

ISCKMC 2020**International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»****EXPRESSING A SEMANTIC SUBJECT IN GENERIC
STATEMENTS OF GERMAN AND RUSSIAN**

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shenetschka@rambler.ru**Abstract**

On the material of German and Russian languages the paper discusses various ways of expressing a semantic subject in generic statements. The comprehensive comparative study carried out at the junction of anthropocentric and systemic-structural paradigms made it possible to compare the means of expressing an animated semantic subject related to the lexical level of a language. The property of superlingual universality of lexical methods of expressing the formal elimination of a subject in generic statements of German and Russian languages is demonstrated. Using integral analytical tools, their nomenclature content in national languages (German and Russian) is specified, the volume of generality expressed using them is specified. In each of the nomenclatures, the study identifies means with a wider and narrower volume of generalization. The analyzed lexical means with features of singularity can also act as means of expressing the subject in generic statements of German and Russian languages, if they replace the means with features of the multiplicity, respectively, a subject defined with their help acts as a substitute for a group of identical subjects. In the paradigm of lexical means of expressing the studied languages, there are lexical means with additional features of their generic value – non-grammaticalized meaning of certainty/uncertainty.

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1. Introduction

The phenomenon of subject representation in modern linguistic science is at the intersection of the interests of various areas, including grammar, semantics and pragmatics. Hyperbolizing the meaning of individual (grammatical, semantic, pragmatic, etc.) images of the existence of this phenomenon in the interests of the corresponding scientific directions the researchers limit themselves to its narrowly special description avoiding a systemic representation with the inclusion of multidimensional and polyfunctional links. This contradiction should be overcome by a comprehensive comparative study carried out at the intersection of anthropocentric and systemic-structural paradigms taking into account the results of previous scientific research thus proposing new ways to solve the problems identified thereof.

2. Problem Statement

This paper illustrates the possibilities of a comparative approach to the specifics of lexical methods of expressing a semantic subject in generic statements. To fulfill this task, the authors used an integral analytical toolkit, which includes some techniques of linguistic pragmatics, propositional analysis based on the semantics of a meaning, as well as techniques of structural-semantic and transformational-component analysis. Within the framework of comparative typological research, we will concentrate our attention on lexical ways of expressing the formal elimination of a subject in the systems of German and Russian languages.

3. Research Questions

Formal elimination of a subject in an updated statement is similar to the implementation of a universal language category of generality. The algorithm for expressing a formal elimination of a subject is similar in various language systems. At the same time, the nomenclature of different-level ways of expressing the formal elimination of a subject for each language is distinguished by its own specific content. Thus, for example, the lexical methods of expressing the formal elimination of a subject, being represented in different languages by special lexical units, differ significantly in the volume of generality expressed. The differentiation of the degree of generality allows approaching the definition of the specifics of the methods of expressing a semantic subject in generic statements in different languages, in this particular study – in German and Russian.

4. Purpose of the Study

The category of generality is a universal category. Its implementation is carried out by generic statements, the semantic meaning of which is formed by various lexical units (pronouns and nouns) and morphological means of a language (verb forms).

In view of the broad semantics of lexical units expressing a semantic subject, it is not specified in generic statements, which gives reason to talk about its explicit elimination.

This paper will primarily focus on the part of the system of generic statements that is distinguished by the integrative property – to define a class or a category of animate referents.

The interpretation of such statements often has a reference background elevating the relation of a sender to a referent or to his properties fundamentally important for this fragment of verbal interaction to the rank of the most significant. The study will illustrate the possibilities of this interpretation on the material of German and Russian languages.

5. Research Methods

Various means of the lexical level of a language and their various combinations can be used in German and Russian languages to express a semantic subject in generic statements.

In the generic meaning in German, the pronouns are most often implemented (primarily the indefinite personal pronoun man, in a given context environment there are also indefinite, interrogative and personal pronouns), indicating an action without assigning it any particular person. In Russian, the nomenclature of such speech means is made up of indefinite, definite, negative and interrogative pronouns.

The indefinite personal pronoun man is used in German to denote an unidentified group of passionate subjects (Zifonun, 2000) performing an action:

Sie spürte einen salzigen Geschmack auf den Lippen und begriff, dass man sie mit Blut wusch (Bulgakov, 1985).

The active use of the pronoun man does not exclude the inclusion of a sender subject in this group: *Mitternacht rückte näher, man musste eilen (Bulgakov, 1985).*

In Russian, there is no pronoun with equivalent content. Sentences in which the indefinite personal pronoun man is used in German correspond in Russian indefinite personal sentences not implying direct indication of an acting subject. As a formal indication of an indefinite actor, the verb form of the 3rd person plural is used:

Маргарита ощутила соленый вкус на губах и поняла, что ее моют кровью (Bulgakov, 1985);

or impersonal verb form:

Полночь приближалась, пришлось спешить (Bulgakov, 1985).

Accordingly, in Russian, instead of the lexical means of expressing the formal elimination of a subject, morphological means are used in this position.

Indefinite pronouns that don't have the ability to establish a reference identity may also refer to an unidentified group of persons unknown to the sender in both German and Russian (Haspelmath, 1997; Paducheva, 2016; Zifonun, 2000): German: *jemand, irgendjemand, irgendwer, irgendein, all, allesamt, alles, beide, paar, einige, etliche, mehrere, manche, niemand, jeder, jedermann, anderer*; Russian: *кто-то, некто, кое-кто, кто-либо, кто-нибудь, некоторый, некий, кое-какой, какой-то, какой-либо, какой-нибудь; чей-то, чей-либо, чей-нибудь; несколько, сколько-то, сколько-нибудь, сколько-либо.*

Here, German indefinite pronouns (*irgend*)*jemand*, *irgendwer* (Zifonun, 2000) and Russian indefinite pronouns *кое-кто*, *кто-то*, *кто-либо*, *кто-нибудь* (Paducheva, 2016) demonstrate the greatest degree of uncertainty of indication to subjects making an action:

Aber **irgendjemand** von der Verwaltung muss doch da sein! (Bulgakov, 1985),

«Ага!..» – сказал себе Поплавский, – но **кто-нибудь** же есть в правлении? (Bulgakov, 1985);

Es hat uns doch nicht etwa **jemand** zugehört? (Bulgakov, 1985),

He услышал бы нас **кто-нибудь**, игемон? (Bulgakov, 1985).

The German indefinite pronoun *irgendein* and Russian *-какой*, *какой-то*, *какой-либо*, *какой-нибудь* are used in the same meaning as a rule acting in a sentence together with a specifying noun:

... aber da dieser Befürchtungen hege und **irgendein** Scharlatan ihm einen Schreck eingejagt habe, müsse man genaue Analysen anfertigen ... (Bulgakov, 1985).

... раз он боится и **какой-то** шарлатан его напугал, то нужно сделать все анализы... (Bulgakov, 1985).

The presence of *irgend-* and *какой-* as part of indefinite German pronouns *irgendjemand*, *irgendwer*, *irgendein* and Russian *кое-какой*, *какой-то*, *какой-либо*, *какой-нибудь* emphasizes the generic property of their main meaning – non-grammaticalized meaning of uncertainty.

Indefinite pronouns all and allesamt representing a given set of persons performing an action known to a sender are also the typified means of expressing a semantic subject in generic statements of the German language. In the Russian language definite pronouns *все*, *всяк/всякий*, *любой*, *каждый*, *сам/самый*, *другой*, *иной* correspond to this category. The set known to a sender in both Russian and German can be clarified by indicating the number of subjects included in it:

*Der Ausländer schob die Dokumente in die Tasche. Die Beziehungen waren somit wiederhergestellt, und **alle drei** nahmen auf der Bank Platz* (Bulgakov, 1985),

*Отношения таким образом были восстановлены, и **все трое** снова сели на скамью* (Bulgakov, 1985);

or by pointing to a sign of an unifying set:

*Sogleich stiegen **alle Anwesenden** die breite Marmortreppe hinunter ...* (Bulgakov, 1985),

*Тут **все присутствующие** тронулись вниз по широкой мраморной лестнице ...* (Bulgakov, 1985).

The means of clarifying a representative set may also be by excluding a particular subject/specific subject from it:

***Alle, außer dem reglosen Prokurator**, blickten Marcus Rattenschlächter nach ...* (Bulgakov, 1985),

***И все, кроме неподвижного прокуратора**, проводили взглядом Марка Крысобоя ...* (Bulgakov, 1985).

German pronouns *alle* and Russian *все*, *всяк/всякий* are distinguished by the volume of the reference generalization, which is the widest compared to other means of expression of a semantic subject:

... der Philosoph, der auf die unwahrscheinlich absurde Idee gekommen war, dass **alle Menschen** gut wären, ging ja hier neben ihm, folglich lebte er (Bulgakov, 1985),

... философ, выдумавший столь невероятно нелепую вещь вроде того, что **все люди** добрые, шел рядом, следовательно, он был жив (Bulgakov, 1985).

In some cases, which, as a rule, are accompanied by the actualization of an additional connotation of disapproval or derogatory attitude the form of a neuter gender of the indefinite pronoun – *alles* is used in German to denote a set of certain animate subjects:

Und er kommandierte: “**Alles** schaut nach oben!” (Bulgakov, 1985).

For the Russian language, such equivalent neuter pronoun *всё* is not typical:

Все примут горячее участие! – и скомандовал: – Прошу глядеть вверх!.. (Bulgakov, 1985).

Only two subjects can be included in the set of persons performing an action, then in German the indefinite pronouns *beide* or *paar* are used, the latter in combination with *ein*:

Die beiden blickten ab und zu um sich, ob niemand ihnen zuhörte, und flüsterten irgendwelchen *Unsinn* (Bulgakov, 1985),

Jetzt lasst mich mit den beiden allein, gebot Voland und wies auf den Meister und Margarita (Bulgakov, 1985),

In Staub gehüllt, sausten kettenklirrend Lastautos vorbei, darauf lagen auf Säcken rücklings ein paar Männer (Bulgakov, 1985).

A uniting feature or function can also be specified here:

Die letzten beiden Gäste kamen die Treppe herauf (Bulgakov, 1985).

In Russian, the equivalent *оба, двое* are traditionally ranked as numerals, *пара* – as nouns (Ryabushkina, 2015).

Откинувшись на удобную, мягкую спинку кресла в троллейбусе, Маргарита Николаевна ехала по Арбату и то думала о своем, то прислушивалась к тому, о чем шепчутся двое граждан, сидящие впереди нее (Bulgakov, 1985).

A set of persons performing an action may be unknown to the sender, in this case indefinite German pronouns *einige, etliche, manche, mehrere*, Russian *несколько, сколько-то, сколько-нибудь, сколько-либо* are actualized acting in a sentence independently or accompanied by a specifying noun:

Außer den Katern hatten auch einige Menschen gewisse Unannehmlichkeiten (Bulgakov, 1985),

Кроме котов, некоторые незначительные неприятности постигли кое-кого из людей (Bulgakov, 1985);

Mehrere Besucher standen stocksteif und betrachteten ein weinendes Fräulein, das an einem Verkaufstisch mit Theaterfachliteratur saß (Bulgakov, 1985),

Несколько посетителей стояли в оцепенении и глядели на плачущую барышню, сидевшую за столиком, на котором лежала специальная зрелищная литература, продаваемая барышней (Bulgakov, 1985).

Since only one negation can be used in a German sentence, the negative form of German indefinite pronouns is also widely used in the generic meaning to indicate the indefinite set of subjects, which are unknown to the sender. The number of subjects may be limited to one or strive for infinity, they are not calculable:

Und noch eines – übersieht **niemanden!** (Bulgakov, 1985)

In Russian the negative pronouns *никто, некого, никакой, ничей* are used in the same meaning:

И еще: не пропустить **никого** (Bulgakov, 1985).

The category of multiplicity in the structure of generic statements is often replaced by the category of singularity. In the sense that each single subject in a generic statement can act as a substitute for an entire group of subjects united on any basis. The main means of expressing an animate subject here are also indefinite pronouns, namely, *jeder(mann)* and *anderer*:

Jeder Besucher, der nicht gerade ein ausgemachter Trottel war ... (Bulgakov, 1985),

in Russian, these are definite pronouns *всяк/всякий, любой, каждый*:

Всякий посетитель, если он, конечно, был не вовсе тупицей ... (Bulgakov, 1985);

... und dann kommt so ein junger Mann zu mir in die Kantine, gibt mir einen Zehnrubelschein, ich geb ihm acht Rubel fünfzig heraus. Dann kommt ein **anderer** ... (Bulgakov, 1985),

И вот заходит ко мне в буфет молодой человек, дает червонец, я сдачи ему восемь с полтиной... Потом другой (Bulgakov, 1985).

Despite the fact that a generic statement implies the expression of a semantic subject neutral in relation to some morphosyntactic categories (for example, a category of gender or number), the main feature of the German indefinite pronoun *jeder* and the Russian definite pronouns *всяк/всякий, любой, каждый* is their ability to express the gender of a semantic subject due to the use of the category of gender in the communication process. Here we encounter a combination of lexical and morphological means of expressing a subject.

The same feature is typical for Russian indefinite pronouns *чей-то, чей-либо, чей-нибудь* with a sense of possessiveness in combination with nouns specifying them:

Затем эти брюки согнулись в колене, и дневной свет заслонил **чей-то** увесистый **зад** (Bulgakov, 1985).

The means of expressing a semantic subject in generic statements in German can be the interrogative pronouns *wer, welcher*, in Russian – *кто, какой*:

“Aber erlaubt”, sagte Voland, “**wer** zum Teufel will ihn denn schlachten und wozu?” (Bulgakov, 1985),

«Помилуйте! – сказал Воланд, – на кой черт и кто станет его резать?» (Bulgakov, 1985).

In German, the personal pronoun *du* in combination with a common noun denoting an inanimate object can also be used in generic statements:

“Oh, **du Stadt** Jerschalaïm! Was bekommt man in dir nicht alles zu hören!” (Bulgakov, 1985).

Through this structure, an explicit indication of the city is made, implicitly – of the properties of inhabitants living in it.

Along with various pronouns, collective nouns can be used as lexical means of expressing an animate semantic subject in generic statements in both German and Russian, for example, German – *Menschheit, Volk*, Russian – *человечество, народ*:

Diese Beweise sind allesamt nichts wert, und die **Menschheit** hat sie längst zu den Akten gelegt (Bulgakov, 1985),

... ни одно из этих доказательств ничего не стоит, и человечество давно сдало их в архив (Bulgakov, 1985);

Du also hast **das Volk** aufgewiegelt, den Tempel von Jerschalaïm zu zerstören? (Bulgakov, 1985),

Так это ты подговаривал народ разрушить Ершалаимский храм? (Bulgakov, 1985).

Collective nouns in German can be represented by composites and, like indefinite pronouns, can be specified by additional general nouns or even whole subordinate sentences providing information on the nature of a unifying feature.

Die Reiterala kam in immer rascherem Trab auf den Platz, um ihn seitlich zu überqueren, passierte **die Volksmenge** und ritt auf eine schmale Seitenstraße unterhalb der weinumrankten Mauer zu, um auf kürzestem Weg zum Schädelberg zu sprengen (Bulgakov, 1985),

Da ist schon **die Gruppe der Blocksbergbummler**, die kommen immer als letzte (Bulgakov, 1985).

In Russian, phrases composed by the formula “a noun in genitive case + a noun in nominative or accusative case” are usually used in this position instead of complex nouns:

Кавалерийская ала, забирая все шире рыси, вылетела на площадь, чтобы пересечь ее в сторонке, минуя **скопище народа** ... (Bulgakov, 1985).

Here it makes sense to talk about the combination of lexical and syntactic means of expressing an animate subject.

6. Findings

A presented variety of lexical means of expressing an animate semantic subject demonstrate the universal property of the category of generality in German, as well as in other languages, for example, French and Russian (Chervony, 2019).

Various lexical means can be used in generic statements of German and Russian languages as lexical means of expressing an animate semantic subject.

The lexical means of the German language include the indefinite personal pronoun *man*, indefinite pronouns (*jemand, irgendjemand, irgendwer, irgendein, all, allesamt, alles, beide, paar, einige, etliche, mehrere, manche, niemand, jeder, jedermann, anderer*), interrogative (*wer, welcher*) and personal pronouns (*du*); collective nouns (*Menschheit, Volk*) and nominalized adjectives (*Verwandte, (Un)bekannte*).

In Russian – indefinite pronouns (*кто-то, некто, кое-кто, кто-либо, кто-нибудь, некоторый, некий, кое-какой, какой-то, какой-либо, какой-нибудь; чей-то, чей-либо, чей-нибудь; несколько, сколько-то, сколько-нибудь, сколько-либо*), definite pronouns (*все, весь, всяк/всякий, любой, каждый, сам/самый, другой, иной*), negative (*никто, некого, никакой, ничей*) and interrogative pronouns (*кто, какой*); collective nouns (*человечество, народ*), nominalized adjectives (*(не)знакомый*).

The analysis demonstrates the mismatch of lexical units with a similar general meaning (for example, German *beide* – Russian *оба*; German *paar* – Russian *пара*).

The review allows highlighting the means of expressing an animate semantic subject with additional connotation of different categories of certainty (identification by a sender) (for example, German: *all, allesamt, alles, beide, paar, jeder, jedermann, anderer; du*; Russian: *все, всяк/всякий, любой, каждый, сам/самый, другой, иной*) / uncertainties (for example, German: *jemand, irgendjemand, irgendwer, irgendein, einige, etliche, mehrere, manche, niemand; wer, welcher*; Russian:

кое-кто, кто-то, кто-либо, кто-нибудь, кое-какой, какой-то, какой-либо, какой-нибудь; несколько, сколько-то, сколько-нибудь, сколько-либо).

The analysis demonstrates the presence of the means of expressing an animate semantic subject with bigger (for example, German: *all, allesamt*, Russian: *все, всяк/всякий*; collective nouns) and smaller (for example, German: *jemand, irgendjemand, irgendwer, irgendein*, Russian: *кое-кто, кто-то, кто-либо, кто-нибудь*) category of generality.

The analysis also shows that the means of expressing a subject in the generic statements of the German and Russian languages may also include the lexical means with the features of the singularity category, provided that the means with features of the multiplicity category are replaced.

Another observation made during the interpretation of generic statements concerns syncretism: the lexical means of expressing a subject regularly intersect with the means of other language levels: morphological and syntactic.

7. Conclusion

The category of generality is a universal category. In different languages, its implementation is carried out by lexical means with similar meaning and according to similar algorithms. However, the nomenclature of lexical means of expressing a subject in generic statements in German and Russian has its own peculiarities.

The comparative analysis revealed a wide range of lexical means of expressing a subject in German and Russian, and also made it possible to differentiate statements by the degree of generalization they express taking into account the certainty/uncertainty of an expressed subject.

The study of lexical means of expressing a semantic subject in generic statements of the German and Russian languages represents another step towards the creation of a universal typology of expressing the category of a semantic subject as a supercategory, which includes the categories of animateness/inanimateness, personality/impersonality, uncertainty/certainty/generalization, etc.

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