

The background of the slide features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. These shapes are primarily located on the left and right sides of the slide, framing the central text area.

The Tree-Banks as a Method for Translation?

Report of a Workshop conducted in
Tehran, October 2017

A) Main Question of the Workshop:

Was information provided by the tree-banks enough for the beginners to reach an acceptable translation of a sample text?

There was a paragraph of Plato (Sym.: 210e-211a) as a sample with two tree-banks showing syntactical relations in the text, Jiyoung's Greek tree-banks and Brian's Greek tree-banks.

The paragraph from Jiyoung's tree-banks

(ἐφη) ὅς γὰρ ἂν μέχρι ἐνταῦθα πρὸς τὰ ἐρωτικὰ παιδαγωγηθῇ , θεώμενος ἐφεξῆς τε καὶ ὀρθῶς τὰ καλὰ , πρὸς τέλος ἤδη ἰὼν τῶν ἐρωτικῶν ἐξαίφνης κατόψεται τι θαυμαστὸν τὴν φύσιν καλόν , τοῦτο (ἐστίν) ἐκεῖνο , ὃ Σώκρατες , οὗ δὴ ἔνεκεν καὶ οἱ ἔμπροσθεν πάντες πόνοι ἦσαν , πρῶτον μὲν αἰεὶ ὄν καὶ οὐ -τε γιγνόμενον οὐ -τε ἀπολλύμενον , οὐ -τε αὐξανόμενον οὐ -τε φθίνον , ἔπειτα οὐ τῇ μὲν καλόν (ὄν) , τῇ δ' αἰσχρόν , οὐ -δὲ τότε μὲν (ὄν) , τότε δὲ οὐ , οὐ -δὲ πρὸς μὲν τὸ καλόν (ὄν) , πρὸς δὲ τὸ αἰσχρόν , οὐδ' ἔνθα μὲν καλόν (ὄν) , ἔνθα δὲ αἰσχρόν , ὥς τισὶ μὲν ὄν καλόν , τισὶ δὲ (ὄν) αἰσχρόν :

B) First Session- 10/24/2017:

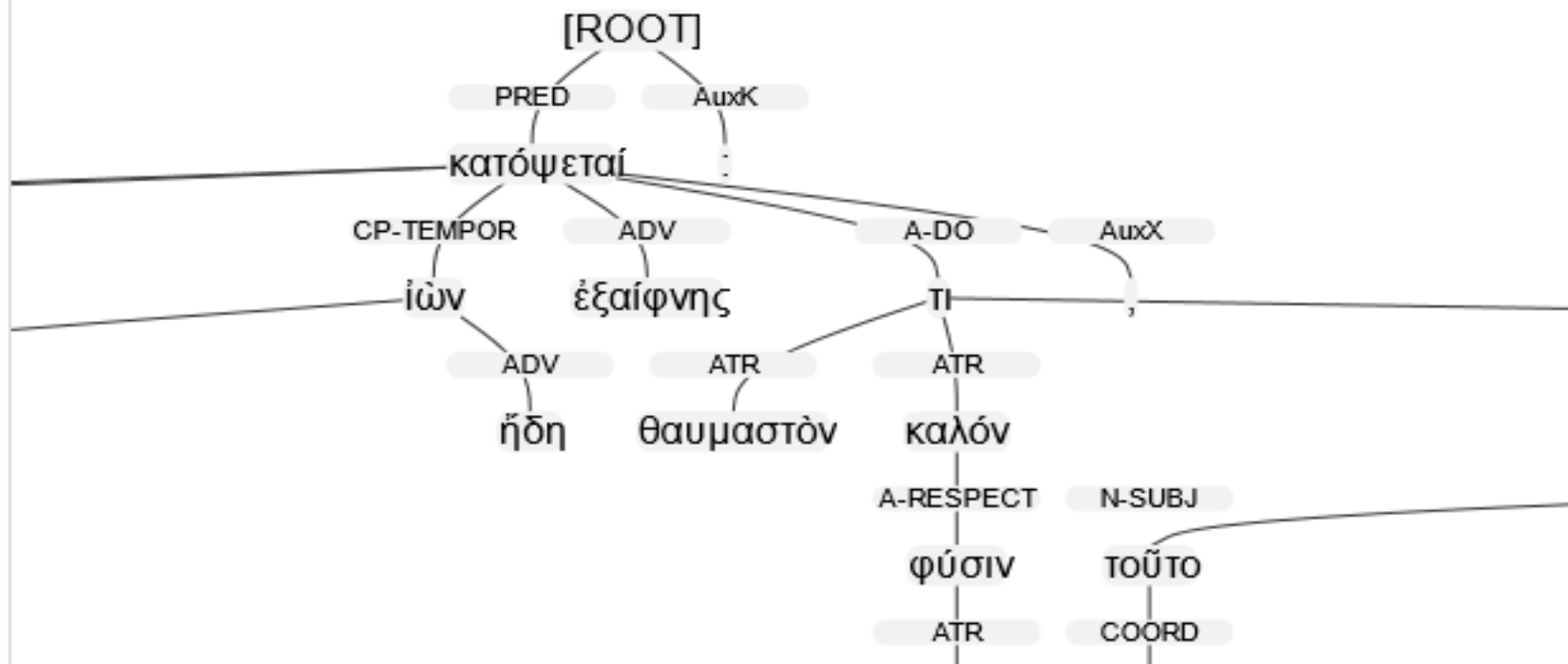
There was a pretest at the first session, before introducing the tree-bank designed by Jiyoung. In the pretest, the beginner's confidence about the probable meanings of a word in the sample text (4 scores), her/his ability to compose sentences with the words, which she/he knew with certainty the meaning of (5 scores), the words she/he knew only by conjecture (3 scores), the words she/he had seen but now forgot their meanings (2 scores), and the words she/he did not know (1 score) were assessed or marked. Then, the first tree-bank designed by Jiyoung was introduced generally. And the roles of the words and their syntactical relations were explained, based on the tree-bank and without any reference to their meanings in New Persian.

C) Second Session- 10/28/2017:

At the second session, the following sentence composed by the main verb of the text was selected for translation:

“κατόψεται τι θαυμαστόν τὴν φύσιν καλόν, ...”

Here, the verb “κατόψεται” is the main verb of the text and also, it selected by Jiyoun as a PRED. from ROOT.



Based on the results of the pretest, four students of five did not know the verb and one student had seen it but now forgot its meaning.

The pretest results of the sentence are as the followings:

Student 1 (Ms Mahdieh Roohi): κατόψεταιί (2) τι (3)
θαυμαστὸν (2) τὴν (1) φύσιν (1) καλόν (4).

Student 2 (Ms Fatemeh Haghiri Peykani): κατόψεταιί (1) τι (3)
θαυμαστὸν (2) τὴν (4) φύσιν (1) καλόν (4).

Student 3 (Ms Faeze Khoshtinat): κατόψεταιί (1) τι (1)
θαυμαστὸν (1) τὴν (1) φύσιν (1) καλόν (2).

Student 4 (Mr Hasan Salehi): κατόψεταιί (1) τι (2) θαυμαστὸν
(3) τὴν (3) φύσιν (4) καλόν (5).

Student 5 (Mr Mohammad Enayati Raad): κατόψεταιί (1) τι (1)
θαυμαστὸν (1) τὴν (1) φύσιν (1) καλόν (2).

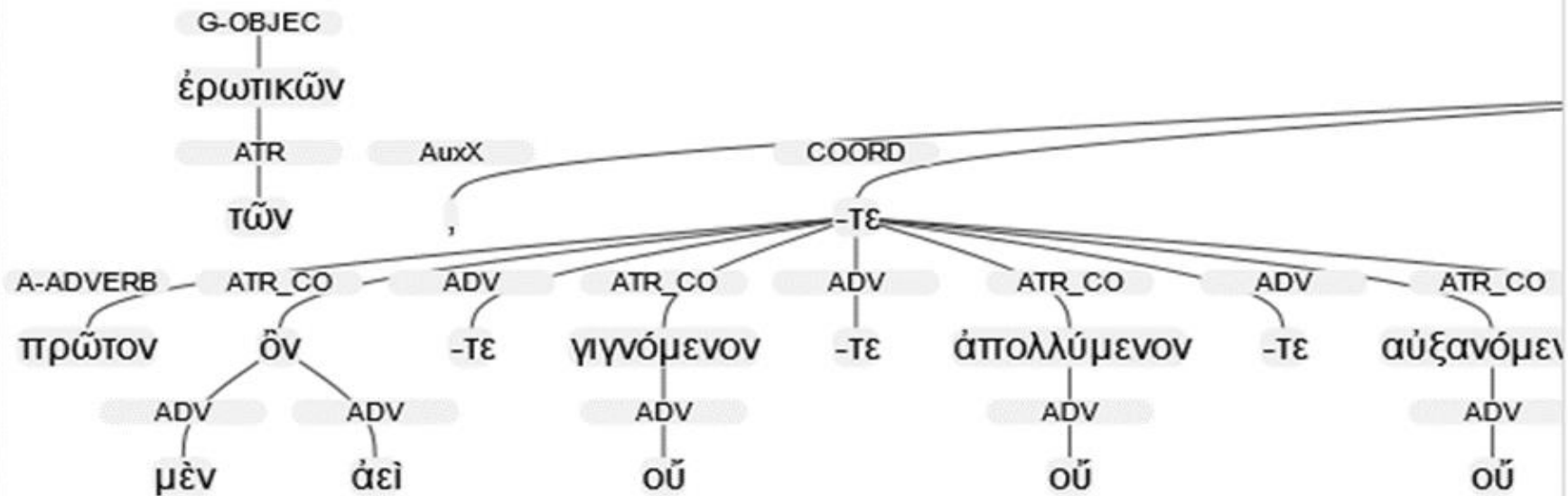
The tree-bank of the sentence having been explained by the teacher of workshop, the students composed translations in New Persian based on the meanings of the words in English. Regarding the teacher's guide about the difference between two accusative substantives in the sentence, i. e. “τι” and “φύσιν”, as well as the explanation of the roles of the words in the tree-banks, the students composed acceptable translations of the sentence, showing the difference in the syntactical roles of the words.

D) Third Session- 10/31/2017:

At the third session, the students were asked to compare two different tree-banks of the following sentence, in order that the teacher might find out whether they considered the information provided sufficient for translation.

“πρῶτον μὲν αἰὲν ὄν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον, οὔτε αὐξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον, ...”

Based upon the first tree-banks by Jiyoun, the students, aided by the teacher, managed to arrive at similar, though not exactly the same, translations in New Persian, which were acceptable.



Nevertheless, comparing the tree-banks, some of the students composed different translations of the sentence based on their different understandings of the roles of the words presented differently in the tree-banks. For example, based on the first tree-banks, student “2” translated “ᾧ ὅν” as a substantive (something like “always-being” in English), while, based on the second tree-banks, she translated it as a complete sentence (something like English “It always is.”). To compare, student “1” translated the same words as a complete sentence with a verb referring to “being” (something like “Always, it is.”) based on the first tree-banks, while, based on the second one, she translated them also as a complete sentence but with a copula and a subject referring to “Being” (something like “Always, it is Being”).

E) An Answer to the Main Question of the Workshop, and the Students' Assessments:

It seemed that the tree-banks could provide enough information for the beginners to arrive at New Persian translations of the aforementioned sentences.

However, the function of the tree-banks was not to compose translations, since it was necessary for the students to be aided by a teacher to understand the role of the words in their syntactical relations in the sentences. In other words, the tree-banks were used only as tools to form an educational plan.

In addition, based on the viewpoints of the students who participated in the workshop, the tree-banks should be used alongside teachers' educational programs explaining fundamental rules of Greek language. Moreover, visible and different comprehensible analyses of one text, shown in different tree-banks, was one of the benefits of such a diagram in terms of translation.

** The sessions were conducted with the participation of my colleagues Ms Sofia A Koutlaki, Ms Maryam Forghani, Ms Farnoosh Shamsian, and Mr Amin Shahverdi, to whom my acknowledgements are due.

Arash Keramati (Teacher of the Workshop)