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Grammar of Media and Features of the New Normativity

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Abstract

The article deals with new phenomena in grammar (first of all morphology), which in many ways change the ideas of normativity in this area, and these new phenomena are formed and replicated by modern media. These are the expansion of the boundaries of graduality, changes in the configuration of generic oppositions of anthroponyms, a new syntagmatics of nouns with collective semantics, deepening the pluralization of abstract nouns, eliminating lacunae connected with the state category words. These processes confirm that modern normativity is largely created in the medial space (and not within the framework of artistic and fictional discourse, as it traditionally happened). In the article the authors focus on those changes in grammatical morphological forms that, in their opinion, modify the norm and increase the new normativity features. According to this article idea a number of changes in grammatical forms and categories in the media are significant not only within the relevant contexts, but also it fixes significant changes in the norm itself. Based on this, the authors propose a descriptive and analytical interpretation of grammatical forms used in modern media. Philological hermeneutics with an emphasis on explanation as well as the linguopragmatic analysis were used to explain grammatical processes. The studied “transformations” of norms in media are connected not with damage to the language. On the contrary, they may indicate a natural compensation of systemic lacunae, the realization of new system potencies, which means that they fully correspond to ecological thinking.

Keywords: grammatical form, media grammatics, normativity, dynamics of normativity, grammatical lacuna, grammatical lacuna elimination, media, media and features.

1. Introduction

Grammar as a whole, especially morphology, is traditionally identified with the dominance of the system norm, taking into consideration its features such as traditionality, authority, sustainability, obligatoriness, uniformity, selectivity, codification, stability (or "flexible stability"). Of course, strong literary texts have always presented examples of deviations from the standard, almost always proved by the content, but understood only as deviations from the norm and invariably implying it. The author's usage in media texts (interpreted in different ways: as intentional form, intentional anomaly, etc.) not only did not destroy the norm, but it itself was identifiable only due to an unshakable normative standard. We will focus on those changes in grammatical morphological forms that, in our opinion, modify the norm, increase the features of the new normativity.

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2. Materials and methods

According to this article idea a number of changes in grammatical forms and categories in media are significant not only within the relevant contexts, but also it fixes significant changes in the norm itself. Based on this, the authors propose a descriptive and analytical interpretation of grammatical forms used in modern media. Philological hermeneutics with an emphasis on explanation, the linguistic-pragmatic analysis were used to explain grammatical processes, because grammatical semantics “is connected with all the subtleties of conceptualization, as well as with socio-cultural and pragmatic factors” (Borodai, 2020: 591).

3. Discussion

The distinctive feature of the language system (at all the levels of its manifestation) is the lacunarity arising from the asymmetry of the signifier and the signified. Taking this into consideration, the formal incompleteness of the paradigm turns out to be a fundamental property of the language, and not an accidental phenomenon. If, according to cognitive science, the grammatical system is considered to be a reflection of the nationally specific worldview features, then not only filled cells are important for grammatical description, but also the natural absence of some forms. And further, it seems natural to eliminate lacunae more or less regularly, which, for a number of reasons, is most clearly manifested in media discourse (Akay, 2020). Modern media is new social and linguistic reality (Boulianne, 2019; Deligiaouri, 2018), and it is no coincidence that whole scientific fields – media linguistics and media stylistics – study media texts today. Media discourse is considered to be a special language formation prevailing in modern communication as a media dialect.

“The special social significance of the medialect is due to the fact that today it determines the essence of all the active language processes, it has a strong influence on all the language forms, including the literary language” (Polonsky, 2018: 230), it was pointed out the culturological conditionality of the function of the standard for the language (Polonsky, 2010).

In the media language, different communicative strategies and tactics providing a perlocative effect are in demand (Fitzpatrick, 2018; Jang, Kim, 2018; Kulikova, Barabash, 2022; Kulikova, Tedeeva, 2022; Manca, 2020; Shin et al., 2022), and in good media, not only lexical means of implementing these strategies are used, but also more subtle signals such as grammatical means.

For example, it was the media that introduced a special manifestation of the lexicogrammatical category of collectivity according to the formula “adjective *kollektivnyi* (collective) + anthroponym”: “*And then it turned out that the kollektivnyi (collective) Alexander Prokhanov was right*” (Polupanov, 2022: 19).

The media introduce into the Russian language constructions with analyte adjectives, which can actually be any noun:

“Fishing (phishing) is the process of luring confidential information from a person in order to steal money or commit fraudulent actions.

- The task of fishing-zlodei (phishing villains) is, – says the developer of Internet services Alexey Shcherbakov, – to look as convincing as possible” (Petushkova, 2022: 8);

The calculation goes to the sea sale of oil to India and China, which sooner or later will overcome its kovid-problemy (covid problems) and start a period of active recovery (Titov, 2022: 2).

In the media, lacunae in parts of speech are eliminated, for example, it is the comprehensive expansion of the normatively limited group of state category words, for example new derivate *kovidno* (predicative adverb from *covid*): *Budet li KOVIDNO?* (the author used pun intended: will it be *covid*?) (Ilyasova, 2021: 171).

For example, the headline of the article by N. Sorokin “*Nam fioletovo*” (the author used pun intended: It’s purple for us) (Sorokin, 2022: 3).

Russian grammarians (L.V. Shcherba, V.V. Vinogradov, etc.) who studied state category words in the middle of the last century noted the limitations and vagueness of this part of speech.

For example, the use of the words *nezhno* (lovingly) or *nadezhno* (securely) in the syntactic function of an adverb has always bewildered.

Of course, there were deviations from this rule and they were even recorded in academic grammars. For example, A. Shirvindt used deviant units in his memoirs “Ahead of the obituary”.

“There is a glimmer of hope for the discovery of the recipe for immortality, it becomes raduzhno (rosy) and nadezhno (securely) (Shirvindt, 2019), however, these were just individual

author's deviations. Nowadays, this process has become large-scale. The rich illustrative material is presented in the research by Akay (Akay, 2020)

One of the striking manifestations of the dynamism of grammatical and word-forming forms in modern media is connected with the activation of the correlates of feminine anthroponyms, often called feminitives (Kulikova et al., 2021: 253). Of course, these forms themselves are not new (many of them are at least two centuries old), but they have always remained on the periphery. They were brought to life solely under the influence of textual conditions. However, today, in our opinion, the situation is radically changing, because these forms have begun to claim central positions. The fact is that under the influence of the media, their positions are strengthening in the official business style of the Russian language, closed to them before.

The nomination *rezhisserka* (female – film director) appeared in the documents of the Moscow International Film Festival of 2021, but this form became known to the general public, of course, thanks to the media:

“I mean, the film was criticized for misogyny, mainly because of the imagined rezhisserka (female – film director) Sasha Tapochek, which you yourself were hiding behind” (Nozdryakov, 2022: 17).

“One joy in the film is an energetic girl, a spetsialistka (female – specialist) in cipher, whom father and son forcibly dragged into their company and did not lose” (Kondrashov, 2022: 26). The word *spetsialistka* (female – specialist) tends to business (rather than colloquial) discourse, and the female correlate seems to be a landmark phenomenon.

For example, the use of a feminitive from a military rank in the media: the title of the article by D. Popov: *Admiralka* (female – admiral) and other “diversities” (Popov, 2022: 6)

Recently, feminitives have sometimes been attributed to destructive phenomena (Wang Yanbing, 2018; Guzaerova, 2017, 2021).

It was often pointed out that feminitives convey negative pragmatics, that they are bright pejoratives, whereas when using them, this is not always taken into consideration (Annushkin, 2021). However: “... if a few years ago the word *avtorka* (female – author) could only be found in a narrow circle of *aktivistki* (female – activists), now *blogerki* (female – bloggers), *kuratorki* (female – curators) and *organizatorki* (female – organizers) are becoming mainstream” (Bobyleva, 2021: 211). That is, the possibilities of feminitives are greatly expanding: they are needed not only to convey pragmatic shades of meaning (although this function remains), but also as neutral nominations suitable for informative media genres and in general for official business communication. This shift occurred under the influence of the mass media use of these forms in neutral contexts.

4. Results

Significant changes have occurred in the system of plural forms of the noun. Eighty years ago, the Explanatory Dictionary of the Russian language, edited by D.N. Ushakov (Tolkovyi slovar'..., 1935–1940), gave huge lists of words of non-specific semantics with the mark “there is no plural form”. Later, explanatory dictionaries, for example the Grammatical Dictionary of the Russian Language by A.A. Zaliznyak (Zaliznyak, 1977), abandoned the uninformative mark “there is no plural form” and agreed with the potentiality of plural forms in most of abstract and real nouns.

Today, only collective nouns with a morphemic index of collectivity remain persistent singularia tantum, while the overwhelming number of abstract nouns have a numerical paradigm. For example, the usual pluratives such as *riski* (risks), *vyzovy* (challenges), *initsiativy* (initiatives), etc. Of course, there remain obstacles of a morphological essence (for words such as *gore* (grief), *zlost'* (anger), etc.). All these changes also occurred under the influence of media, where plurals were “run-in” and got its usuality.

The new role of media in changing grammatical reality is clearly presented by the example of the category of degrees of comparison. Comparatives and superlatives from adjectives and even nouns, the semantics of which normally does not imply gradations, were typical for artistic (especially poetic) discourse throughout XIX and XX centuries, however, it was always an artistic technique not pretending to change the systemic normativity as a whole.

Examples like *I am odinoche* (lonelier) *than all the people in the world* (Severyanin, 1987), *volchei* (more wolfish) *than wolves*, *lisee* (foxier) *than a fox...* (Yevtushenko, 2018) were considered to be precisely means of enhancing textual expressiveness within the framework of the author's idiostyle (according to researchers of M. Tsvetaeva's idiostyle several dozen non-

normative forms of degrees in her texts are conceptually significant). We see a new phenomenon in the fact that such forms are no longer perceived as anomalous, especially deviant, as an exclusively textual means of expression, but become signs of such large-scale conglomerations as the media language (*tsentree* (more central) *than Moscow*) or the language of advertising (*yablochnee* (more applesauce) *than apples*, *limonnee* (more lemony) *than lemons*),

“We answered all the questions clearly and positively. Private property – yes. And for recent years it has never been said that this will be canceled. Oligarchs? So, they are samye oligarkhistye (the most oligarchic) in the world!” (Karelin, 2022: 7);

The title of the article by T. Ustinova *“Vse chudesatee i chudesatee”* (It's getting more wonderful and more wonderful) (Ustinova, 2023: 20) (comparative from the plural form of the noun *chudesa* (miracles)

B. Norman is quite right that the change in the grammar of the media language is determined by the statistically recorded increase in the number of comprehensively presented features of language units (Norman, 2021), and this is extremely true in relation to the forms under consideration.

The same with the forms of the future tense participles (active voice), which were sporadically found in texts of the XIX – XX centuries, but in modern media they have become frequent (despite the norm fixed by academic grammars about their absence).

S. Kholod (Kholod, 2022: 377-380) writes about hundreds of cases of the use of such forms in the Runet, which is obviously connected with the law of economy of linguistic and mental efforts.

Forms such as *svyazhushchikh* (will be binding), *povliyayushchikh* (will be influencing), as is known, denote potential features (*svyazhushchikh* = that will bind, *povliyayushchikh* = that will influence). As it is known, this missing link in the verb formation of the Russian language is presented in other languages (for example, in Latin), and on this basis, this phenomenon was evaluated not only as an intralingual, but also an interlingual lacuna. It is in media where the elimination of this lacuna is actively carried out, and, it must be admitted, it is in media where the very problem is also discussed (and not only in linguistic scientific works): *“for example, I have always been surprised by the absence of future participles in the Russian language. Who came up with this idea? Why can't we say a “voidushchii” (will be incoming) person, “a poletyashchii (will be flying) ball”, after all, the meaning of these phrases is clear without translation“* (Bak, 2021: 11).

The language cultivation, that is, the maintenance of all its useful features and manifestations, since antiquity, when the very idea of cultivation was born (Khazagerov, 2022: 232), remains one of the most effective ideas to this day.

Thus, the new normativity in this area turns out to be due, among other things, to the general trend towards economy of the means of expressing grammatical semantics.

The analysis of modern media texts makes it possible to conclude that there is a growing trend of increasing communicative and pragmatic significance of grammatical forms, and, therefore, the intentionality of their choice by the authors of media texts, it also depends on the media space segment presented media texts. The noted trend is realized due to a consistent intentionally motivated choice of language units, the normativity/non-normativity or linguoecology/non-linguoecology of which is largely determined by the context. The addresser may intentionally create contexts in which the language unit semantics, including grammatical semantics, as a rule, is ambivalent, and the addressee's evaluation of the parameters specified above is not rigidly fixed.

Thus, the use of such units in modern media texts is determined by the intention of the author, but provides a greater degree of communicative freedom to the recipient-reader, since it is the author of the media text who determines for himself, and in some segments of the media space for others (for example, by commenting), the permissibility of the functioning of certain units in the media text. Modern media texts reflect a focus on usage (colloquial speech), but they practically start to displace the literary text from the position of the standard. Perhaps this is due to criteria similar to the norm itself such as common usage, general acceptance, moreover, it is necessary to supplement this list with the criterion of accessibility syncretic by its essence.

Analyzing grammatical characteristics of modern media texts made it possible to outline a hierarchically organized (taking into consideration the regularity of forms) system of typical linguistic units such as feminatives, analyte adjectives, plural forms of nouns, comparatives, superlatives, state category words. Relatively recently, a model of a stable nomination according to the formula *“adjective kollektivnyi (collective) + anthroponym”* has been formed, the choice of

such a nomination determines the system of author's evaluations presented in the media text and makes it possible to predict the secondary evaluation of the text by the recipient-reader.

5. Conclusion

In modern media linguistics the opinion has been strengthened that the “health” and “well-being” of the language is based on the diversity and richness of forms of expression, which is ensured, among other things, by eliminating grammatical lacunae. In our opinion, it is possible to talk about the formation of a new linguistic object – the grammar of the media text. As a result of the research, classes of grammatical units stabilizing this object and determining the representation of grammatical categories in the media text have been identified. These units are divided into two groups of phenomena: systemic and asystemic units. Systemic units include units representing grammatical categories as oppositive ones. Asystemic are units for which there are no oppositions at the moment, but oppositions can be formed, for example, on the basis of the tendency to analyticism presented in the language, such units for which opposition is only potentially possible. Asystemic are units for which oppositions have not been formed yet, but can be formed (for example, on the basis of the tendency to analyticism presented in the language), or such units for which opposition is only potentially possible. If units of the first type can be used intentionally or not intentionally in media texts, then units belonging to the second type can be used only intentionally. Of course, such a complex phenomenon as the grammar of media text requires further special research. The studied “transformations” of norms in media are connected not with damage to the language. On the contrary, they may indicate a natural compensation of systemic lacunae, the realization of new system potencies, which means that they fully correspond to ecological thinking. In the future the conclusions can be further verified based on the analysis of the national corpus data, first of all, on the comparison (taking into consideration the specified criteria) of the data of the main and publicistic sections of the National Corpus of the Russian language. Such an analysis is important because its results makes it possible to supplement the lexicographic characteristics of tropes and figures used in media texts.

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