XV International Conference "Linguistic and Cultural Studies: Traditions and Innovations", LKTI 2015, 9-11 November 2015, Tomsk, Russia

"Structural-systemic" Redundancy as Manifestation of Typological Features in Modern German

Nina Zhukova*

National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University, 30 Lenin Avenue, Tomsk, 634050, Russia

Abstract

This article views the phenomenon of language redundancy and peculiarities of its occurrence on the grammatical level in modern German. The article determines the grammatical redundancy types, conditions and causes for their appearance. Taking into account the typological originality of modern German, such type of the "systemic" redundancy as the "structural-systemic" redundancy is distinguished, which reflects all the past changes and all the current changes in the language.

1. Introduction

There is an extensive literature on the topic of language redundancy. The study of this phenomenon began primarily in the context of the language changes (Paul, 1960). Later the phenomenon of redundancy was more often viewed in connection with the economy phenomenon (Martine, 1960) as two opposite phenomena. However, the linguistic literature pays less attention to the phenomenon of redundancy than to its correlate (Moser, 1970; Ronneberger-Sibold, 1980). The interest to the problem of language redundancy was aroused as part of another correlation "hypercharacterization/ellipsis" (Borovik, 2006; Grudeva, 2008).

Thus, the problem of language redundancy in linguistics is not new, and its research is still relevant nowadays,

---

* Corresponding author.
  E-mail address: shukovans@mail.ru (N. Zhukova).

because the phenomenon of redundancy characterizes both varieties of parts of the language system and speech activity. In this regard, it is necessary to mention a recently published book of articles (Voeykova, 2010) dedicated to the problems of language redundancy and methods of its investigation. Its authors describe different types of redundancy in the grammatical system of the Russian language (e.g. paradigmatic and syntagmatic redundancy; redundancy occurring in the speech act etc.). Voeykova considers the diversity of various viewpoints and suggests that this collective study will be the basis for future creation of a unified redundancy concept (Voeykova, 2010, p. 7).

To accomplish such a global task it is important to study the grammatical redundancy in connection with the typological features of a particular language system. The typological originality in modern German is accounted to justify the existence of one more type of the grammatical redundancy in its system, and explain the conditions, causes and mechanisms of its occurrence as it is shown in the article.

2. Research Design

2.1. Grammatical redundancy

"Redundancy" in its broad sense can be understood as existence of two or more means to express one and the same content in the system of a language or speech. For this article, one special type of redundancy distinguished in the linguistic literature is important – grammatical hypercharacterization or overcharacterization (Rogovoy, 1965a).

The grammatical hyper- or overcharacterization means redundancy of the means of expressing the grammatical categories. The grammatical categories are peculiar for their obligatory character of usage in speech. Cf.: One of the main features of the categorical grammatical meaning is the bound implementation of this grammatical content in each particular lexical unit, included in that grammatical class in every functioning act of this unit (Bondarko, 2002, p. 159). At the same time the corresponding category is often expressed not only by a word form, i.e. grammatically, but also by the other lexical means (lexical markers, syntactic structure etc.). E.g.: Er **fährt** *jetzt* **fort.** On *sejchas* **chitaet** lekciju (He **is giving** a lecture *now*). In the given German and Russian examples the meaning of present is expressed twice: by the verb in the present tense (fährt, chitaet (is giving)) and by the temporal adverb of the present tense (*jetzt, sejchas (now)*). In this context the word form of the verb verbalizing the present tense becomes excessive.

The will to express one or another content in communication more precisely dictates the need to use an appropriate adverb of time in speech (an adverb of the present tense in the given case), that makes the expression of the present tense by the word form of the verb excessive. Thus, the binding to express the categorical meaning has the effect of redundancy.

In the next example the meanings of person and number are expressed twice – by the pronoun and by the ending of the word form: **Du** sag**st.** However, in modern German this redundancy does not take place when expressing the meanings of person and number by the syncretic form. "Syncretic form in morphology means an enlarged grammeme. As such, it is understood in the context of discretism – the differences of the corresponding homogeneous grammemes in the other part of the morphological system of a language in the corresponding period of its development" (Ermolaeva, 1987, p. 21). E.g.: **Wir** sagen. The syncretic form of the plural of the present tense of the verb sagen (wir, sie) expresses undifferentiated meaning of person unlike nonsyncretic forms of the singular of the present tense (ich) sage and (er) sagt. According to the definition of syncretism the categorical meaning of the syncretic forms is wider than the categorical meaning of the nonsyncretic forms. The categorical meanings of the word forms sage, sagt, included in the microparagigm of person, are the first and the third person singular respectively. The syncretic form of sagen (wir, sie) does not express these categories of person differentially. Its categorical meaning is wider, it expresses non-second person plural. When a nonsyncretic form is used there is no need to express the categorical meaning with a pronoun, since it is possible to adequately convey the message without using it. But for such complex system as language, structural redundancy is a necessary factor for reliable and stable operation under various conditions (Katsnelson, 2004, p. 77). The data of the linguistic-psychological experiments with the degrammaticalized texts demonstrates this fact. This data shows that a significant part of the grammatical indicators in the texts is not absolutely necessary. These grammatical elements could be recovered from context and their presence is not necessary for proper understanding. Nevertheless, as it is noted by Rogovoy