Structural Blueprints: English-Ukrainian Translation

Deconstructing grammatical friction points between analytic and synthetic languages.



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The Typology Matrix

English: The Analytic Engine

- **Syntax Dominant:** Relies on rigid sentence structure.
- **Morphology**: Minimal inflection; meaning changes via word order and auxiliary words.



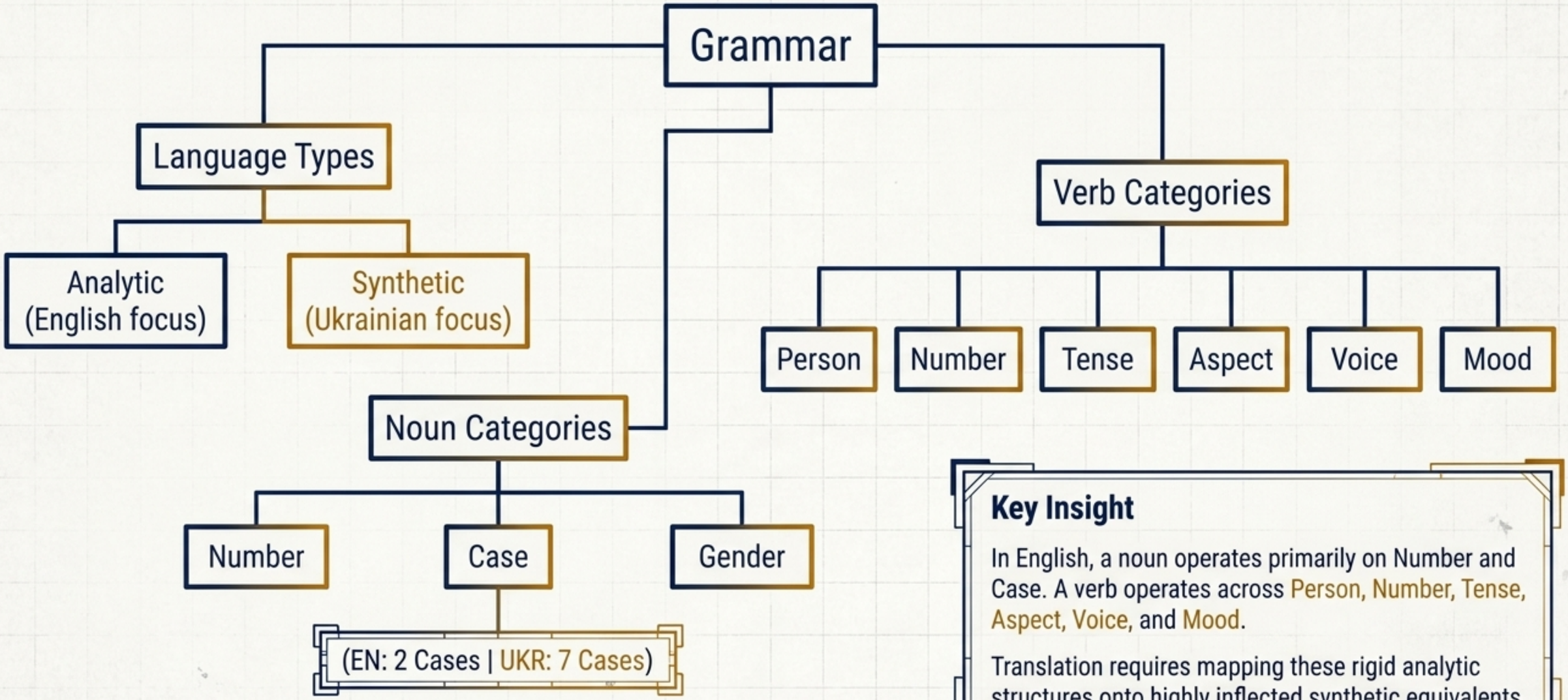
Ukrainian: The Synthetic Engine

- **Morphology Dominant**: Analyzes the structure of words (stems, roots, prefixes, suffixes).
- **Syntax Flexible**: Word order can shift without losing core meaning due to case markings.



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Grammatical Taxonomy



Key Insight

In English, a noun operates primarily on Number and Case. A verb operates across Person, Number, Tense, Aspect, Voice, and Mood.

Translation requires mapping these rigid analytic structures onto highly inflected synthetic equivalents.

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The Obligatory Choice Pivot

English Base
(Optional Lexical Choice)

Example: He hired a worker.

Note: No indication of the gender of the person.



Grammatical choices are obligatory in **Ukrainian**, while lexical choices are **optional** in English.

Path A (Masculine)

Найняв працівника /
Нанял рабочего

Path B (Feminine)

Найняв працівницю /
Нанял работницу

The translator **cannot proceed without adding information (gender)** that the source text deliberately or naturally omitted.

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Category of Gender: Morphology vs. Personification

The Translator's Self (Morphological Rule)

English:

I came into the room.

Gender-neutral base

Ukrainian:

Я зайшов [M] / зайшла [F] в кімнату.

Requires translator intervention based on the speaker

Personification (Lexical Choice)

English assigns "She" to vehicles and nations:

- The ship's struck a rock. She's sinking.
- France has decided to increase her/its trade...
- How's your new car? She's running beautifully.

Literary Case Study: The Happy Prince (Oscar Wilde)

English source: The Swallow (His) fell in love with the Reed (Her).

Ukrainian friction: "Ластівка" (Swallow) is feminine; "Очерет" (Reed) is masculine.

Translation reality: The translator must flip the genders of the romantic pair to satisfy synthetic grammar rules:

Якось уночі над містом пролітала Ластівка... вона відстала, бо закохалася в чудовий Очерет.

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The Inflection Gap: Category of Case

English (2 Cases)

Common Case
(uninflected)

Possessive Case
('s inflected)

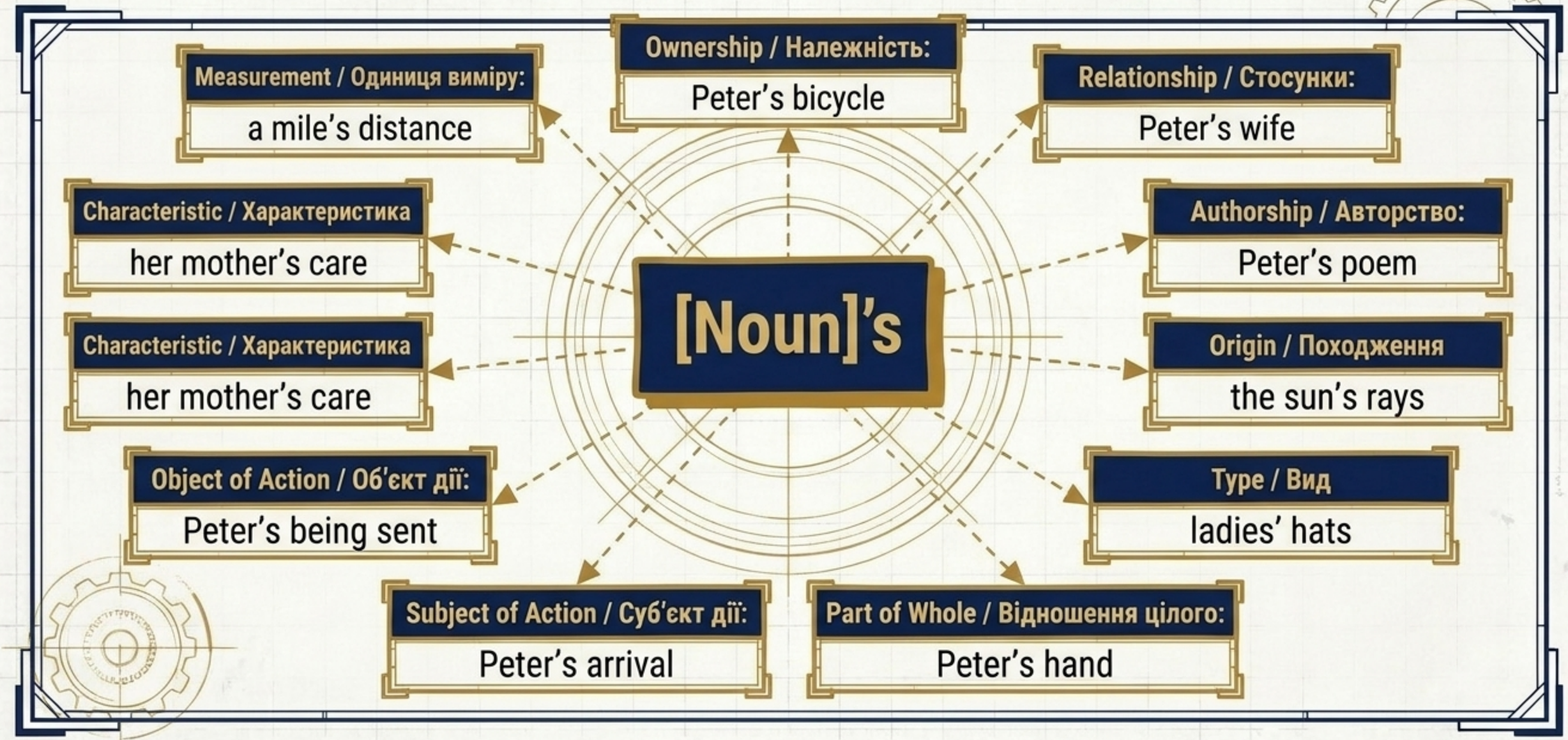
"the man over there**'s** dog"
/ "Mary and Ann**'s** room"

Ukrainian (7 Cases)

- Nominative
- Genitive
- Dative
- Accusative
- Instrumental
- Locative
- Vocative

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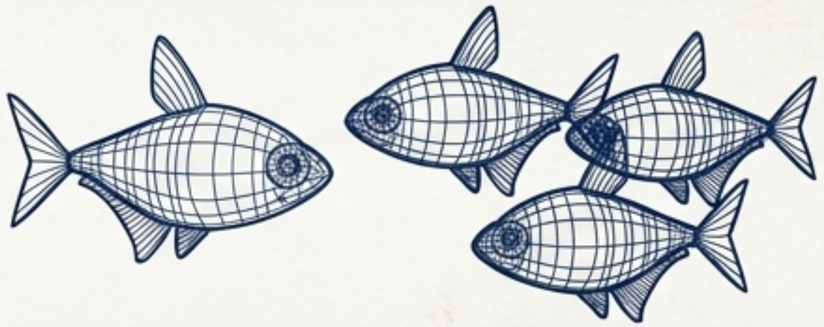
The 10 Nodes of Possession



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The Irregular Plurality Grid: Category of Number

Latin/Greek Anomalies	Singular Facades (Plural Concept, Singular Verb)	Uncountable Concepts (Piece/Some required)
Phenomenon -> phenomena Criterion -> criteria Analysis -> analyses Crisis -> crises	The news is at 6.30 p.m. Athletics is good for young people. Billiards is played all over the world.	I can give you a piece of advice (some advice). There was some money on the table. The police lack basic equipment.



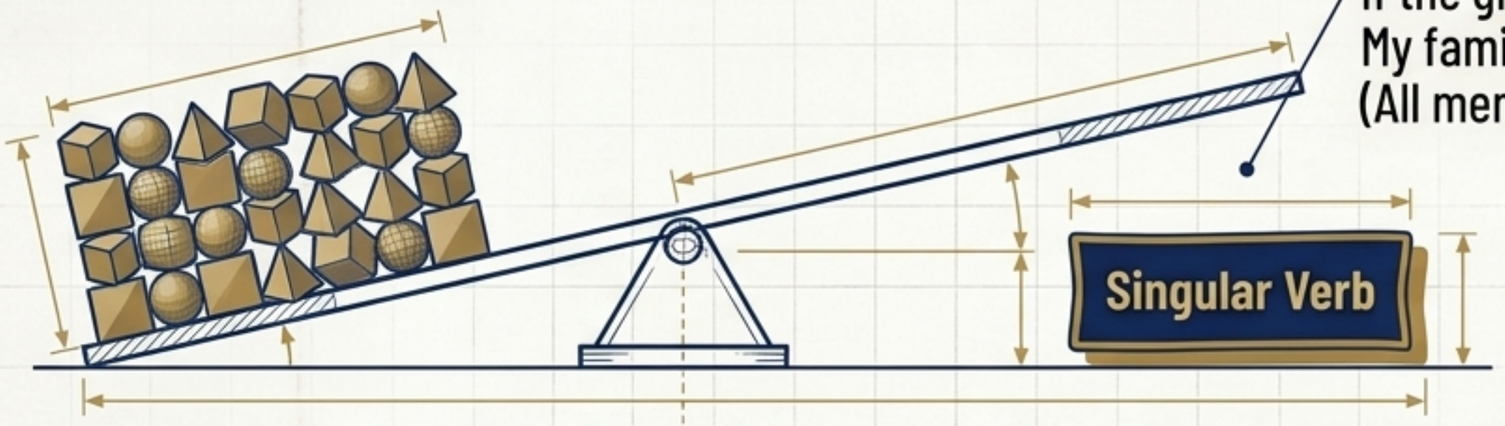
"I caught three fish" vs "freshwater fishes"

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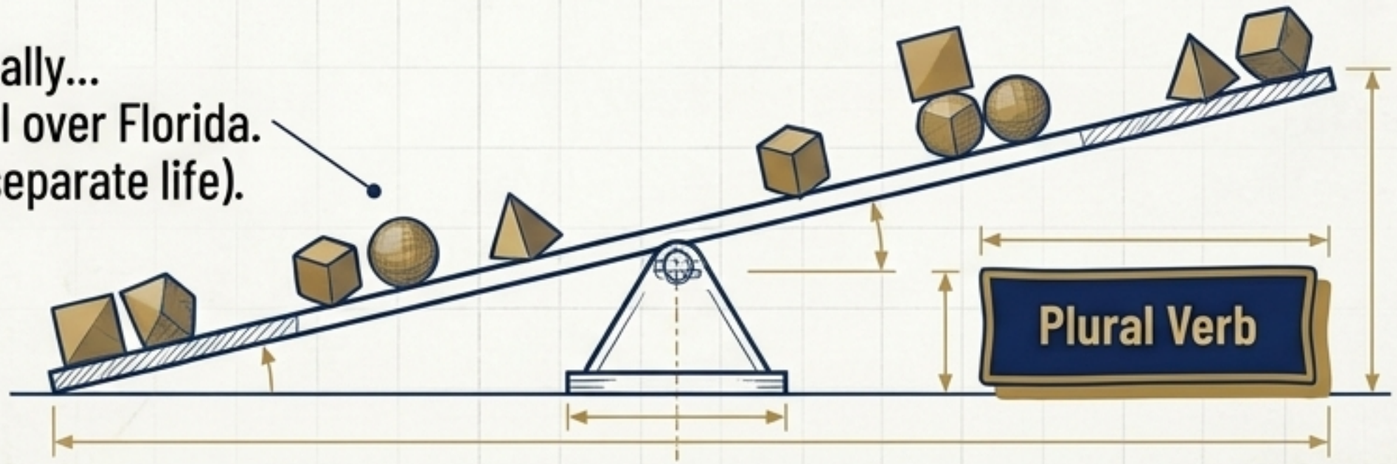
Special Plural Nouns: The Collective Seesaw

Applies to: family, class, police, team, government, staff
(Note: British English uses plural more often).

If the group acts in unison...
My family lives in Miami.
(All members living under one roof).



If the group acts individually...
My family live in towns all over Florida.
(Each individual living a separate life).



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Tense, Aspect, and Sequence

Case Study 1: Tense Aspect Forms

...the lethal effects... [have so far been confined]... there are few who imagine it is really a self-contained conflict.

...поки-що [відчутні] тільки в Лівані... однак мало хто вважає, що цей конфлікт має обмежений характер.

English Present Perfect Passive transforms into a Ukrainian state/adjective.

Case Study 2: Sequence of Tenses

They knew he [was doing] a terrible job.

Вони знають, що він [працює] препогано.

Shift from Past Continuous (was doing) to Present (працює) due to sequence of tense rules.

The Israeli army claimed it [had killed] 10 guerrillas and [captured] five...

...[було вбито] десять бойовиків... і [захоплено] в полон ще п'ять.

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The Passive Voice Reversal

English Passive

He was wined and dined.

Many are called and but few are chosen.

More sinned against than sinning.

Ukrainian Active/Impersonal

Його тепло приймали. (Shift to active impersonal)

Багато людей хочуть добитися чогось, але тільки окремим це вдається. (Shift to active verb phrases)

Радше жертва, аніж грішник.
(Shift from passive participle to noun phrases)

Modal Verbs (Habitual & Volitional)

Rule: “Will” and “Would” denote habitual past actions, requiring adverbial translation.

Translating modal “would” into the Ukrainian adverbial “бувало”.

English: In the afternoon he [would go out] alone and walk for hours.

Ukrainian: Після полудня він, [бувало, йшов] із дому і годинами не вертався...

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Unpacking Non-Finite Constructions

1. Complex Object Expansion

I saw + him cross + the street.

Unpacking

Я бачив + що він переходив / як він переходив + вулицю.

Injection of “що / як” creates a full subordinate clause.

2. Complex Subject Translation

He was seen to cross the street. → Бачили, що він переходив вулицю.

Shift to an impersonal active construction.

3. For-to Infinitive Construction

There’s nobody here for him to play with. → Там нема нікого, з ким він міг би гратися.

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The Translator's Formula

1. Identify Structural Base

Map the English SPO framework. (Analytic assessment).

2. Resolve Obligatory Nodes

Check nouns for Gender constraints and apply 1 of 7 Cases. (Synthetic conversion).

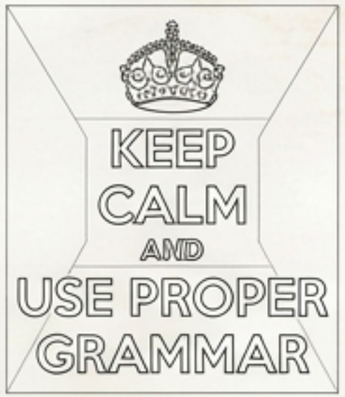
3. Map Timeline

Adjust Sequence of Tenses. Convert English Perfect/Continuous blocks into contextual Ukrainian adverbs/states.

4. Unpack Non-Finites

Expand English Complex Objects/Subjects into full Ukrainian subordinate clauses (що/як).

“Translation is not word replacement; it is the the structural engineering of meaning from an Analytic framework into a Synthetic architecture.”



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