


THE LANGUAGE SYSTEM HOMEOSTASIS

O. Kasymova, Doctor of Philology, Professor, Lecturer
Bashkir State University, Russia

Language system, represented in the article, is characterized by the homeostasis. All units in the language system are presented in great numbers and are related to each other in different ways. Homeostasis makes the language system stable.

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As is known, superlarge systems have material and structural redundancy that provides their stability. The language system is also characterized by such redundancy. First of all, the language includes a great number of units – the infinite number of sounds, about 100 thousand words (according to the dictionaries of the Modern Russian Literary Language), the infinite number of word combinations and sentences. The relations among these units are also different, they are thoroughly studied and expressed in scientific works: “the true universal character of the language structure is expressed on the abstract level as the universal character of the system of inner relations, and the close relations of the language and the logic are also found. The most general structural principle of the language is the principle of hierarchy...” [Степанов 1998, p. 64].

The phonetic units are distributed into groups depending on the place and way of formation, the acoustic characteristics of the sounds, their functional traits (see, for example, [Панов 1979]). They form a system in the traditional sense of the word: we can find the clear division of units according to some principle and the hierarchic relations among the units. Such are the groups of vowels and consonants, the classification of vowels according to their row, level and labiality, and the classification of the consonants according to the place and way of formation, participation of the voice and noise in the formation and so on.

Words as lexical units form numerous groups depending on their origin (originally Russian and borrowings), use (active and passive stock, neutral and stylistically fixed ones), according to their meanings: synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, paronyms and others (see, for example, [Шмелев 1977]). Words are represented as word-forming classes

and as grammatical groups in the works in morphology (see, for example, [Виноградов 1972]). The sentences are classified according to their volume, aim of locution, structure and so on. The language itself is represented in the works of the linguists in different forms of existence: it is the language and the speech, dialectic, professional, jargon forms and the literary norm of the language. The interlevel language relations are expressed in the theory of functional grammar: the units of different levels that have semantic and functional common features are joined in the language field. So the complexity of the language system is fixed and put down, the expression of the complex character of the language relations, in essence, was the aim of all linguistic studies.

Together with this, not always the cases of relations among language units are represented correctly from the point of view of the system theory. For example, the language represents widely the phenomena of multiple meanings, synonyms and antonyms, but linguists treat them in different ways. If multiple meanings, synonyms and other language phenomena are considered positive, natural in the language, then homonymy is considered the «plague» of the language, «the undesirable case» and even «the phenomenon beyond the system» [Шмелев 1977, p. 89 – 90, Харитончик 1992, p. 72]. The homonyms themselves are not also considered a system phenomenon. (see the review of works in [Лыков, Орлова 1997, p. 178]). But it is from the point of view of stability of a large system that any relation among the units is considered a positive thing, this is the thing that leads to the homeostasis of the system. That is why homonymy can by no means be considered beyond the system and an undesirable phenomenon, because

in linguists' opinion, distinguishing homonymy in the speech practice of the natives causes no difficulties: «the communicants have no troubles because of homonyms, because the context determines the meaning of the word in homonymy» [Шмелев 1977, p. 89]: «подковка лежит в пыли» и «подковка лошадей»; «тилка сломалась» и «тилка дров». In the case of syntactic homonymy a mass introduction of «extralinguistic moments into speech communication» destroys the possible syntactic vagueness like «предлагаем услуги по ремонту автомашин, принадлежащих гражданам *всех марок*»; «Нам нужно еще заплатить за это» or «Со льда она возвращается *хромая*» [Лаптева 1988, p. 147 - 148]. The completing abilities of the text milieu enable us to understand correctly both the meaning of the word and the meaning of the construction.

Thus, homonymy on the whole does not interfere into communication, and the difficulties of homonyms differentiating arise only with those for whom the given language is not native, or with the persons with the low level of language competence. С. Д. Кацнельсон pointed to the redundancy of morphological categories of synthetic languages as «a reason for reliable and stable work in various conditions» [Кацнельсон 1972, p. 76 - 77].

A high degree of doubling, characterizing the natural languages, refers to the phenomena contributing to the homeostasis of the language system. The developed languages are characterized by the dialectal and literary forms of the language, while the dialectal forms (talks and parlances) are present in one language in multitude. So, in Russian one can point out three parlances, inside which there are several dozens of talks. To denote the same reality the dialectal

and literary forms of the language use a large list of words, for example: the literary *дичок* (a wild apple-tree) and the dialectal *дикарка, дикарька, дичка, дичок, дичь*.

The developed stylistic system also contributes to complementary relations among language units, enabling them to express the same meaning through the means associated with certain situations of communication. Double means of the expression of this or that meaning is considered a positive phenomenon in the language, because it testifies to the degree of national thinking development, capable not only to notice the proximity of the realia, but also to differentiate them with precision: *напрасно, тщетно (усилит., преим. с глаг. стараться, пытаться, стремиться и т. д.), безуспешно, безрезультатно, бесполезно, бесплодно, бессмысленно, зря (разг.), напрасну (разг.), даром (разг.), попусту (разг.), впустую (разг.), по-пустому (прост.), задаром (прост.)*. It is impossible to keep all the various ways of naming all realities in the mind of an individual speaker, the capacity of individual memory cannot assimilate such a number of words. That is why it should be supposed that such doubling is reasonable exactly in the sense of redundancy expression, contributing to the stability of the language system.

From the point of view of providing increased stability one can explain the presence of absolute synonyms in language. Whatever small their number may be, absolute synonyms are an occasional case, contradicting the law of economizing language means and not having enough reason to exist: *бегемот – гиппопотам, кинуть – бросить, лингвистика – языкознание*. The introduction into linguistic use of the notion of homeostasis of the language system contributes to the understanding of the reason for the absolute synonyms existence.

So, basing on the main postulates of the system theory we can “legalize” and explain such language phenomena that have not yet been explained satisfactorily – the presence of a large number of parallel forms, including complete doubles, the presence of homonymy, redundant grammatical forms. The natural language is a flexible and surviving system that has proved

its stability for thousands of years. It is obvious that in the natural language there are no occasional, extrasystem and redundant “details”. In artificial languages there is no, vice versa, material and structural redundancy, the systems of artificial languages do not have homeostasis. “The planned” language is organized more rationally: it includes the minimal number of synonymic rows, there are no dialectal forms, the stylistic system is not developed, homonyms are excluded. В. А. Звегинцев noted that «the notion of redundancy is not now used only in the technical sphere, and now, frankly speaking, is one of the methodological criteria through which the natural and the logical languages are distinguished» [Звегинцев 1968, p. 28].

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Information about author:

1. Olga Kasymova - Doctor of Philology, Professor, Lecturer, Bashkir State University; address: Russia, Ufa city; e-mail: olgakasymova@yandex.ru