was the English word *worry*, but *worry* remains the most frequent stimulus.

Of note is the fact that the verb *pobespokoit'sja* (semantically related to *bespokoit'sja **2***) appeared 14 times in the English-Russian subcorpus (compared

to only three times in the Russian-English subcorpus). The examples correspond well to the meaning of *bespokoit'sja **2***:

(42) If one gentleman under a cloud **is not to put himself a little out of the way** to assist another gentleman in the same condition, what's human nature?'
'Esli odin džentl′men, popavšij v bedu, **ne pobespokoitsja nemnogo**, čtoby pomoč′ drugomu džentl′menu, naxodjaščemusja v takom že položenii, čego stoit čelovečeskaja priroda!' [Charles Dickens. The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club (A. V. Krivcova, E. L. Lann, 1933)]

(43) With a shock he realized that this was the smoke from his little cooking-fire, which he had **neglected** to put out.
'S ispugom on ponjal, čto èto dym ot ego sobstvennogo malen′kogo kostra, kotoryj on **ne pobespokoilsja** pogasit′.' [J. R. R. Tolkien. The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers (M. Kamenkovič, V. Karrik, 1994)]

(44) Obviously, Father Abbot **was seeing to it** that they all cooled their heels.
'Očevidno, otec abbat **pobespokoilsja** o tom, čtoby oni oxladili svoj pyl.' [Walter M. Miller, Jr. A Canticle For Leibowitz (S. Borisov, 1999)]

This raises a question: why such a disproportion (14 examples of *pobespokoit'sja* in the English-Russian subcorpus vs. only three in the Russian-English) exist? Certainly, the English-Russian subcorpus is larger, but by less than a factor of two. Do translators use this verb significantly more often than authors who write originally in Russian?

One might hypothesize that *pobespokoit'sja* is a relatively new verb (as the Russian originals in the Russian-English subcorpus are significantly older than the translated texts in the English-Russian subcorpus). But the Main corpus of RNC shows that its frequency has grown only slightly since the 19th century. Thus, the reason for the discrepancy remains unclear.

The verb *trevožit'sja* occurs far less frequently in both subcorpora compared to *bespokoit'sja*. The stimuli for its appearance are generally the same (*worry* being the most frequent). Yet it is interesting to examine in which cases translators prefer this verb as an equivalent.

As mentioned, *bespokoit'sja* is chosen as a translation of *worry* 530 times, while *trevožit'sja* appears 123 times. In addition, there are 121 examples with the causative verb *bespokoit'*, 103 with *bespokojstvo*, 75 with *obespokoit'* (usually in the form *obespokoennyj*), 20 with *zabespokoit'sja*, 10 with *obespokoit'sja*, and

isolated cases with *pobespokoit'sja* and *pobespokoit'*. Also: 101 examples with *trevoga*, 61 with *trevožit'*, 57 with *vstrevožit'* (including *vstrevožennyj*), and 13 with *vstrevožit'sja*. Altogether, translations of *worry* using words from the *bespokoit'* and *trevoga* word families account for almost half of all translation variants, with a clear predominance of the *bespokoit'* family. This likely reflects the fact that these words contain an element of intellectual evaluation of the situation, which better conveys the specific meaning of *worry*, implying reflection and concern about a possible negative outcome.

For the words *anxious*, *anxiously*, and *anxiety*, the situation is different. Here, although the difference is small, the *trevoga* family predominates. This is likely due to the fact that the English words emphasize a lack of important knowledge about a situation, which gives rise to an intense emotional experience.

For the word *alarm*, the predominance of the *trevoga* family is more significant. Notable translation equivalents include *vstrevožit'* (including *vstrevožennyj*) and *vstrevožit'sja*, likely reflecting the idea of a sudden realization of impending danger.

Overall, the analysis of English-to-Russian translations shows that *bespokoit'(sja)* and *trevožit'(sja)* are close synonyms, and the choice between them often depends on the translator's individual preference. It can be observed that in describing internal states, *bespokoit'sja* is used significantly more often than *trevožit'sja*, while in describing the cause of such states, the causative verb *trevožit'* is used nearly as often as *bespokoit'*. Observations from Apresjan (2004) are largely confirmed: *bespokoit'sja* involves a greater degree of intellectual evaluation, while *trevožit'sja* points to a more intense and less uniform emotional experience. At the same time, data from the parallel subcorpus of the RNC were insufficient to verify whether external signs mentioned by Apresjan such as uncontrolled facial expressions and small motor movements are indeed characteristic of *trevožit'sja*.

The difference between *bespokoit'(sja)* and *trevožit'(sja)* is especially striking in contexts involving negation: *ne bespokoit'sja* may indicate indifference, while *ne trevožit'sja* indicates the absence of anxiety. It is no coincidence that expressions like *Don't worry*, *Never mind*, etc., are often translated into Russian as *ne bespokoj'sja* or *ne bespokojtes'*. This explains why *ne bespokoj'sja* and *ne bespokojtes'* occur significantly more often (267 instances) than *ne trevož'sja* and *ne trevož'tes*' (39 instances) in the English-Russian subcorpus.

5. Conclusions

The use of data from the Russian-English and English-Russian subcorpora of the RNC made it possible to test the descriptions of words from the *bespokoit'* and *trevoga* word families as presented in the works of Apresjan. A significant portion of the observations made in those works was confirmed. At the same time, it was possible to supplement and refine these descriptions. In particular, the rudimentary negative polarity of *bespokoit'sja* was identified. Possible syntactic patterns were clarified. Overall, the analysis demonstrated the usefulness of parallel corpus data in lexicographic portraying.

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