

Russian State University for the Humanities

as a manuscript

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**PRONOUNS, PARTICLES AND CONJUNCTIONS AS
“DISCOURSE MARKERS” IN RUSSIAN SYNTAX:
A SYNCHRONIC AND DIACHRONIC ANALYSIS**

Dissertation Summary
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The dissertation was prepared at the Russian State University for the Humanities (RSUH).

Publications

Ten publications were selected for the defense. All articles, except one, are indexed in the Scopus or the Web of Science database; seven articles are published in journals included in the first or the second quartile of the Scopus.

1. Pekelis, O. Effekt krysolova v russkix odnositel'nyx pridatočnyx: mikrodiachroničeskoe issledovanie (in Russian, 'Pied-piping in Russian relative clauses: a microdiachronic analysis')//Voprosy Jazykoznanija. 2021. In print. (Scopus Q2)
2. Pekelis, O. *Moj ili svoj?* Ob èvoljucii pritjažatel'nyx mestoimenij v russkom jazyke posle XVIII veka (in Russian, 'On the evolution of possessive pronouns in Russian since the 18th century')// Russian Linguistics. 2021. 45(1). 75-91. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11185-21-09239-0>. (Scopus Q3)
3. Pekelis, O. Ob odnom slučae pragmatikalizacii v russkom jazyke: mikrodiachroničeskoe issledovanie časticy *že* v sostave voprosa (in Russian, 'A Case of Pragmatization in Russian: Microdiachronic Analysis of the Particle *že* in Questions') // Slověne. 2020. Vol. 9. № 1. Pp. 340–361. (Scopus Q2)
4. Pekelis, O. Nulevaja anaphora v russkom jazyke: mikrodiachroničeskoe issledovanie (in Russian, 'Zero anaphora in Russian: a microdiachronic analysis') // Russkij jazyk v naučnom osveščanii. 2020. №1. Pp. 36–59.
5. Pekelis, O. Distantnoe upotreblenie refleksiva v sostave infinitivnoj klauzy v russkom jazyke: XIX vek vs. sovremennaja norma (in Russian, 'The long-distance reflexive in infinitive clauses in the Russian language of the 19th century and according to the contemporary norm')// Scando-Slavica. 2020. Vol. 66. №2. Pp. 281–303. (Scopus Q2)
6. Pekelis, O. Slovo *èto* v častnom voprose: o priznakax, otličajuščix časticu ot mestoimenija (in Russian, 'The word *èto* in a *wh*-question: on the differences between a pronoun and a particle')// Computational Linguistics and Intellectual Technologies. 2019. Vol 18(25). Pp. 484–496. (Scopus, no quartile)
7. Pekelis, O. Expletives in a null subject language and criteria for expletiveness: evidence from Russian// Studies in Polish Linguistics. Special Volume 1. 2019. Pp. 189–205. (Scopus Q2)
8. Pekelis, O. Expletives, referential pronouns and pro-drop: The Russian extraposition pronoun *èto* in light of the English *it* and the German *es* // Lingua 203. 2018. Pp. 66–101. (WoS Q3/Scopus Q1)

9. Pekelis, O. Èllipsis podležaščego glavnoj klauzy v russkom jazyke i ego svjaz' s tipologiej korreljatov (in Russian, 'Subject ellipsis in the main clause in Russian and the typology of correlatives')// *Voprosy Jazykoznanija*. 2018. No. 6. Pp. 31–59. (Scopus Q2)
10. Pekelis, O. Pokazatel' *to* kak sredstvo akcentuacii implikativnogo otnošenija (na primere sojuza *esli...to*) (in Russian, 'The marker *to* as a means for highlighting implicative relation, case study of *esli...to* 'if...then' conjunction')// *Voprosy Jazykoznanija*. 2015. No. 2. Pp. 55–96. (Scopus Q2)

The results of the present study have also been presented in the following papers:

11. Pekelis, O. Illokutivnoe upotreblenie sojuzov: škala illokutivnosti i ejo otraženie v grammatike (in Russian, 'Speech act conjunction: the scale of speech act use and its manifestation in grammar')// *Computational Linguistics and Intellectual Technologies*. 2018. Vol 17(24). Pp. 565–576.
12. Pekelis, O. Correlative markers, contrastiveness and grammaticalization: A comparative study of conditional correlatives in Russian and Italian // *Italian Journal of Linguistics*, 28(2). 2016. Pp. 143–180.
13. Pekelis, O. Mestoimenie *èto* kak sredstvo modifikacii istinnostnogo statusa (o konstrukcii vida *esli* <*kogda, hotja...*>*p, èto q*) (in Russian, 'Pronoun *èto* as a means of modifying truth value, case study of *esli p, èto q* 'if p, it is q' construction')// *Voprosy Jazykoznanija*. 2016. No. 4. Pp. 49–78.
14. Pekelis, O. Infinitiv vs. pridatočnoe s sojuzom *čtoby*: k voprosu o vybore sposoba oformlenija sentencijal'nogo aktanta v russkom jazuke (in Russian, 'On the factors that underlie the opposition of infinitive and subjunctive complement clauses in Russian')// *Voprosy Jazykoznanija*. 2014. No. 4. Pp. 13–45.
15. Pekelis, O. Častičnoe soglasovanie v konstrukcii s povtorjauščimsja sojuzom: korpusnoe issledovanie osnovnyx zakonomernostej (in Russian, 'Partial agreement in constructions with correlative conjunctions: a corpus-based study')// *Voprosy Jazykoznanija*. 2013. No. 4. Pp. 55–86.
16. Pekelis, O. Dvuxmestnye sočinitel'nye sojuzy: opyt sistemnogo analiza (na osnove korpusnyx dannyx) (in Russian, 'Coordinating correlative conjunctions: a systematic corpus-based study')// *Voprosy Jazykoznanija*. 2012. No. 2. Pp. 10–45.

Conference presentations and grants

The main results of the present study have been presented in 2006–2021 in 13 oral presentations at 10 international conferences:

- Causal Constructions in the World's Languages (synchrony, diachrony, typology) (2021);
- Typology of Morphosyntactic Parameters (2018, 2019, 2020);
- International Computer Linguistics Conference "Dialogue" (2018, 2019);
- Grammatical Processes and Grammatical Systems in Synchrony and Diachrony (2019);
- Conference on Syntax, Phonology and Language Analysis (SinFonIJA) (2018);
- Constructional and Lexical Semantic Approaches to Russian (2013, 2017);
- Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europaea (SLE) (2019);
- Russian Grammar: Description, Teaching, Testing (2017);
- International conference on Discourse and Grammar (DG) (2008);
- International Symposium on the Grammar and Pragmatics of Complex Sentences (Subordination and Coordination) in Languages Spoken in Europe and North and Central Asia (LENCA III) (2006).

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1. Introduction

By “discourse markers”, one usually means lexical or grammatical items (primarily particles, modal or parenthetical words) that serve to link one utterance to another in a discourse (Trask 2003: 84).

The papers collected in this dissertation are unified by a more general idea of discourse markers, the one that takes into account the syntactic linkage. I treat as discourse markers both particles, conjunctions and pronouns since all of them may play a role in combining clauses or sentences either semantically or grammatically. In five papers, I study the diachronic evolution of a number of Russian discourse markers since the 18th century. These are the reflexive pronouns *sebja* and *svoj*, the null referential pronoun, the relative pronoun *kotoryj* and the particle *že* in questions. In five more papers, a number of discourse markers, namely the pronoun *èto* and a series of particles, are investigated from the synchronic point of view.

The study of discourse markers allows one to get an idea not only about the markers themselves, but also syntactic, semantic and pragmatic regularities of a more general order concerning the syntax of polypredicative constructions, syntax and semantics of anaphora, and organization of discourse. An important direction in the search for such generalizations is associated with the notion of **conventionalization** (cf. also similar notions of grammaticalization and pragmaticalization). For pronouns, particles and conjunctions, it is typologically frequent to be subject to conventionalization, with pronouns most typically serving as a starting point of this process and conjunctions or particles representing its resulting phase. In line with this tendency, all the microdiachronic shifts discussed in the dissertation turned out to be linked to conventionalization in one sense or another. Some of the phenomena in present-day Russian, investigated in the dissertation, may also be considered as a result of conventionalization (e.g. the pronoun *èto* most probably constitutes the diachronic source for both the expletive pronoun *èto*, see Section 3.1, and the particle *èto*, see Section 3.2). Not only lexical or grammatical items, but also grammatical patterns may be subject to conventionalization. In my data, this phenomenon is exemplified by the reflexive pronouns *svoj* and *sebja* (Sections 2.1 and 2.2), the relative pronoun *kotoryj* (Section 2.4), and the null referential pronoun (Section 2.3). Cases of conventionalization of patterns serve to illustrate in a particularly clear way as to how a language-specific process may be part of a more general typological process. To cite just one example, the Russian language of the 18th-19th centuries turned out to represent an intermediate period in the evolution of Russian from the full null-subject pattern (in Old Russian) to the partial null-subject pattern (in present-day Russian). Importantly, the direction of this evolution appeared to have clear typological parallels (see Section 2.3).

As the studies collected in the dissertation show, pronouns, particles and conjunctions may give rise to generalizations, both language specific and typologically relevant, also beyond the

phenomenon of conventionalization. The syntactic shift undergone by the Russian relative clauses with the pronoun *kotoryj* since the 18th century proved to be part of a more general shift in information structure that took place in Russian in the same period (Section 2.4); the expletive pronoun *èto* turned out to display traits that are typical for expletives cross-linguistically and can therefore be generalized as criteria of expletiveness (Section 3.1); the constraint on subject ellipsis in constructions with correlative conjunctions was accounted for in terms of a general link between ellipsis and symmetry, known to be valid also for at least some other languages (Section 3.3). The search for generalizations, both typological and theoretical, was thus the main unifying **goal** of the research included in the dissertation. It turned out that almost all the discourse markers under examination may contribute to generalizations, with the most important source of generalizations being the microdiachronic studies.

The papers selected for the defense are primarily based on data obtained from the Russian National Corpus (RNC)¹. Its collection of modern newspaper texts (Newspaper corpus) is taken to be the main source for judgements concerning the contemporary norm, while the diachronic studies are based on the subcorpus of the texts of the 18th-19th centuries within the Main corpus and on the Historical subcorpus. The size of the subcorpus of the 18th-19th centuries is extensive enough to ensure that the comparison with the present-day data is valid.

The results obtained in the dissertation are **novel** in three aspects. Firstly, many studies were among the first to look at a certain phenomenon (e.g. the evolution of constraints on the use of the long-distance reflexive *sebjá* and on zero subject since the 18th century, syntactic traits of adverbial clauses with correlative conjunctions or grammatical traits of expletive pronouns in modern Russian). Secondly, the microdiachronic analysis of Russian syntax, as a separate line of research, has not received sufficient attention until now. Although there do exist fundamental studies on the Russian language of the 18th-19th centuries (cf. Bulaxovskij 1954; Vinogradov, Švedova 1964), these studies focus primarily on lexis and morphology. However, the microdiachronic syntactic data may be of interest not only in themselves, but also as a tool for investigating the synchronic data both language-internally and from the typological point of view. Thirdly, somewhat novel is the view of pronouns, particles and conjunctions as a single class of words that shed light on common syntactic and discourse mechanisms.

The following **theses** are proposed for the defense:

1. Since the 18th-19th centuries, there have been shifts in the use of a number of Russian pronouns and particles that are part of more general language-internal or typological tendencies. Studying the

¹ URL: www.ruscorpora.ru

properties of "discourse markers", both from a synchronic and diachronic perspective, may thus serve as a tool for discovering more general grammatical and discourse patterns.

2. The syntactic shift undergone by Russian possessive pronouns with the 1st and 2nd person subject antecedents after the 18th century (from the equipollent and semantically motivated use of personal and reflexive possessives to the prevalence of the latter and the weakening of the semantic motivation) is a symptom of the reflexive possessive being conventionalized as a default means for expressing the possessor in Russian.

3. The syntactic shift in the use of the reflexive pronoun *sebjja*, which occurred after the 18th century (from a less restricted long-distance usage within infinitive clauses to a more restricted one), corresponds to the typological tendency towards the complementary distribution of reflexives and personal pronouns.

4. The syntactic shift in word order tendencies that occurred in Russian relative clauses since the 18th century (the relative pronoun *kotoryj* tended to precede its pied-piped head in the 18th-19th centuries and tends to follow it today) is related to a more general shift in information structure tendencies.

5. The syntactic shift in the use of the null referential subject, which Russian underwent since the 18th century (from a less restricted to a more restricted use), is the result of the consistent evolution of Russian from a full null-subject language (in the Old Russian period) to a partial null-subject language (in present-day Russian).

6. The pragmatic shift undergone by the particle *že* in questions after the 18th century (from a pragmatically neutral to a pragmatically colored use) fits into the typologically widespread phenomenon of pragmatization.

7. In present-day Russian, the word *eto* corresponds to several grammatically distinct items that differ in their meaning, their syntactic distribution, and their position within the "pronoun-particle" continuum. An intermediate position of the continuum is occupied by the expletive *eto*, which displays traits common to expletives cross-linguistically.

8. Russian adverbial clauses may be organized by two types of correlates (i.e. components of correlative conjunctions). With correlates of the first type (*togda*, *tut*), mainly used within conditional constructions, the adverbial clause is akin to a correlative relative clause, which is in accordance with general typological expectations. With correlates of the second type (*to*, *tak*, *no* and *kak*), the adverbial clause is not an instance of a correlative relative, which goes contrary to typological expectations. However, elliptical properties displayed by the correlates of the second type do permit an interpretation based on more general typological patterns (the ones that concern the interaction between ellipsis and symmetry).

2. Microdiachronic studies

In four papers presented in this section, four diachronic syntactic shifts that took place in Russian since the 18th century are studied. These regard the use of the possessive pronoun *svoj* (Section 2.1), the reflexive pronoun *sebjja* (Section 2.2), the referential zero pronoun (Section 2.3) and the relative pronoun *kotorjy* (Section 2.4). In the fifth paper, a pragmatic shift underwent by the particle *že* in interrogative sentences is investigated (Section 2.5).

2.1 On the evolution of possessive pronouns in Russian since the 18th century

Paper selected for the defense: (Pekelis 2021a)

In modern Russian and in the Russian language of the 18th-19th centuries, both personal and reflexive possessive pronouns may refer to the 1st or 2nd person subject possessor in a monopredicative clause. Cf. (1).

(1)	<i>Ja</i>	<i>ljublju</i>	<i>moego</i>	<i>syna,</i>	<i>ja</i>
	I.NOM	love.PRS.1SG	POSSP.1SG.ACC	son.ACC	I.NOM
<i>goržus'</i>	<i>svoim</i>	<i>synom.</i> (RNC, Newspaper corpus)			
be.proud.PRS.1SG	POSSR.INS	son.INS			
‘I love my son, I am proud of my son.’					

At the same time, it is commonly assumed that in the 18th-19th centuries, the 1st and 2nd personal pronoun was preferred over the reflexive one, while today the situation is reversed (Paducheva 1983: 191).

Based on the RNC data, in my study (Pekelis 2021a) the following was found:

- Contrary to expectations, 1st or 2nd person singular subject possessors were referred to by personal possessive pronouns less frequently than by reflexive possessives as early as in the 19th century.
- The share of reflexives among the possessive pronouns referring to the 1st and 2nd person singular and 2nd person plural subject possessors has increased significantly in the 21st century compared with the 19th century; it is today more than 90 percent. At the same time, the share of personal possessive pronouns is higher for 2nd person plural possessors than for singular possessors in the modern texts.
- For the 1st person plural subject possessors, the frequency of personal and reflexive possessive pronouns is roughly the same both in modern Russian and in the Russian language of the 19th century.

My analysis of the quantitative data includes the following assumptions. I suggest that the increase in frequency of the reflexive possessive is a symptom of its being conventionalized as a default means for expressing the possessor in Russian. As I demonstrate, this increase was indeed

accompanied by the weakening of the semantic distinction between personal and reflexive possessive pronouns, as is typical of conventionalization. Furthermore, the higher frequency of personal pronouns referring to plural possessors compared with singular possessors is shown to be due to the fact that plural possessors create special semantic conditions that contribute to the preservation of the opposition between personal and reflexive pronouns.

2.2. The long-distance reflexive pronoun *sebj*a in infinitive clauses in modern Russian compared to 19th century Russian

Paper selected for the defense: (Pekelis 2020a)

Both in modern Russian and in the Russian language of the 18th-19th centuries, the pronoun *sebj*a can occur in infinitive clauses as a long-distance reflexive, i.e. a reflexive pronoun that takes as its antecedent the subject of the main clause and not the understood subject of the infinitive. However, as I demonstrated based on the RNC data, the long-distance usage of *sebj*a was *less restricted* in the 18th-19th centuries than it is today. Example (2), for instance, dated by the 19th century, sounds archaic according to the contemporary norm.

(2)	<i>Otec_i</i>	<i>velel</i>	<i>mamen'ke</i>	<i>podat'</i>	<i>sebe_i</i>
	father.NOM	tell.PST.SG.M	mom.DAT	serve.INF	himself.DAT
<i>bol'šoj</i>	<i>kelih</i>	<i>vina.</i> (RNC, 1894)			
big.ACC	glass.ACC	wine.GEN			

‘[My] father told mom to serve him a large glass of wine.’

In my study (Pekelis 2020a), I identified three factors (the semantic role of *sebj*a, the availability of the local reading of *sebj*a, the empathy locus) that influence the acceptability of the long-distance usage of the reflexive in modern texts, but played little, if any, role in the texts of the 19th century. These factors were also of less importance than today in the Russian language of the 15th-16th centuries, according to the Historical subcorpus of the RNC. This gives evidence for the assumption that the shrinkage in long-distance uses of *sebj*a in infinitives represents a consistent trend in the history of Russian, which, in turn, may be a part of the well-known general trend to use reflexive pronouns locally.

2.3. Zero anaphora in Russian: a microdiachronic analysis

Paper selected for the defense: (Pekelis 2020b)

Modern Russian is usually referred to as a partial null-subject language (Robert, Holmberg 2010: 10; Bizzarri 2015, inter alia), which means that null subjects are admissible in Russian, although the conditions under which they are used are more restricted than those in consistent null-subject languages. Old Russian, on the contrary, is known to be a consistent null-subject language, which

used verbal inflection as the basic reduced referential device (Borkovskij et al. 2006 (1963): 332; Zaliznjak 2004(1995): 170). The Russian referential system is assumed to have acquired its modern form, according to various estimates, in the first half of the 17th century or in the beginning of the 18th century (Zaliznjak 2008: 255; Meyer 2009: 394).

In my paper (Pekelis 2020b), I analyze the conditions that restrict the use of null referential subjects within a finite clause in the Russian language of the 19th century and in present-day Russian. Contrary to a widespread assumption, these conditions turned out to be not the same – they were looser in the 19th century than they are today. Based on the data from the RNC, this fact is demonstrated for null subjects in three syntactic contexts: declarative root clauses, questions and embedded complement clauses. For each context, I specified the factors that restrict the use of null subjects in present-day Russian but played little, or at least lesser, role in the 19th century. In declarative clauses, for instance, such factors as topicality and subjecthood of the antecedent were less pronounced than today. Example (3), with the null subject taking as antecedent the direct object, which is focal, is inappropriate according to the contemporary norm.

- (3) *On* *znakom* *priglasil* *nas_i* *sest'*.
 he.NOM by.motion invite.PST.SG.M we.ACC sit.INF
- i *Molča* *povinovalis'* *emu*. (RNC, 1839-1841)
 in.silence obey.PST.PL he.DAT
- ‘He motioned us to take our seats. [We] obeyed him in silence.’

I suggested that the evolution that zero anaphora in Russian underwent over the last two centuries is to be analyzed as *grammaticalization* of the pattern known as *partial null-subject language*. This idea is supported by the fact that the conditions under which the subject can be dropped have not just become more restricted compared to the 19th century. As I show in my study, they have become more regular and more syntactic in nature. As a consequence of the analysis in terms of grammaticalization, the newly acquired traits of null subjects in present-day Russian may contribute to the general picture of partial null-subject languages.

2.4. Pied-piping in Russian relative clauses: a microdiachronic analysis

Paper selected for the defense: (Pekelis 2021b)

My study (Pekelis 2021b) deals with the pied-piping phenomenon in Russian relative clauses in the 18th-19th centuries and in present-day Russian. As is well-known, the relative pronoun *kotoryj* ‘which’ tended to precede its pied-piped head in the 18th-19th centuries and tends to follow it today (Zaliznjak, Paducheva 1979; Kruglov 2003; Rappaport 1995, inter alia). This contrast has mainly been investigated for relativization on genitives, as in (4), or, to lesser extent, for relativization of a noun phrase within an infinitive clause, as in (5).

(4) *Jego sekundantom byl fracuz, kotorogo imeni*
 his second.INS be.PST.SG.M Frenchman which.GEN name.GEN
ja ne pomnju. (RNC, 1840) – cf. *imeni kotorogo*
 I.NOM not remember.PRS.1SG

‘His second was a Frenchman whose name I do not remember.’

(5) *Ona čuvstvovala tut velikij smysl,*
 she.NOM feel.PST.SG.F here great.ACC meaning.ACC
kotoryj razgadat’ ona poka
 which.ACC unravel.INF she.NOM yet
ne umela. (RNC, 1896) – cf. *razgadat’ kotoryj*
 not be.able.PST.SG.F

‘She felt a great meaning here, which she had not yet been able to unravel.’

Two fundamental questions are to be answered with regard to the shift in word order: what the origin is of the pattern characteristic of the 18th-19th centuries, and why this pattern gave place to the modern pattern. There is significant literature dedicated to the former question (Rappaport 1995; Hüttl-Folter 1996; Kruglov 2003; Kruglov 2006, inter alia), while the latter one has been studied less.

In my research, I investigated heterogeneous syntactic contexts in order to find out whether the supposed changes in word order represented a systemic syntactic shift. In addition to the relativization on genitives and noun phrases embedded in infinitives, I considered the relativization on noun phrases marked for an oblique case different from the genitive and on noun phrases embedded under quantifiers, adverbs and finite verbs. In all these contexts, as I found out, the word order with *kotoryj* preposed to its head was acceptable in the language of the 18th-19th centuries. In present-day Russian, on the contrary, this word order is either ungrammatical, or the positioning of the head after *kotoryj* cannot be analyzed in terms of pied-piping. Thus, the change in word order associated with pied-piping represented indeed a systemic syntactic change.

As the next step, I tackled the question as to what the eventual reasons were for this change, which, as pointed out above, has not been considered extensively in the previous research. I proposed to account for the syntactic shift in terms of a more general shift in information structure: the linear order of the relative pronoun and its head that was acceptable in Russian two centuries ago is demonstrated to be in contradiction with the modern inventory of felicitous information structure patterns.

2.5. Particle *že* in questions: a microdiachronic analysis

Paper selected for the defense: (Pekelis 2020c)

Že is one of the most closely studied particles in Russian (Paducheva 1987; Plungjan 1987, Bonno, Kodzasov 1998, Valova, Slioussar 2017, inter alia), but its use within interrogative sentences has not been investigated in detail. In my paper (Pekelis 2020c), I deal with the semantic and syntactic properties of *že* as part of a question in the 18th–19th centuries and in modern usage. Based on the RNC data, I demonstrate that in modern texts *že* can appear in questions in four different meanings, each of them pragmatically colored, whereas in the 19th century and earlier, *že* could also have a pragmatically neutral meaning, close to a conjunctive one, which has today been lost. This meaning is exemplified in (4); as I show, *že* in (4) has neither of the four pragmatically colored modern meanings.

(6) *Da, ubit – prodolžali oni, – pojdom*

yes kill.PASS.SG.M go.om.PST.PL they.NOM go.IMV.1PL

skoree. – Da kuda že? – Dorogoj uznaeš. (RNC, 1839-1841)

quick PTCL where ŽE on.the.way hear.FUT.2sg

“Yes, killed!” they went on. “Let’s go, quick.” “Where to?” “We’ll tell you on the way.”

The proposed semantic analysis of *že* is further considered in the light of syntactic tendencies in the evolution of this particle. According to the RNC data, in the 18th-19th centuries *že* could be used in polar questions in the same meaning it was used in *wh*-questions, which is not the case in present-day Russian. Among the examples (5) and (6), only the former one, containing a *wh*-question, is in line with the contemporary norm.

(7) *Kuda že ty edeš?* (RNC, 1973)

where ŽE you.NOM go.PRS.2SG

‘Where are you going?’

(8) *Nadolgo li že ty edeš?* (RNC, 1853)

for.a.long.time Q ŽE you.NOM go.PRS.2SG

‘Are you going for a long time?’

I suggested an account for this contrast based on the idea that the range of meanings *že* may have in *wh*-questions was broader in the 18th-19th centuries than it is today. The pragmatically colored meanings of *že*, as I show, contradict the meaning of a polar question, and hence are incompatible with the latter. However, no contradiction arose with the pragmatically neutral, conjunctive-like meaning *že* could have in the 18th-19th centuries.

The assumption that *že* has lost its conjunctive-like meaning in interrogative sentences is consistent with the observation that the conjunctive *že* is the less frequent type of *že* in declarative sentences (Valova 2014: 32). The diachronic evolution underwent by *že* corresponds to a typologically widespread scenario and represents the process known as *pragmaticalization* (Beijering 2012, Degand, Evers-Vermeul 2015, inter alia).

3. Synchronic studies

In five papers collected in this section, three research questions are considered with reference to modern Russian: the existence, properties and functions of expletive pronouns in Russian (Section 3.1); the properties and grammatical status of the word *èto* in *wh*-questions (Section 3.2); syntax and semantics of particles within correlative subordinators, such as *to* within *esli...to* ‘if...then’ (Section 3.3). The first and the third questions have been considered within a broader typological perspective.

3.1. On expletive pronouns in modern Russian

Papers selected for the defense: (Pekelis 2018a; Pekelis 2019a)

According to the common assumptions, expletive, i.e. semantically vacuous, pronouns are to be expected in non-null-subject languages, since the main function of expletives is supposed to be that of filling the subject position. However, as my analysis suggests, Russian does feature two expletive pronouns despite the fact of being a partial null-subject language (see Section 2.3). These are pronouns *èto* ‘it’ and *ono* ‘it’, which display expletive traits when referring to a right-peripheral embedded clause, as in (9) and (10). At the same time, the pronoun *tak* ‘so’, which is also commonly used to refer to a right-peripheral clause, cf. (11), lacks the properties of an expletive.

(9) **Èto** *horošo,* *čto ty takoj umnyj i*
it good that you.NOM so smart and
rassuditel’nyj. (RNC)
sober.minded

‘It is good that you are so smart and sober-minded.’

(10) **Ono** *i horošo,* *čto ne vsjo*
it PTCL good that not everything.NOM
tak prosto. (RNC)
so simple

‘It is good that not everything is so simple.’

(11) **Tak** *slučilos’,* *čto papa umer*
so happen.PST.SG.N that dad.NOM die. PST.SG.M
nakanune. (RNC)
day.before

‘[It] so happened that [my] dad died the day before.’

In my papers (Pekelis 2018, 2019a), dedicated to expletives in Russian, the following research questions are posed:

- What are the properties of Russian expletives? Do they resemble the properties of expletives in non-null-subject languages?

- What are the functions of Russian expletives, with the syntactic function of filling the subject position being not “demanded” by the Russian syntax?

- What are the reasons why some pronouns obtain expletive traits while others do not (cf. *èto*, *ono* vs. *tak*)?

I argue that both *èto* and *ono* share important traits with the English expletive *it* and the German expletive *es*. These traits, as I suggest, constitute a cluster of the properties that are inherently linked to the lack of referentiality. Therefore, they should be regarded as general criteria for expletiveness. The reason why *èto* or *ono* may obtain these traits when they refer to a right-peripheral embedded clause is that both *èto* or *ono* are originally complement clause proforms – they express the meaning of the complement clause when the clause itself is absent from the sentence, cf. (12). But when both the clause and the pronoun are present, no meaning gets lost in case the pronoun is semantically vacuous.

(12) *On budet pisatelem. Èto horošo.* (RNC)
he.NOM be.FUT.3SG writer.INS it good
'He will be a writer. It's good.'

It is for the same reason that the pronoun *tak*, contrary to *èto* or *ono*, lacks expletive traits. *Tak* is not a complement, but an adjunct proform. Therefore, the meaning it expresses would get lost in case *tak* lacked referentiality.

I suggest furthermore that both *èto* and *ono*, when used as expletives, have a discourse rather than a syntactic function – they signal to the addressee that the piece of information conveyed by the embedded clause was activated in the pre-text. In line with this interpretation, *èto* and *ono* differ from both the English expletive *it* and the German expletive *es* in that in the construction with a right-peripheral embedded clause, only the latter are strictly mandatory. The existence of pro-drop languages with the expletive pronouns that serve a discourse function has already been reported in the literature (Greco et al. 2017). Russian is thus to be added to the list of such languages.

3.2. The marker *èto* in *wh*-questions

Paper selected for the defense: (Pekelis 2019b)

The word *èto* is usually deemed a particle when it precedes or follows the *wh*-word, as in (13).

(13) *Gde èto ty byl?*
where ÈTO you.NOM be.PST.SG.M
'Where have you been?'

However, in my study (Pekelis 2019b) I argue that as many as four different types of *èto*, illustrated in (14)-(17), are to be distinguished in the interrogative context.

- (14) *Èto kto?*
 ÈTO.NOM who.NOM
 ‘Who is this?’
- (15) *Èto kto prišjol?*
 ÈTO who.NOM come.PST.SG.M
 ‘Who is this coming?’
- (16) *Èto kto že tebjā obučil takim poljotam? (RNC)*
 ÈTO who.NOM PTCL you.ACC teach.PST.SG.M such.DAT
 flight.DAT
 ‘Who taught you such flights?’
- (17) *Počemu èto mal’čiki vsegda ssorjat’sja? (RNC)*
 why ÈTO boy.NOM.PL always fight.PRS.3PL
 ‘Why do boys always fight?’

As I demonstrate, these types differ in their meaning, their syntactic distribution, and their position within the “pronoun-particle” continuum, with the type in (14) being the “most pronominal”, or the most referential one, and the type in (17) being the least pronominal. In (14), indeed, *èto* is an argument of the clause, and hence a canonical pronoun. In (15), *èto* is not an argument, and therefore is less pronominal than *èto* in (14). However, it still preserves a certain degree of “pronounhood” in that it is functionally identical to the so calledthetic *èto* as in (18), with the latter being deemed as a pronoun by Paducheva (1982). Both thethetic *èto* and the *èto* in (15), as I suggest, serve to introduce athetic information structure, the only distinction being that in interrogative sentences only intransitive verbs with a *wh*-word in an argument position are compatible with this type of *èto*.

- (18) *Čto za šum? - Èto Kostja prišjol.*
 what for noise.NOM ÈTO Kostja.NOM come.PST.SG.M
 ‘What’s that noise? Kostja came.’

(16) and (17) differ from (15) in that either the verb is not intransitive (cf. (16)), or the *wh*-word is not in an argument position (cf. (17)). Both in (16) and (17), *èto* is a particle, but the semantic “trail” of the pronounhood is more pronounced in (16), where *èto* precedes the *wh*-word, than in (17), with *èto* following the *wh*-word. In (16), *èto* signals to the addressee that the question being posed refers to a piece of information that has been activated in the immediately preceding context, according to my analysis. In (17), it serves to express the speaker’s perplexity with regard

to a piece of information that has been activated in the immediately preceding context. It is the pragmatic meaning of ‘perplexity’ that clearly suggests that *èto* in (17) is more particle-like than *èto* in (16). In my study, further evidence for this conclusion is given.

3.3. Correlative subordinators in modern Russian

Papers selected for the defense: (Pekelis 2015; Pekelis 2018b)

In two studies collected in the dissertation, I deal with the Russian markers *to*, *tak*, *no*, *kak*, *togda* and *tut* when they are used as components of correlative subordinators, that is, are linked to an adverbial subordinator across the clause boundary. Cf. (19).

(19)	<i>Esli</i>	<i>zavtra</i>	<i>budet</i>	<i>xorošaja</i>	<i>pogoda,</i>	<i>to</i>
	if	tomorrow	be.FUT.3SG	good.NOM	weather.NOM	then
	<i>my</i>	<i>pojdom</i>	<i>guljat.</i>			
	we.NOM	go.FUT.1PL	walk.INF			

‘If the weather is good tomorrow, then we will go for a walk.’

In (Pekelis 2018), I argue that the markers under examination fall into two groups with respect to two parameters, and the correlation between the parameters is not random. The markers in one group (*togda* and *tut*) are correlative proforms corresponding to the subordinate clause, as illustrated in (20).

(20)	[adverbial clause] _i [<i>togda</i> _i / <i>tut</i> _i ...].
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In other words, the subordinate constructions with these markers are part of a larger class of correlative relative constructions. This is in accordance with the wide-spread assumption that conditionals are to be treated as correlatives (Izvorski 1995; Bhatt, Pancheva 2000, inter alia). At the same time, *togda* and *tut* share the property of being incompatible with the subject ellipsis in the main clause if the antecedent of the elided subject is overtly expressed in the subordinate clause. Cf. (21).

(21)	<i>Esli</i>	<i>čelovek_i</i>	<i>zanjat</i>	<i>ljubimym</i>	<i>delom,</i>	<i>togda</i>	<i>??(on_i)</i>
	if	person.NOM	busy	loved.INS	job.INS	then	he.NOM
	<i>čuvstvet</i>	<i>sebja</i>	<i>sčastlivym.</i>	(RNC)			
	fell.PRS.3SG	himself.ACC	happy				

‘If a person is busy with what he loves, then he feels happy.’

The markers in the second group (*to*, *tak*, *no* and *kak*), on the contrary, are not correlative proforms, while they do allow the subject ellipsis in the main clause with the antecedent of the elided subject overtly expressed in the subordinate clause. Cf. (22).

(22)	<i>Esli</i>	<i>čelovek_i</i>	<i>očen’ sil’no</i>	<i>zaxočet,</i>	<i>to</i>
	if	person.NOM	very strongly	want.FUT.3SG	then

_i *možet* *sdelat'* *vsjo.* (RNC)
 can.PRS.3SG do.INF everything.ACC

‘If a person really wants to, then [he] can do everything.’

Contrary to correlative proforms *togda* and *tut*, the markers *to*, *tak*, *no* and *kak* are particles that refer not to the subordinate clause as a whole, but only to the subordinator that introduces that clause. I argue that the semantic function of *to*, *tak*, *no* and *kak* is to contrastively emphasize the relation expressed by the respective subordinator. This analysis, schematized in (23), is elaborated in detail for the marker *to* in (Pekelis 2015).

(23) [subordinator_i...] [*to/tak/no/kak*_i ...]

My main hypothesis, namely that there is a link between the proform- or not-proform-status of the marker and its capacity to license the subject ellipsis, is based on the assumption that the markers from the second group (*to*, *tak*, *no* and *kak*) serve to raise the degree of semantic and grammatical symmetry between the clauses. Ellipsis, as is well known, occurs more easily in coordinate than subordinate structures (van Oirsouw 1987, *inter alia*), with coordination being associated with symmetry (te Velde 2006, *inter alia*). The features of the markers from the first group (*togda* and *tut*), on the contrary, provide semantic and grammatical asymmetry to the sentence they are part of. Therefore, they do not contribute to the possibility of ellipsis.

This analysis appears to partly falsify the claim that cross-linguistically, conditionals are related to correlative relatives. In Russian, this claim turns out to be incorrect with regard to conditionals with *esli...to*, the latter being by far the most frequent correlative subordinator in Russian.

4. Conclusions

The studies collected in this dissertation investigate how some Russian pronouns, particles and conjunctions have evolved since the 18th century and what their properties are in present-day Russian. The general hypothesis that underlies these studies was that pronouns, particles and conjunctions, as a means to link clauses and sentences semantically and/or syntactically, allow one to make generalizations with regard to the syntax and semantics of polipredicative constructions, anaphora and discourse. The Russian data considered in the dissertation indeed gave rise to a number of generalizations, both typological and language-specific (e.g. the generalization according to which the syntactic shifts in the usage of the Russian reflexive pronouns *sebjja* and *svoj* and the null referential pronoun, occurred after the 18th century, are part of a broader typological scenario). Many studies were the first to touch upon certain phenomena (e.g. the long-distance reflexive or zero anaphora in the Russian language of the 18th-19th centuries; the evolution of the particle *že* in questions; and Russian expletive pronouns and correlative subordinators in a cross-linguistic perspective).

Abbreviations: 1 = first person; 2 = second person; 3 = third person; ACC = accusative; DAT = dative; F = feminine; FUT = future; GEN = genitive; IMV = imperative; INF = infinitive; INS = instrumental; M = masculine; NOM = nominative; PASS = passive; PL = plural; POSSP = personal possessive pronoun; POSSR = reflexive possessive pronoun; PRS = present; PST = past; PTCL = particle; SG = singular; Q = question.

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