

THE ROLE OF LEXICAL UNITS IN THE EXPRESSION OF COMPARISON

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The article examines the role of lexical units in the expression of comparison in German. It is noted that in the German language, comparative relations in the comparative field of adjectives manifest themselves in two forms: the absolute degree of the attribute and quality and the relative degree of the attribute and quality. The deviation of the attribute and quality specific to a certain object and event from the point determined by the norm is expressed by the comparative and superlative degrees of the adjective. This also indicates that the compared attributes are in an unequal relationship. The comparative is the first degree of multiplication of the adjective. This degree is used to show the inequality between the levels being compared in the language. The comparative is used to compare two things of the same kind. Comparative is used in the comparison of two identical objects. An adjective used in this degree is variable in its attributive function and unchanged in its predicative function.

Key words: adjective, degrees of adjective, comparison, comparative, superlative.

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1. Introduction

The category of comparativeness in modern linguistics is interpreted as a functional-semantic category that reflects the concepts of equality and inequality. The degree of quality to a greater or lesser extent finds its expression at the morphological and lexical-syntactic levels of the degrees of comparison of adjectives. Comparative is the first degree of multiplication of the adjective. This degree is used to indicate the inequality between the levels being compared in the language. While adjectives in the attributive case receive morphological features, in the predicative case the adjective does not undergo changes in its comparative degree.

A similar situation is observed in adjectives used in the superlative case. The superlative form of an adjective is formed differently depending on the function it performs in the sentence. The adjective in the superlative, formed with the suffix /-(e)st/, is used in the place of the definition and has a variable form.

In addition, the German language also has an invariable form of the superlative. This form is formed with the particle "am" and the suffix "-sten". In this form, the adjective used in the superlative degree performs a predicative function. In the German language, the comparative field of the adjective plays a decisive role in the perception of the surrounding world and finds its expression in the degrees of comparison of the adjective, which are formed morphologically and syntactically.

Purpose of Study. The main purpose of the article is to emphasize the decisive role of the comparative field of the adjective in the perception of the surrounding world in the German language and to show its expression in the degrees of comparison of the adjective formed morphologically and syntactically.

2. Literature Review

Many works have been devoted to this problem. Among them, we cite the works of such researchers as Bunting K.D., Eichler W., Engel U., Erben J. and etcs. In the German language, comparative relations in the comparative field of adjectives manifest themselves in two forms: the absolute degree of the attribute and quality and the relative degree of the attribute and quality. The deviation of the attribute and quality specific to a certain object and event from the point determined by the norm is expressed by the comparative and superlative degrees of the adjective. This also indicates that the compared attributes are in an unequal relationship. For example: *“Die Zungen der Menschen sind länger als ihre Arme”* – (*People’s tongues are longer than their arms.*). Here, the attribute belonging to the nouns “Zunge” and “Arm” is compared. In the first (“Zunge”), this attribute is expressed as higher than in the second (“Arme”). The comparative particle “Als” connects the nouns “Zunge” and “Arm” that are being compared in the sentence. It is important to use this particle, as well as the particle “wie” in the sentence structure. In German, the particle “wie” reflects the equality of the attribute between the nouns being compared. For example: *“Wie Bratäpfel mir glühten die Backen”* – (*My cheeks were glowing like baked apples*). If we use this sentence without the particle “wie”, the idea will be confusing. For example: *“Bratapfel mir glühten die Backen”* – (*The baked apple brightened my cheeks*). Therefore, it is impossible to use this sentence without the particle “wie”. It should also be added that the parties being compared here are different objects.

3. Results and Discussions

The category of comparability in modern linguistics is interpreted as a functional-semantic category that reflects the concepts of equality and inequality. The greater or lesser degree of quality finds its expression at the morphological and lexical-syntactic level of the degrees of comparison of adjectives. For example:

“Klaus ist der schnellste Läufer” – (*Klaus is the fastest runner.*);

“Der Großvater hat einen sehr langen, grauen Bart” – (*Grandpa has a very long, gray beard.*);

“Das geringste Gespenst noch haut dir die blöden Träume auf Kleinholz” – (*The smallest dream will destroy your foolish dreams*) (Schindel, 2004: 21).

In the first sentence, the adjective “schnellere” is used in the comparative degree and shows that the attribute is higher than the degree indicator intended in the norm. A morphological form is used to show this degree difference.

An adjective used in this degree is variable in its attributive function and invariable in its predicative function. For example:

1) *“Er ist kleiner als ich gedacht habe”* (Lenner, Wegner, Ruhlig, 2015: 41) – (He is smaller than I thought.);

3. *“Die Pflanze... hüfthoch, um Ohren dicken Mittelstiel bildet sich ein lockerer Strauch”* (Müller, 2009: 24) – (Plant... waist-high, forming a loose bush around a thick central stem);

4. *“Und je schwächer man ist, um so stärker tränen die Augen und um so mehr zuckert sich der Speichel”* (Lenner, Wegner, Ruhlig, 2015: 42) – (And the weaker you are, the more your eyes water and your saliva becomes sugary).

The adjectives used in the 3rd sentence analyzed (lockerer) are used in the attributive position, while the adjectives in the 1st and 3rd sentences (kleiner, schwächer, stärker) are used in the predicative position. While adjectives in the attributive position receive morphological

features, in the predicative position the adjective does not change in the comparative degree.

In German, the meaning of an adjective used in the comparative degree of an adjective can be strengthened with words such as *viel*, *bedeuten*, *noch immer*. For example, “*Wir kommen viel später*” – (*We will arrive very late.*).

A similar situation is observed with adjectives used in the superlative degree. For this, the word “*aller*” is used in front of the adjective used in the superlative degree. For example: “*Sie ist die allerschönste Kirche in München*” – (*The most beautiful church in Munich*).

In German, the comparative degree is formed by adding /-er/ to the base form of the adjective. In this case, most adjectives with the vowels /a/, /o/, /u/ in the root receive an umlaut. This situation is also reflected in the formation of the superlative degree form. For example: “*schön-schöner*, “*groß-größer*” – (*beautiful, great*).

The formation of the comparative degree of an adjective in this form has been noted by many linguists, for example, by V. Jung, G. Helbig and others (Jung, 1966; Helbig, Buscha, 1974).

The superlative degree is formed by adding /-st/ or /-est/ to the basic form of the adjective. This fact is unambiguously accepted by V. Jung, Duden, U. Engel, V. Eichler and others (Jung, 1966; Dudenredaktion, 2010; Engel, 1996; Eichler, Bünting, 1996). The suffix /-est/ is added to adjectives ending in /-d, -t, -s, -ß, -sch, -z, -x/. For example, “*Der heißeste Monat ist August*” – (*August is the hottest month.*).

In some adjectives, the stem vowel does not accept umlaut in the formation of the comparative and superlative. This situation mainly occurs in the following cases:

a) Adjectives ending with the suffixes /-el, -er, -en, -e, -bar, -sam, -licht, -ig, -haft/. For example: “*dunkel-dunkler-dunkelste*” – (*dark – darker – the darkest*); “*mager-magerer-magerste*” – (*thin – thinner – the thinnest*);

Umlaut is also not used in adjectives whose root vowel is the diphthong “au”. For example:

“*schlau-schlauer-schlaueste*” – (*smart – smarter – the smartest*);

a) Umlaut is not used in some monosyllabic adjectives with the root vowels /a/, /o/, /u/. For example:

“*falsch-falscher-falschste*” – (*wrong – more wrong – the wrongest*);

“*matt-matter-matteste*” – (*gloomy – more gloomy – the gloomiest*);

“*platt-platter-platteste*” – (*straight – straighter – the straightest*) and so on.

b) Umlaut is not used in adjectives borrowed from other languages. For example:

“*logisch-logischer-logischste*” – (*logical-more logical-most logical*);

“*galant-galanter-galanteste*” – (*brave – more brave – the bravest*).

In German, in some adjectives, the comparative (and sometimes the superlative) stem vowel can be used with or without an umlaut. For example: “*glatter-glätt er/glatteste-glätteste*” – (*smooth / smooth*); “*krummer-krümmer/krummste-krümmste*” – (*more crooked – more crooked / the crookedest – the crookedest*); “*schmäler-schmäler/schmalste-schmälste*” – (*narrower – narrower / narrowest – narrowest*).

In modern German, the without umlaut version is more common.

Adjectives that take umlaut in comparative forms do not take umlaut when used in a compound compound. For example: “*Er ist klüger*” – (*O daha ağıllıdır*); “*Er ist noch altklüger als sie*” – (*He matures earlier than her*).

When forming the comparative of adjectives ending in /-el/, the letter “e” used in the ending /-el/ is not used. For example: “*Ein dunkleres Zimmer*” – (*Dark room*); “*Eines edleren Mannes*” – (*A nobler man*).

The adjectives “gut”, “viel” and “gern” form degrees of comparison in the superlative form. For example: “*gut-besser-best*” – (*good – better – best*); “*viel-mehr-meist*” – (*much – more – mostly*).

The comparative forms of these adjectives are derived from different roots than the ordinary form. The formation of comparative degrees of an adjective in the supplementary form is also found in other languages. For example: in English: “good-better”, “bad-worse”, “little-less”.

These adjectives have a completely abstract meaning about quality and quantity.

There are also adjectives in German that change the consonant at the root of the word when forming degree forms. For example: “*hoch-höher-höchst*” – (*high – higher – highest*); “*Das höchste Gebäude in der Stadt liegt am Meer*” – (*The tallest building in the city is on the seafloor*).

In German, some adjectives, for example, “jung”, “alt”, “lang”, “kurz”, “groß”, “klein” are used in comparative language without indicating comparison. In this case, the comparative of these adjectives does not express the usual degree of increase, but a relative relationship to the opposite adjective. For example, the expression “*ein jüngerer Mann*” (a young man) does not indicate that he is younger than a young man, but that he is older than a young man, that is, “*ein älterer oder*”, “*ein alter Mann*” is older than this. For this, G. Helbig makes such a comparison:

“*Ein junger Mann*” (about 15-30 years old)

“*Ein jüngerer Mann*” (about 30-45 years old)

“*Ein älterer Mann*” (about 50-65 years old)

“*Ein alter Mann*” (about 70 years old and over) (Helbig, Buscha, 1974: 274).

The superlative is also not used in comparison. In this case, it indicates the highest degree. The absolute superlative (elative) used in this way is used only with the zero article. For example: “*Gestern war das herrlichste Wetter. Er ging in höchster Eile*” – (*Yesterday was the most beautiful weather. It went by so quickly*). The adjective “höchster”, which is used as a component of the expression “in höchster Eile” used here, is the superlative form of the adjective “hoch” and indicates that the quality of the noun “Eile” is as high as possible. This form is also used as the “elative” degree in German linguistics.

The adjective “Wenig” is graded in two forms (with different meanings):

“*wenig-weniger-wenigste*” – (*az – daha az – ən az*);

“*minder-mindeste*” – (*daha az – ən az*).

Thus, the change of the adjective “wenig” according to degrees occurs in two forms. Unlike the first, in the second form, when forming the comparative and superlative degrees of the adjective, the root of the word undergoes a complete change. The degree form “minder” is the ancient form of the adjective “wenig” and is still used in modern times. Therefore, this form is used in parallel with the modern degree form of the same adjective “weniger”. The word “weniger” replaces its original version (“minder”) in modern language due to its usage. However, in modern German, new words have been created related to the original form of this word “minder” and are still used today. For example: “*vermindern, Minderheit, mindestens*” – (*reduce, minority, at least*).

In the nominative function, the adjectives “mehr” (the form *mehrere* is an exception) and “weniger” are used with the zero article.:

“*Mit mehr Fleiß, mit weniger Fleiß, bei mehr Fehlern, bei weniger Fehlern*” – (*Daha çox zəhmətlə, az zəhmətlə, daha çox səhvlə, daha az səhvlə*).

In this case, these adjectives do not change, or rather, do not accept a suffix. In German, the grading of adjectives can also be realized through the adverbs: “besonders”, “höchst”, “sehr”, “überaus” – (especially, very, very, extremely). In this way, the absolute superlative of the adjective is formed. For example, the absolute superlative is used with the definite, indefinite and zero articles.

“Das sehr schöne Mädchen” - (Very beautiful girl);

“Eine überaus fleißige Sängerin” - (Very hardworking singer);

“Besonders schnelle Verkehrsmittel” - (Especially fast vehicles) (Helbig, Buscha, 1974: 274).

V. Aikler, K.D. Bunting noted that in colloquial language the superlative degree of an adjective is also indicated by strong expressions. According to the authors, although the adjectives “irre gut”, “phantastisch schön”, “schrecklich lieb”, “klasse gut”, “dufte brauchbar” and others are used in ordinary degrees, they express the extreme increase in the sign in the combination. For example: *“Die Touristen bewunderten die phantastisch schöne Stadt” - (Tourists were amazed by the incredibly beautiful city) (Eichler, Bunting, 1996: 133).*

One of their interesting ideas is that the plural is formed by intermediate degrees on a certain scale through adverbs that express weakness (decrease). For example: *“ziemlich klein”, “etwas klein”, “ein wenig klein”, “fast klein”, “weder groß noch klein”, “fast groß”, “ziemlich groß” - (quite small, somewhat small, a little small, almost small, neither big nor small, almost big, quite big) (Eichler, Bunting, 1996: 133).*

The particle “zu” is used before adjectives to indicate that the characteristic or quality they express is higher (more) than the norm. For example: *“Er läuft zu schnell” - (He runs very fast.).*

Grading the characteristics and qualities of objects and events is also accomplished through word-forming means. This occurs by combining an adjective in the positive with a specific noun. For example: *“Das bildschöne Mädchen” - (Beautiful girl); “Eine bienenfleißige Studentin” - (Very busy student).*

In these combinations, adjectives of this kind are used, such as “federsleicht, grundfalsch, mäuschenstill, nagelneu, schneeweiß, stockfinster, todsicher”.

W. Jung also showed that the use of a sign and quality in the superlative is expressed by compound words that express comparison. According to him, compound words formed with “steinhart”, “federleicht”, “flaumweich” and other non-comparative words “stein-”, “gold-”, “mords-”, “ur-”, “erz-”, “über-” and others also express the superlative, for example: “steinreich”, “goldfrisch”, “mordsmäßig”, “urkomisch”, “blutwenig”, “überschlank”, “erzgemein” (Jung, 1966: 174).

As is clear from the examples, these adjectives reflect a higher degree of a characteristic or quality. The superlative degree of a characteristic of an object can be expressed in various alternative forms. For example: *“Das Gebäude ist am höchsten” - (The building is the tallest building); “Das Gebäude ist sehr hoch” - (The building is very tall.).*

In the first case, the height of the attribute is expressed in the superlative form, while in the second case, the adverb “sehr” is used to increase the meaning in front of the ordinary form of the adjective to express the height of the attribute at the same level. Both variants are used to indicate that the adjective is in the superlative degree. However, this is not always possible. For example: *“Das Flugzeug ist am allerschnellsten” - (The plane is the fastest).*

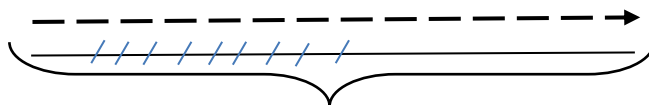
The second version of this sentence, “Das Flugzeug ist sehr allerschnell” (The plane is very fast), is not used in the language.

The superlative form of an adjective is formed differently depending on its function in the sentence. The adjective in the superlative, formed with the suffix /-(e)st/, is used in the position of the determiner and has a variable form. For example: “*die schönste Stadt. In der schönsten Stadt*” – (*the most beautiful city. In the most beautiful city*).

In addition, the German language also has an invariable form of the superlative. This form is formed with the particle “am” and the suffix “-sten”. In this form, the adjective used in the superlative degree performs a predicative function. For example: “*Er ist in der Familie am ältesten. Im Februar ist das Wetter am kältesten*” – (*He is the oldest in the family. The weather is coldest in February*).

In the given sentences, the adjectives “am ältesten” and “am kältesten” form the predicative part of the noun news.

W. Engel’s opinion on the superlative degree of the adjective does not differ from the theoretical views of other linguists. The author believes that “the superlative is used only when talking about an extreme (higher) level. For example: “*die klügste von uns allen*” – (*smarter than all of us*)” (Engel, 1996: 567). The author presents the extremes of the trait and quality in the form of a diagram:



Scheme 1. Extreme level of sign and quality

– rise in the direction of semantic preference (choice) ///// – choice plurality. Universal intelligence 0 – a sign in a specific case (Engel, 1996: 567).

Here it is also pointed out that modifying indicators are realized with the form “am”. For this, the following example sentences are used:

1. “*Bernd ist in seiner Klasse der schnellste*” – (*Bernd is the fastest of his class*);

2. “*Bernd ist in seiner Klasse am schnellsten*” – (*Bernd is the fastest in his class*) (Engel, 1996: 568).

According to W. Engel, if Bernd’s qualities are compared with each other, then it is more correct to use the form “am – Form” (Engel, 1996).

In German, adjectives that are used but not cased also do not change according to degree in most cases. For example: “*lila*”, “*rosa*”, “*beige*”, “*creme*”, “*olive*”, “*orange*” – (*purple, pink, beige, cream, olive, orange*), etc.

V. Jung also calls the superlative degree the second degree of multiplication (Jung, 1966: 173). If the comparative acts as the first degree of multiplication, the superlative expresses that the sign is higher than the comparative. For example: “*hoch-höher-höchst*” – (*high – higher – highest*).

“am meisten” is used to describe the superlative degree of an adjective. “*der am meisten gelebte Sportler*” – (*the oldest living athlete*); “*das mich am meisten interessierende Buch*” – (*The book that interests me the most*).

The words “mehr” and “eher” are also used to express the superlative degree when comparing two qualities of an object or person. “*Der Student ist mehr begabt als fleißig*” – (*The student is more diligent than talented*); “*Die Küche ist eher breit als lang*” – (*The kitchen is wider than it is long*).

The word “weit” is also used to express the comparative degree, which indicates an increase in meaning. For example: “*Müller ist weit fleißiger als Bauer*” – (*Müller is much more diligent than Bauer*).

The adverb “immer” is used with comparative adjectives to indicate a gradual increase in quality. For example: “*Es wurde immer kälter (und kälter)*” – (*It's getting colder*).

When comparing qualities and attributes in the superlative degree, the prepositions “von” and “unter” are used. For example: “*Er ist der beste von (unter) allen meinen Studenten*” – (*He is the best of all my students.*). “*Das ist das schönste von allen Geschenken*” – (*This is the most beautiful of all gifts.*).

In these sentences, the prepositions “von” and “unter” are used after the adjectives “beste” and “schönste”, which are used in the degree of superiority between the compared and the compared.

In German, adjectives formed from adverbs of place such as “außen”, “innen”, “hinten”, “oben”, “unten” are used only in the comparative and superlative degrees. For example: “*Der innere – der innerste*” – (*inner – innermost*); “*Der obere – der oberste*” – (*up – top*).

Therefore, this modification is not used in the usual form as a component of the comparative field of adjectives. They are used only in degrees of comparison.

If two people or things are compared in a language, the adjectives “erstere” and “letztere” are also used in comparison. For example: “*Die Gäste trafen ein und ich reichte ihnen: Hans und Michael die Hand und sagte dem letzteren (Michael) und dann dem ersteren*” (*The guests arrived and I shook hands with them: Hans and Michael and I said to the second one (Michael), and then to the first one*).

The superlative form of an adjective used in the attributive function is used with the definite article and is variable in nature. “*der fleißigste Student*” – (*the most diligent student*); “*des fleißigsten Studenten*” – (*of the most diligent student*);

The change is also evident in the comparative degree. “*Ein jüngerer Mann*”- (*A young man*); “*Eines jüngeren Mannes*”- (*A young man*);

In the comparative degree of an adjective, the words “weit(aus)”, “bei weitem”, and “noch” are used to indicate the superiority of the attribute during comparison and its intensification. “*Der Mann ist weit älter als seine Frau*” – (*Kişi sürücüsündən xeyli yaşlıdır*).

As can be seen from the example, the comparative adjective “älter” is strengthened by using “weit” at the beginning of the comparative adjective.

In German, there are also adjectives that are used in the attributive and predicative function, which undergo changes, but are not graded according to their semantics. For example: “*heilbar*”, “*gemeinsam*”, “*fertig*”, “*ledig*”, “*stimmhaft*”, “*tödlich*” – (*müalicə oluna bilən, birlikdə, bitmiş, tək, səsli, ölümcül*).

“*Die gegenseitige Hilfe*” – (*Mutual help*);

“*Die Hilfe ist gegenseitig*” – (*Help is mutual.*).

The adjective “gegenseitig” used as a determiner and predicative in the given combinations undergoes changes, but is not graded.

4. Conclusions

Analysis of the linguistic material shows that in German the method of forming words with suffixes is used to express comparative relations. Comparative models in German are not formed from verbs. In German, the comparative field of the adjective plays a decisive role in the perception of the surrounding world and finds its expression in the degrees of comparison of the adjective, which are formed morphologically and syntactically.

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