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GERMAN ELLIPTICAL SENTENCES AND PSYCHOLOGICAL
DIRECTION IN LINGUISTICS

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Abstract

A sentence is a psychological act of connecting ideas. But since the connection itself presupposes the presence of at least two elements, then any sentence, as an expression of this act, consists of at least two parts, members. The apparent contradiction – the presence of one-word sentences – is resolved very easily on a psychological basis. Psychologists do not care what form the sentence has in the language. It is important here that in consciousness, due to the combination of ideas, the act of forming a generalized sentence scheme occurs. And how this scheme will manifest itself in language – verbally – is completely indifferent. Under the influence of the increasingly widespread inconsistencies between language and logic, scientists came to the conclusion that language cannot be a reflection (Abbild) of consciousness and its logical forms. In addition to the inconsistency of grammatical constructions with constructions of logic, other deviations were found. So, the interrogatory, imperative and exclamatory sentences in a language differ in their content from the content of the judgment. Language has nothing to do with the reality surrounding a person, for reality itself is created by their representation. Psychologists leave the external side of the expression of internal processes to the language. The processes taking place in the soul do not need the intervention of language. The categories of grammar are an external, far from complete expression of more substantial categories of psychology. The consequence of such attitudes was the constant distinction between the psychological and the grammatical.

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1. Introduction

Any linguistic phenomenon is considered in two dimensions: psychological and linguistic. A number of psychologists adhere to the definition of a grammatical sentence, which covers all possible constructions from a simple interjection “O!” to the most complex expression of a philosopher. For instance, G. Wunderlich defines a sentence as “die Urformsprachlichen Ausdrucks, die sich von der einfachen Interjektion! Bis zum viel umfassenden Satzgebilde eines Philosophen ausdehnen kann” (as cited in Erdmann, 2013). Similar is the case of a one-word sentence, where one term is usually a psychological subject, as a matter of course it is not expressed in language. An expression only finds a psychological predicate. Mononuclear sentences, as such, do not exist. All sentences are two-part, but one composition may not be verbally expressed. Mononuclearity in language is only external, seeming mononuclearity (scheinbare Eingliedrigkeit). The basis for the assertion that “der Satz besteht mindestens aus zwei Gliedern” is not a sentence that actually exists in language, but an internal psychological act of connecting representations. The definition of a sentence, thus, is reduced to the definition of a schema created in advance in the mind of an individual, a prototype of the “future” of a linguistic sentence. “Zweigliedrigkeit ist die Urform des Satzes. Auch die inhaltsreichsten Sätze können zweigliedrig bleiben, in dem alle Bereicherungen in einer Erweiterung der beiden Glieder besteht.” Thus, each linguistic sentence is based on two components: a psychological subject and a predicate.

2. Problem Statement

The issue of elliptical sentences is one of the topical and unresolved issues in the syntax of the German language. When working with students, we often face this problem. Elliptical sentences are represented by a wide variety of grammatical structures that require careful differentiation and study of their features. Denying the elliptical nature of the so-called incomplete sentences, we nevertheless try to give their structural and grammatical characteristics, starting from a two-part sentence. That is, the basis for isolating elliptical sentences is a purely formal feature – the absence of a grammatical term. Their classification is based on its grammatical nature. This feature does not reflect the communicative essence of these structures, the specifics of their functional significance. It reflects only the formal, relative side, since their grammatical characteristics are given, as it were, against the background of an already defined scheme: a model of a two-part sentence.

3. Research Questions

The reason for the incomplete expression of a psychological sentence in language is, for example, the rapid change of thoughts, when there is no time left for the complete linguistic reproduction of the sentence “scheme”. In this case, only the main parts of the scheme are shaped up. In the linguistic literature, a number of factors are indicated that contribute to the incomplete reproduction of the scheme.

Sometimes the incompleteness of expression is due to the presence of a situation of context, intonation, etc. Sometimes the members of the sentence are not expressed due to the desire for brevity, liveliness of speech. Sometimes a member is left unspoken for one reason or another in order to give the message a certain semantic connotation.

Brugmann believes that the omission (Auslassung) is made the more often, the more clearly it is indicated by the grammatical form or by the very content of the sentence expressed or even by voice modulation. The members of the psychological sentence expressed in words by their grammatical design give an idea of the complete, integral scheme of the sentence. For example, “Morgen!” contains not a simple idea of a time span, but also a mention of the whole sentence “Es ist so zu sagen ein verdichteter Satz, innerhalb dessen sich noch ein geringer Rest von Gliederung erhalten hat” (as cited in Delbrück, 2019).

What is meant here is that the uttered “Morgen” evokes the idea of the complete scheme of the sentence: “Einen guten Morgen wünsche ich”. To prove this sentence, an example is given when members of an incomplete sentence without control words are formed in certain cases. **For example: “Guten Morgen! Noch einen!” The main role is assigned, as you can see, to the psychological sentence scheme.**

“Die Hauptrolle beim Sprechen,” writes Delbrück, “spielen die Satz-schemata, mit deren Hilfe die Rede wie von selbst abläuft, wenn sie ihr im wesentlichen Inhalt nachgegeben ist”.

A sentence will be incomplete only if it is able to give the listener the opportunity to create, on the basis of the given words, a scheme of a complete sentence, and precisely such a scheme as is in the speaker's mind. Otherwise, it is a piece of speech that is unable to convey the idea fully to the listener. “Ein unvollständiger Satz bleibt immer nur dann zu erkennen, wo die Bedeutung fehlender Wörter unzweideutig aus dem Inhalt des Gesprochenen ersehen wird, nicht da, wo sich die aller verschiedensten Gedanken zu dem Gesprochenen hinzutut”.

For example, the sentence “Hier ein Feuer.” is incomplete, because here, without any difficulty, the listener themselves complement the sentence scheme with the form “ist”, and thereby unambiguously understand the sentence. And in this case, it makes no difference whether “ist” is in the sentence or not. But simply “Feuer” does not have the clear meaning that it has in “Hier ein Feuer”. What was said, according to Wundt, can only be an incomplete sentence, when the non-essential parts of the sentence are missing, as in “Hier ein Feuer”. Otherwise it will be Satzäquivalent or Satzfragment, like “Feuer”.

Thus, it turns out that in the speaker's mind, sentence schemes are created, which, being embodied in a linguistic shell, appear before the listener as grammatical sentences. They, being expressed by linguistic means are transformed and appear already in the form of various types of sentences (complete, incomplete, equivalent of a sentence or a fragment of a sentence).

A schema is a sentence and its linguistic expression: the type may or may not be the same. The same sentence exists in two areas: linguistic and psychological. B. Delbrück says about the relationship between the schema and type: “Man könnte statt Schema vielleicht auch Typus sagen. Ich unterscheide die beiden Ausdrücke so, daß ich Typus anwende, wenn von den in einer Sprache gegebenen Sätzen, Schema, wenn von dem psychischen Verlauf die Rede ist”.

Therefore, the schema and type of offer may not be the same. We find a similar point of view on the relationship between the psychological and the linguistic in grammar in the works of Blaz. He argues that any sentence by its nature is always two-term, and that in the language sometimes it is not necessary to use such constructions that would completely correspond to the scheme. Remarkable is his statement: “... ein psychologisch vollständiger Satz kann auch ohne Behilfe eines finiten Verbs entstehen, in dem ein

oder mehrere Worte ohne ausdrückliche Beigabe einer Aussage genügen können, um in unzweideutiger Weise einen Satzinhalt auszusprechen und aufzufassen”.

He gives the following examples: Achtung! Herein! Lauter sprechen! “Solche Sätze nennt man syntaktischer Hinsicht unvollständige (elliptische).”

Given syntactically incomplete sentences, after adding a verb or other missing word, can be converted into syntactically complete sentences, i.e. when the scheme and type are mutually covered. The sentences transformed in this way will look like this: “Gebt Achtung! Man trete here! Du sollst lauter sprechen”, etc.

An incomplete sentence can be formed due to the separate absence of each member of the sentence: subject, predicate, complement, adverbial. But it can also be formed when several members, major or minor, are omitted at the same time. For example, a sentence may consist of a single circumstance with the subject, predicate, and sometimes object omitted. There may be other combinations as well. In his “Nhd.Grammatik” F. Blatz writes: “Sehr häufig geschiehtes, daß ein Glied oder mehrere Glieder, die zum vollständigen grammatischen Aufbau des Satzes notwendig wären, ohne Benachteil demigung des Gedankenweg ausdrucks”.

The omitted term may be supplemented in order to achieve grammatical perfection (Vervollständigung) of the sentence from the general representation created by the present members. “Diese Art der Auslassung von Satzgliedern nennt man Ellipse, und einen solchen grammatisch unvollständigen, wenn auch psychologisch vollständigen Satz nennt man einen elliptischen Satz” (Moskalskaja, 2004).

The omission of a predicate verb is most often found in inscriptions, signatures, in answers, in a lively conversation, in a story, in interrogative, imperative and exclamation sentences.

Wenig Kühe, wenig Mühe. Erst den Dienst und dann die Bürde. Guten Abend! Herein! Um Vergebung! Großen Dank! Willkommen! Bei Gott! Fort von hier! Aus dem Wege! etc. The subject expressed by a noun can rarely be omitted. This type of incomplete sentences occurs most often when talking about religious topics: Behütel!

The subject expressed by the pronoun of the 1st person are danke, bitte, weiß wohl, etc. Sentences of this kind are used mainly in colloquial language and in literary, imitating folk speech.

The subjects, complements and adverbials are often incompletely represented when a noun is omitted with an adjective or with an attributive genitive, as quite understandable ones.

Er hat neuen getrunken (Wein)

Es gibt junge Damen, die nie dreißig überschreiten.

In the vulgar tongue, participles II are often omitted with auxiliary verbs.

Ich bin heute etwas früh hinaus.

Das Wort war kaum über die Lippen.

The artificiality and schematism of his classification of incomplete sentences are obvious. Illustrative material is very interesting here. In most cases, these are colloquial expressions and phraseological locutions. They cannot be considered incomplete sentences from the point of view of completeness and clarity of expression of meaning; on the part of their formal composition, these are stereotyped phrases, clichés, greetings, wishes, etc., fixed in linguistic practice.

An incomplete sentence arises due to the omission of a sentence member, which is filled in consciousness from the general content of what is said, in which it is necessary only to achieve the grammatical perfection of the sentence (Vervollständigung). For example: Solch ein Wort nie wieder (sprich).

Überall fremde Gesichter (waren ...)

A number of members of the proposal are often absent at the same time. Viel Vergnügen (wünsche ich). Wie geruht? Wie geschlafen? (habt ihr).

A number of incomplete sentences have become stable in the practice of speech, they have become so strengthened in use that such an elliptical sentence can rarely be replaced by a grammatically complete sentence. Guten Tag! Verzeihung! Morgen! etc.

Stable elliptical locutions based on common usage are applied by the speaker without much intention. They are often used in inscriptions, signatures, sayings, etc.

Wohnungen zu vermieten.

Kein Gewinn ohne Mühe. Heute rot, morgen tot.

Gleiche Brüder, gleiche Kappen. Frische Fische, gute Fischer, etc.

The set of ellipses is based on a special use at the discretion of the speaker. For example, in striving for speed, brevity, expressiveness, emotionality, and effective speech. Ich darf heute ins Theater.

Another series of ellipses is based on the speaker's sensory arousal, due to which they are not able to fully and correctly grammatically form their thoughts. This occurs when ordering, requesting, prohibiting, wishing, etc.

Dieses Glas (bringe ich) dem guten Geist!

Fort mit ihm! In weiter Fläche kein Bühl, kein Haus. (Kellermann,1980)

The ellipse occurs in the main clause and in the subordinate clause, and sometimes in both at the same time.

Wie die Arbeit, so der Lohn. Gesagt, getan. Jung gewohnt, alt getan.

Complete sentences may be omitted as being perfectly understandable. For example, the main clause is omitted before the subordinate clause: (Ich verlange), Daß mir keiner die Gedichte erwähnt! Due to omission, brevity, expressiveness and at the same time liveliness and power of speech are achieved.

Mononuclearity of a sentence is only external, linguistic mononuclearity (according to Paul "scheinbare Eingliedrigkeit"). A mononuclear sentence can come to the subject of a two-part one, a predicate, to an object, to an adverbial definition. Mononuclear sentences that have arisen:

- from the subject of a two-part sentence: Aber du, lieber Himmel! Ich! Welch ein Leiden! O! die großen Akkorde des Schicksals! (Bredel, 1963)
- from a complement (direct and indirect): Schönen Dank! Meinem Vater!
- from a predicate: Will euch sagen. Melde gehorsamst. Fertig! Aufstehen!
- from adverbial attributes: Wohl! sicherlich! wahrlich! in Wahrheit! Um Verzeihung! Leider! Vielleicht!
- omitted preposition: (um) Vergebung! (um) Verzeihung!

4. Purpose of the Study

In this article, we will try to consider elliptical sentences, in which some members of the sentence may or may not be present, from the point of view of their grammatical and semantic completeness. We will try to determine the relationship between language and thought, establish what cases of omission exist, what elliptical sentences are characteristic of oral and written speech.

5. Research Methods

We have chosen written speech as the material for our research; accordingly, the main attention will be paid to the analysis of structures, the relative incompleteness of which is due to the presence of context. We will consider the elliptical constructions of the German language using a method that is feasible for us: the study of the specific features of elliptical sentences, starting from their formal grammatical insufficiency.

6. Findings

Thus, the connection of representations in consciousness finds its syntactic expression in a sentence even when some of the members of the sentences are omitted. The members represented are syntactically formatted as if it were a complete proposal submitted by all members. Pronounced members can stand in a specific case, with a specific preposition and with all other noun and verbal syntactic indicators. This fact suggests that the structure exists in the mind as a whole, but only parts of this integral structure find verbal expression, but they are formed in such a way that by their form they lead the listener to the creation of the same complete structure that was created in the speaker's mind. Any speech (Sprehen) in general is subject to this mechanism, it affects the formation and design (Gestaltung) of all members of the sentence.

7. Conclusion

Therefore, the representatives of the psychological direction in linguistics build their doctrine of an incomplete (elliptical) sentence on a subjective-idealistic understanding of the essence of language. Language for them is not an expression of objects, phenomena of reality and their relations, but only ideas about them. The objects themselves, phenomena and the relations between them do not exist in reality, but only in the representation of a person. Thought can never be fully and accurately conveyed by linguistic means. All representatives of this trend are united by one idea: language is a purely external manifestation of thought; thought is always more meaningful, richer than the content of the sentence that expresses it. Thinking takes place without the intervention of language.

Proponents of the logical direction in defining a sentence proceeded from its identity with a logical judgment: the result of this was the conclusion: grammatical constructions that do not correspond to the form of judgment are nothing more than elliptical constructions. The tongue turned out to be oversaturated with elliptical turns. There were fewer “correct” constructions than “wrong” ones; exceptions prevailed over rules.

Representatives of the psychological direction, rejecting the theory of those who adhere to logic, put their own in its place. A sentence is the act of combining two representations and this act was called psychological judgment. The latter consists of a psychological subject and a psychological predicate and is represented in the human mind in the form of a sentence schema (Satzschema). Each sentence in the language is preceded by the formation of this scheme. If the scheme is presented in the grammatical sentence in full, then the sentence will be complete, otherwise it will be elliptical. All incomplete sentences have a complete psychological sentence as their prototype. Hence the denial of mononuclear and all other types of sentences. Therefore, the very idea of classifying sentences turned out to be unjustified.

The difference in the views of representatives of the logical and psychological directions did not affect the fundamentally different interpretation of the incompleteness of the sentence. Their understanding of an incomplete sentence is based on the same false understanding of the relationship between language and thought. In reality, thought does not exist outside of language, just as there is no language without thought (Kulaeva, 2019). Both those and others not only did not understand that language is the immediate reality of thought but asserted just the opposite. A prerequisite for solving the problem of incomplete sentences for the former is compliance or non-compliance with a logical judgment scheme; for the latter, a diagram of psychological judgment. Both are united by the fact that a priori created stamps were imposed on linguistic forms, as a product of an idealistic perception of the surrounding world, including language.

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