

Syntax and morphology in the light of functional approach

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Abstract

Article is devoted to the correlation of Syntax and Morphology in the light of functional approach which is considered to be one of the features of Modern Linguistics. We highlight and analyzed the following functions: communicative, cognitive, emotive and metalinguistic.

Key words: text linguistics, communicative function, cognitive function, emotive function, metalinguistic function, logic-oriented aspect, structural aspect, actual aspect, case grammar.

1. INTRODUCTION

These functions are communicative (communication), cognitive (thinking incarnation), emotive (expression of emotional sphere of a person) and metalinguistic (provision of opportunities for self-study). Considering the problems of grammar, we first turn to its means of its realization. From the perspectives, the syntactic category and syntactic means might be defined as the functional-communicative, while the morphological categories – as functional-cognitive. The syntax, namely the organization of communicative units focuses mainly on the sphere of experience and transmission to other members of society. Morphology provides with the expression of concepts, abstracted from the concrete fact that is from the data obtained in the experiment. Diversion of these data can transform a means of expressing categorical apparatus into purely formal markers. The old formula “Morphology – is a technique for syntax”, adopted then with the correlation that morphological categories serve to link functional-cognitive and functional-communicative features through the means of expressing them.

Main part. However, the modern syntax as a science, widely developed in recent decades, allows the allocation of several aspects in its subject matter, namely, in the syntactic structure of the language. This term, which determines the properties of the object of reality, was taken following after L.V.Scherba as an opportunity to

analyze the object. The multidimensionality of syntax is often emphasized in modern literature, due to the multiplicity of theories created around the syntax; however, some generalizations allow distinguishing four main aspects.

The aspect that is preferred to be called as logic-oriented, has been allocated as the first one in the European scientific tradition, in order not to be equated with logical syntax as a branch of logic. The second, and apparently the most developed aspect is a structural aspect, represented primarily in the traditional model of the sentence, as well as various other models – direct-components, transformation, stratification, etc.

The third aspect, related to the deployment of functional perspective of a sentence is appropriated to be named as actual, because the latter term has rooted in the actual division of the sentence theory. Note, however that the commonly used name “Communicative” (even “Communicative syntax”) is not suitable because syntax in all its aspects is communicative; this feature is fundamental for the whole syntax, whatever approach to take.

The fourth aspect of syntax is revealed in the works, representing the so-called case grammar, a set of events that are the subject of the variety of scientific knowledge. It is more appropriate to call it the analogue aspect of syntax, because it represents an analogue of situation elements that are reported, and communicative situations. For example:

agent – an animate initiator of an action, instrumentalism – an object, which is included in the action as its cause, dative – an animate being affected by the action, locative – a special orientation of an action, etc.

We add that working on analogue, it is necessary to take into account at least two of the correlation factors – the experience of the society and the expertise of speakers using the language in the act of communication. It is also useful to add the factor of the language structure influence on the organization of utterances.

In speech acts, i.e. utterances-sentences, all aspects of syntactic phenomena interact and determine each other, and aspects of syntax reflecting the special properties of the subject matter are superimposed on each other, forming an indivisible, dialectal study. In the sentence “**John broke the window**” the first component **John** at the same time is the subject, the theme and the agent, the second **broke** – the predicate, the first component of the rheme and the transitive verb, **the window** – a direct object, the second, but a required component of the rheme, **the patient**. These aspects often substitute each other.

The four aspects mentioned above, have been identified by A.I.Smurnitskiy who justified the need to distinguish between:

- The subject and the predicate as objects of thought;
- The grammatical subject and the predicate;
- The lexical subject and predicate (coinciding with the relevant units of syntax – theme and rheme);
- The agent and the action as an indication of source of the action and the action in reality (same as the analogue units of syntax – in our terminology).

A.I.Smurnitskiy wrote that one and the same sentence Дом строят; Переводится текст [A house is being built; Text is being translated] can be viewed from these four aspects [6:p.110]

The accumulation of logic-oriented, structural, actual and analog-to-date aspects of syntax represent the syntax which is interpreted broadly in communicative language with each of them being able to serve as a basis for modeling the types of syntactic constructions. As noted by V.N.Yartseva, “the communicative function of a language determines the appropriateness of its models” [9: p.175]. At the same time every aspect reveals the peculiarity of different elements of the syntactic structure.

The formal-structural aspect of the sentence acts as a guiding principle in the organization of syntactic structures in languages like the Indo-European, in which the subject is quite clearly marked with the Nominative case and the predicate with personal endings of the verb. However, in languages of other types another principle of the organization of syntactic structures is in the foreground - theme – rheme - although marked by the expression of the object and the indication (sign, mark); its basic units are not burdened by formal indicators of the subject and the predicate [1:202]. This principle reflects the informative intention (intonation) of the speaker, his mental attitude during the transmission of a listening content. This principle was predicted by A.I.Smurnitskiy, who believed that in a sentence “Завтра я пойду на работу и зайду в библиотеку, пообедаю и вернусь” the subject does not need to allocate the word я, but the word завтра [6: p.109] as a psychological subject. Nowadays, however, when dealing with psychology resumed on a new basis, one can return to the notions of psychological subject and predicate and define it as substrate on actual aspects of syntax.

Once again it has to be emphasized that, in our view, actual and structural aspects of the syntax express the sentence – utterance organization principles that provide the communicative function of the language first and foremost. Two other aspects, logic-based and analogue aspects,

embody the principles of the organization of thoughts about existence and knowledge of its features and, hence, provide a cognitive function of the language. Such distribution does not mean that there are strict demarcation lines between all four aspects since language is an organization with a soft structure that can be considered from different angles and perspectives.

Focusing on the basic functions of the language allows us to define two traditionally distinguished ranges of entities, syntax and morphology. Although this division is denied in some works on Functional Linguistics [11: p.36-42], it is unlikely to give it up because not only the word, but also the sentence relentlessly presented to the human mind as something central in the whole mechanism of language and its functioning. The viewpoint of functional grammar provides the opportunity to return to the problem of the relation of the syntax and morphology, which in the words of V.N.Yartseva “has always been and still remains the difficult question of theoretical grammar” [10: p.21].

Syntax appears as the main sphere of realization of communicative function as in its complete (and sometimes incomplete) structure the idea is formed and can be complicated. Besides the syntactic properties, basic syntactic units and relations between them are found through special means of their individual design the morphology of words. However, formal indicators of words are not possible to determine the place of one or the other unit in the language system. (We will come in the evening. We enjoyed a warm evening): it is necessary to clarify the syntactic function. In other words, a peculiar dependence of morphology on the syntax is observed. It was expressed harshly by Ferdinand de Saussure: “From a linguistic point of view, morphology does not have its real and independent object for study: It cannot form a discipline distinct from syntax” [7: p.158].

Syntax is considered in the light of the ideas of functional grammar as a study of the structure, categorical semantics and function of sentences of any type and their components, as well as the syntactic relationship, connections and functions of these parts. Morphology is considered as a study of lexical-grammatical word classes and inherent grammatical categories which are formally expressed in this language, as well as about the structure of words, about the values and functions of morphemes. Accordingly, the objects of grammatical science are determined, both terms are traditionally used for naming both syntax and morphology of the subject and the science of it; clarification is usually seen from the context.

Functional features of the language units are inextricably linked with the categorical semantics of morphology, which is inseparable from the word, and it is dual in nature. On the one hand, word appears as the central unit of lexical composition of language with all its semasiological and onomasiological qualities, but, on the other hand, it has properties which are dependent on its structure and modifications when used in connected speech, i.e. in utterances. Being the main unit of study in Lexicology, word at the same time is the basic unit of morphology as a section of grammar. This dual nature of the word is reflected in the classified distribution of words per categories, referred as lexical and grammatical categories of parts of speech.

Participating in the construction of sentences, words in their modifications become dependent on its function in the sentence, and, consequently, the sentence becomes a starting point of morphology, speaking precisely of inflection: what syntax requires would be provided by morphology, polished throughout history of the language. On the other hand, morphology in its turn, influences syntax on the choice of this or that form of word, i.e. it becomes an active basis of syntax, allowing stating its definite approach.

This correlation of syntax and morphology differentiates in the structure of the language and the role of morphology seems more comprehensible within the flecional type of languages. However, the dominant position of syntax characterized in flexional languages like Russian is stated in the introduction to "Russian Grammar" [3: p.9]. In such analytical language English the initial and prominent role of syntax puts morphology into the back position, and category of words is defined only by its syntactic function (compare: A round table – We turned round the corner).

Despite the prominent role of syntax in the English language, the formal features of words, which appear in the construction of their paradigm, allow to speak about subdivided categorical hierarchy of morphology. Moreover, there is a viewpoint, that vocabulary also verbalizes the rules of grammar: for example, degrees of contrasting, i.e. the category of comparison, and emerges only within qualitative adjectives and category of quantitativity that can be evaluated by the number of units, and etc.

As long as the functioning of language is carried in speech, the analysis of functional features of language begins with syntax, mainly with its unit that acts as a statement in speech and as a sentence – in the language system. Morphological functions, or the functions of morphological units, are an extension of syntactic functions in the language system provided their confirmation with formal means, i.e. in word forms. In other words, the morphological function of the unit is its role in syntagma due to the existence of the word paradigm in the language. In English, as the language of analytical type, function of element is defined as its role in syntagmatic construction, due to:

- The principle of the construction of this structure;
- The relations in the system of grammatical (morphological) units.

It should be emphasized that that these two points are based directly or indirectly on semantics in the content of units and constructions. As I.I.Meshaninov said: "Semantics of a word to a certain extent complete its syntactic role in the sentence" [2: p.4], although they were related to the parts of speech theory, they have not lost their importance for the functional observation of modern grammatical problems of the language.

Comprehensible model of syntax allows us to show that the morphological categories and their corresponding distinctive forms are not equally distributed on these fields of the English language. Detailed researches showed that actual and analogue aspects turned to be the most morphological and syntax is based on categories which implement precisely these aspects of syntactic constructions. Categories of actual aspects used in the act of communication are defined by the choice of the addresser, i.e. be the communicative intent: the addresser determines to ask, to order, to report assuredly or with uncertainty, to deny something, to assert and etc. consequently, the categories of molality, voice, personality, affirmation – negation and determination (definiteness / indefiniteness) serve actual aspect.

Since the analogical aspect is based on the categories which are represented in a generalized and abstract form of situation of communication, the same is a situation the use of appropriate forms are imposed on a speaker, the choice of these categories does not depend on him. These categories are the locative category, the category of temporality, the category of aspectuality, the category of possessiveness, the category of quantitiveness. They can be characterized as categories of the first stage of reflection borrowed from direct experience of a team, to a certain extent they can be characterized as denotative categories. Logic – oriented aspect is less morphological in the English language as long as its related categories – objectivity,

qualitativity, comparison, generalization – are represented mainly by syntactic and lexical units (words) that express the relevant notions. These categories can be described as representatives of the second stage of reflection, to a certain extent – as signifying categories.

2. CONCLUSION

Finally, the categories of structural aspects (function words, word-substitutes and etc.) are the least cognitive and they serve to deploy a message. Thus, starting the research of language functions, while having aside the emotive and metalinguistic functions from syntax to morphology, we found out another opportunity to learn how the range of universal thinking, universal language and idioethnic categories are organized in a particular language. The complex nature of linguistic phenomenon is revealed through the analysis of those or other properties expressed in communicative work.

3. REFERENCES

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