

Inferential Statement in the German Language

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Abstract—This article deals with the inferential statements as linguistic means of indicating and specifying the evidentiality in the German language. Evidentiality implies implicit or explicit ways of marking the mechanisms of obtaining the knowledge necessary for constructing a statement. Being one of the components of evidential semantics, inferentiality is directly related to the designation in the statement of information obtained through logical reasoning using the activity of sensory systems or personal experience. However, at the same time, such a characteristic of personality as the ability to intuition, which allows reconstructing a situation without involving logical analysis or past experience, often remains outside the field of examination of linguists. The analysis of the linguistic material made it possible, on the one hand, to clarify the concept of inferentiality, and on the other, to identify the means of explication of inferential semantics in the German language, which are represented by modal words, modal verbs in their secondary function and the verb *scheinen*. Let us note that, expressing epistemic modality in addition to inferential evidentiality, these lexemes are distinguished by their polyfunctionality.

Keywords—*evidentiality, the German language, inferential statement, inferentiality, intuition, life experience, marker, logical inference, modal verb, modal word, perceptive activity, verb *scheinen**

I. INTRODUCTION

Recently, there has been a tendency of linguistics to describe the semantic value of an utterance, reflecting the mechanisms for obtaining information. Here we mean the category of evidentiality (from the Latin word 'evidentia'), the interest in which was stimulated, in particular, by the work «Shifters, Verbal Categories, and the Russian Verb» of R. O. Jakobson [2], one of the first researchers to pay serious attention to this category. At the same time, it should be noted that this category was previously included in the zone of interests of the American ethnolinguist F. Boas [1], who introduced the term "evidentiality" into research use.

Proceeding to examination, let us present our understanding of the category of evidentiality itself, in the study of which there is currently some progress. According to the founder in the study of the category of evidentiality R. O.

Jacobson, evidentiality appears as a verb category in which three facets can be distinguished. They are associated with a narrated event, a speech event and a narrated speech event [2]. In other words, we are talking about the setting which considers the information source of the reported fact.

Detailed theoretical studies of the category of evidentiality in Russian linguistics were carried out by N. A. Kozintseva [3]. The researcher includes explicit reference to the source of the speaker's information regarding the situation reported by him into the sphere of evidential semantics. O. A. Kobrina [4] adheres to a similar opinion, stating that evidentiality serves to indicate the presence of special means for marking that the speaker or another person was the author (witness) of the utterance.

When it comes to evidentiality, many authors systematize the mechanisms for obtaining information. So, S. I. Buglak [5] ranks among such sources: 1) perceptual (sight, hearing, smell, taste, tactile sensations), 2) inferential (all types of inferential knowledge (induction, deduction, abductive, animalistic inference), 3) reporting (indirect speech, rumors, gossip, hearsay, 4) the speaker's memory and experience.

Evidentiality can also appear in the form of a code that allows the recipient of information to decipher information from the point of view of certainty / uncertainty, truth / fiction, reliability / unreliability [6]. Thus, the perception, storage and transmission of information with a mental assessment are carried out. In this case, attention is focused on the correlation between the nature of the impact and the information being reproduced. From the point of view of the author there are two types of evidentiality: "categorical evidentiality", which refers to the truth, certainty and reliability of information and its source, and "uncategorized evidentiality" with subdivision into such types as "emotional evidentiality", "rational evidentiality", "hidden evidentiality" and "neutral evidentiality".

Some researchers, when studying the category of evidentiality, focus on the personality of the speaker himself, on his experience and testimony of the described event, as well as citing the information heard [7].

We adhere to the traditional point of view and see the category of evidentiality as the optional explicit or implicit marking of the source of information by the speaker regarding the situation he is reporting.

II. METHODS

The present study was carried out from the standpoint of a descriptive method, aimed, as it is known, at systematizing the facts and phenomena of one language, in particular the modern German language. The essence of observation, which refers to the descriptive method, along with generalization, interpretation and classification, is, in our case, in identifying the means of expressing inferential semantics based on the use of the resource of a text of fiction. The collection and analysis of illustrative material was carried out using the method of continuous sampling, which, in its turn, allows obtaining reliable results. The study is based on the material of German-language fiction texts published in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The interpretation of the markers of inferential semantics identified in the process of observation, namely modal words, modal verbs in the function of an assumption and the verb *scheinen*, made it possible to once again to be convinced of the polyfunctionality of language units. The application of the classification technique provided us with the opportunity to distinguish subtypes of inferential meaning, which were further generalized in this study.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Inferential statement substance

When it comes to inferential evidentiality, we note that this type of information is considered by many researchers as a subtype of evidential semantics. At the same time, we can note the relative unanimity in the views of linguists on its understanding. Some researchers note the possibility of observing the result of an action, phenomenon or event as an essential factor for the speaker. From the point of view of V. A. Plungyan [8], we can talk about the inferential meaning when the speaker evaluates the situation judging by its result. According to A. D. Kaksin and M. D. Chertykova [9], inferential semantics correlates with an indication to the result of the observed action. Other researchers associate inferential semantics more with logical inference, although the key indicator is still data available for perception. For S. G. Tatevosov [10], a condition for logical reasoning can be an observable situation or general data and intuition.

A more detailed classification of inferences was given by O. A. Khadartsev [11]. As inferential statements in Persian, he considers: 1) prototypical inferential statements, in which inference is based on the observation of the speaker; 2) inferential statements that have several reasons for logical conclusion; 3) the appearance of the described situation when the truth of the message is not presupposed.

Summing up a far from exhaustive review of works, we can conclude that, being a subtype of evidential semantics, inferentiality serves to explicate in the utterance information acquired through logical inference based on perceptual activity or preliminary life experience of the speaker.

B. Inferential statement expression

The disclosure of the inferential statement substance of the category of evidentiality seems to us flawed without discussing the inferential statement expression. The analysis of the inferential statement expression causes a lot of controversy and reasoning due to the ambiguity of not only the phenomenon of evidentiality, but mainly the means of its explication. In Indo-European languages, in contrast to many Türkic, Caucasian, Finno-Ugric, American Indian languages, in which evidential semantics is manifested grammatically in the verb paradigm, there are no specialized grammatical means and explication is carried out primarily at the lexical and lexical-grammatical level. In some languages of the world, linguistic means for marking evidential semantics are registered at the morphological level, and are constructed, as a rule, on the basis of perfect forms. Thus, the origin of the retelling mood in the modern Bulgarian language can be directly related to the historical development of the Bulgarian perfect. In addition to perfect, in some languages other means of expressing inferentiality are recorded, for example, affixation in the Korean language.

At the same time, the absence of specialized markers for the explication of evidential semantics leads to the detection of areas of intersection between different semantic planes for expressing inferentiality. In the German language there are intersection between epistemic modality and evidentiality in terms of their meanings. As our observations on linguistic material have shown, the methods of marking inferential evidentiality in German include modal verbs in the secondary function, modal words *anscheinend*, *offenbar*, *offensichtlich*, *sicher*, *vermutlich*, *vielleicht*, *wahrscheinlich* and others, as well as the verb *scheinen*.

Based on the analysis of linguistic material, it can be stated that inferential evidentiality in German, not being a grammatical category, interacts primarily with epistemic modality. As for the verb *scheinen*, B. Hanzen [12] speaks quite rightly of its semantic generalization and the highest degree of grammaticalization.

Probably, in this case, we can talk about some polyfunctionality of linguistic units, when the semantic structure contains potential senses for expressing similar meanings. Obviously, the linguistic literature increasingly discusses the problem of correlation between two categories of evidentiality and epistemic modality, which are closely related in meaning and researchers' opinions on the topic are significantly different.

Some researchers propose to consider them as independent categories as referring to the source of the speaker's knowledge does not imply describing the level of the certainty [3], [13], [14]. So, according to A. Aikhenvald [14], the linguistic category of evidentiality is associated with the manifestation of the method of obtaining information, while marking different degrees of the speaker's confidence in the certainty of the statement is optional. Other researchers, on the contrary, urge not to consider these categories as unrelated.

In this context, the means of expressing evidentiality appear as linguistic units that mark the type of obtaining

information in terms of expressing the degree of its probability or certainty [15], [16], [17], [18], [19]. This problem was covered in more detail in the work «Evidentiality, Epistemic Modality, and Epistemic Status» [20].

Of course, one of the main functions of modal words and modal verbs in the secondary function can imply the explication of the speaker's subjective-evaluative attitude to the content of the utterance in terms of expressing varying degrees of reliability, presumption, probability, confidence within the framework of epistemic modality. At the same time, there is an indication of the source of information from the point of view of its presumption, built on logical reasoning. Based on the material of the modern German language, several types of inferential semantics can be identified, the main of which being perceptual and general inferences.

The perceptual activity of the speaker contributes to making a conclusion about the situation with the involvement of visual perception or perception by the rest of the sensory systems (hearing, taste, smell, touch). Moreover, visual observation plays a leading role in human cognitive activity due to the fact that an optical analyzer allows a person, as it is known, to perceive up to 80% of all incoming information. For example: in the following statements, the author's reasoning may be based entirely on visual observation: In einem Schlafanzug und mit zerzausten Haaren saß sie im Schneidersitz auf ihrem Bett. Sie hielt einen Becher mit Kaffee in der Hand und hatte ganz *offensichtlich* gerade Zeitung gelesen. Jetzt schlug sie sie zu und warf sie vom Bett (S. Kornbichler «Im Angesicht der Schuld»); (She sat cross-legged on her bed in pajamas and with disheveled hair. She was holding a mug of coffee and had *obviously* been reading a newspaper. Now she folded it and threw it off the bed (S. Kornbichler "In the face of guilt"); » Es sieht wie ein Schlag aus. Dein Hals ist auch zerkratzt. Du wirst *sicher* irgendein Abenteuer gehabt haben, Liebling « (E. M. Remarque "Drei Kameraden"); ("It looks like a blow. Your neck is scratched too. You *must have had* some adventure, darling (E. M. Remarque "Three Comrades").

Based on the resources of the literary text, it can be argued that auditory observation is used to a lesser extent than optical observation to restore the situation. As a rule, the linguistic context of a situation of this kind includes perceptual lexeme, such as the lexeme *vernehmbar*. The speaker draws his conclusion based on the auditory perception of the situation, and marks it with the modal word *offenbar*, also in this context the verb *scheinen* is used as an indicator of intuitive inference: Geflüster wurde im Sitzungszimmer vernehmbar, *offenbar* sprach der Abt auf Gralduke ein; sichtbar waren nur der grüne Tisch, der Aschenbecher, die Wasserkaraffe; die Hinrichtung war verschoben; Streit lag in der Luft; immer noch *schien* das Richterkollegium uneins zu sein (H. Böll «Billard um halbzehn»); (Whispers were heard in the meeting room, apparently the abbot spoke to Gralduke; only the green table, the ashtray, the water carafe were visible; the execution was postponed; Quarrel was in the air; the board of judges still *seemed* at odds (H. Böll "Billiards at half past six").

The logical conclusion of the speaker can be based, on the one hand, on optical observation, and on the other, on the

speaker's knowledge of the situation itself. Noticing that the auctioneer is in a hurry, the speaker concludes that he must have a lot to do. These reflections are further reinforced by the knowledge that there are many auctions held every day: Er war eilig, er hatte *anscheinend* viel zu tun. Jeden Tag gab es ja Dutzende von Auktionen. Mit runden Gesten begann er den armseligen Kram zu versteigern. Er hatte den gußeisernen Humor und die Sachlichkeit eines Mannes, der täglich mit dem Elend zu tun hat, ohne selbst davon berührt zu werden (E. M. Remarque "Drei Kameraden"); (He was in a hurry, apparently he had a lot to do. There were dozens of auctions every day. With round gestures, he began to auction off the poor stuff. He had a cast-iron humor and practicality of a man who deals with misery every day without being touched by it himself (E.M. Remarque "Three Comrades").

Numerous among the subtypes of inferences in the German language can be considered as the so-called general inferences. In these inferences the prerequisite for the logical conclusion of the speaker is knowledge of individual facts of the reconstructed situation, in other words, the presence of his past experience. In the next example, despite the bewilderment of the characters in the work, the narrator believes that the boy should know what breakfast is. The basis for this conclusion is his life experience and the fact that the boy is already 13 years old: ... sie lachten und fragten: »Frühstück, weißt du nicht, was das ist, hast du denn noch nie gefrühstückt?« »Nein«, sagte ich. »Und in der Bibel«, sagte der eine Erwachsene, »hast du da nie das Wort Frühstück gelesen?«, und der andere Erwachsene fragte den einen: »Sind Sie so sicher, daß in der Bibel das Wort Frühstück überhaupt vorkommt?« »Nein«, sagte der eine, »aber irgendwo, in irgendeinem Lesestück oder zu Hause, *muß* er doch das Wort Frühstück einmal *gehört haben*, er ist doch bald dreizehn... (H. Böll „Billard um halbzehn“); (They laughed and asked, "Breakfast, don't you know what that is, have you never had breakfast?" "No," I said. 'And in the Bible,' said one adult, 'haven't you ever read the word breakfast there?', And the other adult asked one: 'Are you so sure that the word breakfast actually occurs in the Bible?' "No", said one, 'but somewhere, in some reading or at home, he *must have heard* the word breakfast once, he will soon be thirteen ... (H. Böll "Billiards at half past six").

In another case, Madame Gaillard's thoughts are based on the knowledge of the situation described: Madame Gaillard hingegen fiel auf, daß er bestimmte Fähigkeiten und Eigenheiten besaß, die sehr ungewöhnlich, um nicht zu sagen übernatürlich waren: So *schien* ihm die kindliche Angst vor der Dunkelheit und der Nacht völlig fremd zu sein. Man konnte ihn jederzeit zu einer Besorgung in den Keller schicken, wohin sich die anderen Kinder kaum mit einer Lampe wagten, oder hinaus zum Schuppen zum Holzholen bei stockfinsterer Nacht. Und nie nahm er ein Licht mit und fand sich doch zurecht und brachte sofort das Verlangte, ohne einen falschen Griff zu tun, ohne zu stolpern oder etwas umzustößen (P. Süskind «Das Parfum. Die Geschichte eines Mörders»); (Madame Gaillard, however, noticed that he had certain abilities and qualities that were highly unusual, if not to say supernatural: the childish fear of darkness and night *seemed* to be totally foreign to him. You could send him anytime on an errand to the cellar, where other children hardly dared go even

with a lantern, or out to the shed to fetch wood on the blackest night. And he never took a light with him and still found his way around and immediately brought back what was demanded, without making one wrong move-not a stumble, not one thing knocked over (P. Süskind "The perfume. The Story of a Murderer" translation by E. Vengerova).

We should also note that in the study of inferential meaning, intuition or the sixth sense often remains outside the field of examination, in other words, the person's ability to restore the situation in the absence of logical inference, while various kinds of experience, empathy, and imagination are involved.

In the following example, the speaker's intuition becomes decisive for the logical conclusion. It seems to the speaker that the white man seemed to know about everything: Der Weiße nahm mich am Arm, fasste meine Schultasche und führte mich aus dem Lehrerzimmer, er fragte nichts, er *schien* über alles Bescheid zu wissen ... (M. Orths „Lehrerzimmer“). (The white man took me by the arm, grabbed my school bag and led me out of the teacher's room, he asked nothing, he seemed to know about everything ... (M. Orths "Teacher's room"). Inferences of this kind can be labeled as intuitive.

IV. CONCLUSION

We consider inferentiality as a component of evidential semantics, which is intended for optional marking of information obtained by logical reasoning with the involvement of perceptual activity or life experience, or intuition. In contrast to such languages as Turkic, languages of the Balkan Areola, Finno-Ugric and many others, most Indo-European languages do not have specialized markers as part of the grammatical structure of a word for the explication of evidential semantics in general and inference in particular. In German, inferential evidentiality is marked by modal words *anscheinend*, *offenbar*, *offensichtlich*, *sicher*, *vermutlich*, *vielleicht*, *wahrscheinlich* and others, modal verbs in the secondary function, the verb *scheinen*, which, as it is known, also refer to indicators of epistemic modality. The commonality of the means of expressing inferentiality and epistemic modality suggests, first of all, the idea of their polyfunctionality. The development of new semantics, as observations show, occurs on the basis of existing ones. The means of expression of a certain category acquire a new meaning or modify it mainly within the limits of their original category. It can be concluded that the categories of evidentiality and epistemic modality are inextricably linked.

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