

**Private educational institution of higher education
«Saint Tikhon's Orthodox University of Humanities»**

As a manuscript

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**CORPUS METHODS AS A TOOL FOR STUDYING
THE MICRO-DIACHRONY OF THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE
OF THE 18th-21st CENTURIES**

Summary of the Dissertation

for the purpose of obtaining the academic degree

Doctor of Science in Philology and Linguistics

Moscow 2022

General description

The study presents the results of a series of corpus studies of linguistic units of different levels in modern Russian and surveys the application of these methods to micro-diachronic analysis.

In modern Russian studies, the focus is on large-scale processes such as grammaticalization, lexicalization, metaphorization, pragmaticalization, and evaluation shift in vocabulary. Little is known about how these processes apply to specific linguistic units over time. The question of how linguistic units behave over relatively short time intervals, e.g. one hundred years, or fifty years, or ten years, is particularly poorly investigated. Micro-diachronic processes in modern Russian were rarely studied before the advent of corpus methods. Moreover, traditional grammars tend to equate modern standard language with the language of the Russian classical literature of the 19th century, ignoring the language of earlier and later periods. In order to understand the processes taking place in the language over short time spans, we need corpus studies, which were introduced no more than two decades ago. At the moment, there are relatively few works which describe the Russian language using corpus methods, although in recent years their number has been increasing. There are practically no works devoted to corpus research methods as such.

Micro-diachrony here means studying the evolution of language units over small time intervals - from ten to fifty years. **Modern Russian language** is understood in a diachronic perspective: the linguistic phenomena of the 21st century are studied in relation to their history of 200-300 years. These are **corpus** studies because they are based on very extensive linguistic data obtained from corpora, which make possible a statistical analysis. First of all, the work relies on the Russian National Corpus (hereafter referred to as RNC), as well as on the General Internet Corpus of Russian (hereafter referred to as GICR) and on "natural corpora" - entire array of texts from the search engines "Yandex" and "Google".

Research topic

In the domain of morphological semantics, we analyze the development of the ambiguity of the root *благ-*, remarkable by its enantiosemy; of the bound root *-каз-*; and of Russian verbal prefixes. For example, the discussion of the history of the verb *покрестить* is based on the idea of a unified semantics of Russian verbal prefixes, such as *но-* and *об-*. In the domain of inflection, we consider, firstly, the history of the third person possessive pronoun *ихний*: its emergence in the language and its further marginalization due to the pressure of the norm. Secondly, the change from a system in which converbs are formed from verbs of any aspect by two different types of suffixes to one where the choice of a suffix depends on the aspect of the verb. Thirdly, the fate of converb forms with the suffix *-вши* that are becoming obsolete. Finally, we consider a morphological phenomenon whose frequency reached the peak in

2021 - a language game usage with the substandard ending *-ов* for feminine nouns (*рыбов, собаков*, etc.). In the domain of vocabulary, firstly, we research the micro-diachronic history of seven idiomatic expressions which became quantifiers (*постольку-поскольку, будь здоров, малая толика*, etc.) in a process described as a type of grammaticalization. Secondly, the change in the semantics of religious lexemes, due to the departure from the religious perception of the world in the 19th century and then a partial ban on this perception in the 20th century - in the Soviet time - and finally a return to it in the post-Soviet period. At the junction of inflection and syntax, we analyze the competition between the full and the short form of color adjectives (*цветок алый/ал*) for the predicative function. Finally, in the domain of syntax, we describe the absolutive adverbial construction (*Прочитав книгу, она оказалась скучной*): its 300-year long relation to the standard and its entry into the modern language despite the prescriptive norm. Thus, this work combines micro-diachronic studies of the semantic and grammatical development of units of different levels - morphemic, morphological, lexical, and syntactic. We provide methodological generalizations of these studies and their results to draw conclusions about the prospects and outlooks of micro-diachronic studies of the Russian language of the last three centuries.

The scientific relevance of the study lies in the fact that corpus descriptions of the Russian language meet the current challenges of Russian studies, helping to systematize what is known about the development of macroprocesses and linguistic variability as well as substantiating and adjusting the views on certain non-standard units that are subject to codification.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in the fact that the units under investigation are poorly studied by micro-diachronical corpus methods. Many of the units considered in the study have not been previously studied at all, and those that have were never researched in micro-diachrony.

The methodological basis of the study are philological methods of the study of written texts, more specifically corpus micro-diachronic methods. The **descriptive method**, one of the main methods used in this study, is necessary to characterize a particular phenomenon. To do this, we analyze and classify the examples found in the corpus, determining the features and functional patterns of the units in the analysis. Thus, within the descriptive method, we primarily use synchronic contextual and categorical analysis. The **corpus** method requires the analysis of the units to be based on very large collections of texts and processing them with **statistical** methods. A special feature of the corpus approach is the extensive use of quantitative data from texts attributed to specific time, which makes it possible to compare the frequency of different variants of linguistic units in order to describe their micro-diachronic evolution. The **micro-diachronic** method involves the consideration of corpus

data in particular time periods, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, in the texts of particular authors (also divided into time intervals in a more detailed analysis) and in texts of certain speech styles. Within the micro-diachronic approach, this study for the first time introduces the “**nano-diachronic** method”, which only became possible in the 21st century due to the advent of “natural language corpora” — Internet search engines. This method involves analysing the use of language units at very short time intervals, such as a year or even a month.

Goals and objectives of the study

The goal of the study is to describe previously understudied units of different linguistic levels, remarkable in terms of their variability or non-standard status. The theoretical goal of this study is to establish the patterns of micro-diachronic development of Russian language units belonging to the derivational, morphological, lexical and syntactic levels that can be described using corpus methods and to suggest micro-diachronic methods to study such units. The tasks set up to achieve these goals can be formulated as follows:

- creating a corpus-based micro-diachronic description of several units of the derivational level (enantiosemic root *благ-*, bound root *-каз-*, and verbal prefixes);
- creating a corpus-based micro-diachronic description of several units of the inflectional level (substandard third-person possessive pronoun, converbs with substandard aspect - suffix combination, intransitive converbs with the suffix *-вuuu*, substandard verbal comparatives, substandard forms of nouns ending in *-oв* used in language game);
- creating a corpus-based micro-diachronic description of several lexical units (idioms that have developed into quantifiers; lexemes with an evaluative semantic component which changes when moving from religious to secular discourse);
- creating a corpus-based micro-diachronic description of several units of syntactic level (short forms of color adjectives, absolute adverbial constructions);
- assess the reliability and the potential of corpus-based micro-diachronic methods of studying units of different levels of the Russian language in the 18th-21st centuries;
- suggest a classification of variable and non-standard units of different types;
- review the methods of collecting data for studies of non-standard grammatical forms in Internet texts;
- review the methods of processing and analysis of Internet texts which make it possible to track the evolution of certain phenomena on a yearly and even monthly basis.

Propositions of the study

1. Corpus studies based on linguistic and natural search systems make it possible to detect and subject to statistical and micro-diachronic analysis such material of the Russian language that was difficult to access for pre-corpus linguistics. Therefore, standard language prescriptions and much data from non-corpus descriptions must be rechecked in modern works. On the other hand, corpus research makes it possible to determine the presence and number of units under study, but not their standard status, so such a study must be accompanied by grammars and metatextual discussions of the period under consideration.

2. Corpus micro-diachronic studies efficiently describe variable and non-standard units of different types and make it possible to identify the main types of variable standard forms: (1) "free non-systemic variability": equally standard variants coexist without any distribution (example: *прислонившись - прислонясь*); (2) "free system variability": the choice of equally standard variants is generated by the needs of the system (example: choice of the full and short forms in the position of the predicate); (3) "intentionally archaic variability": generated by the marginalization of language units of a certain type and their preservation as stylistically distinguished or phraseologized (example: converbs in *-вши - снявши*).

3. Corpus studies have made it possible to single out the main types of substandard forms: (4) "systemic non-standardness": variants are opposed to each other as codified and "incorrect", the incorrect ones being generated by grammatical systemic factors (example: absolutive adverbial construction); (5) "semantically motivated non-standardness": non-standard forms are generated by the needs of semantics (example: **покреститил сына*); (6) "game with non-standard language use": non-codified forms are consciously created by native speakers for the sake of expressiveness (example: *собаков и кошков*); (7) "random non-standard use": a speaker who does not know the standard prescriptions has options and chooses incorrectly (example: *крававый дуэль*).

4. Micro-diachronic corpus studies of different-type units have shown that it is convenient to study many linguistic phenomena within pre-postulated time periods associated with global external historical and cultural circumstances which influence the language. The 18th-21st centuries are most conveniently divided into five stages: (1) the stage recorded in the first comprehensive prescriptive grammar, the grammar of M. V. Lomonosov; (2) the authors of most written texts are representatives of the nobility's culture, their speech influenced by French; (3) the emergence of the Raznochintsy culture, which at the same time inherits the culture of the nobility and builds on it; (4) significant influence of the Soviet prescriptive standard tradition on the language; (5) partial liberation of the speech from the pressure of codification and the emergence of the "oral-written" language of Runet.

5. In the study of non-standard formations, the "grammatical generation" method is significant, in which potential forms are constructed (starting with derivatives from the most frequent words of a given class) in order to check their presence in the language. This method has produced new results in the study of common in modern oral and written Internet language of game substandard variants.

6. When studying the linguistic phenomena of the 21st century, reflected in the texts of the Runet, one technique becomes possible and interesting, although very laborious, namely the “nano-diachronic” technique. It includes tracking changes in linguistic phenomena over the course of years and sometimes even several months. It is possible to effectively use this method to investigate units that differ in formal appearance from others: neologisms and forms of words with unusual morphemic compositions.

7. The corpus analysis of Russian verbal prefixes has shown that the theoretical approach which assumes the semantic integrity of the prefix has a high explanatory power. All meanings of one prefix are described as generated by the interaction of the same abstract semantics of the prefix with the semantics of the verb stem. Hypotheses about the meanings of five semantically opaque prefixes (*вы-*, *у-*, *по-*, *о-/об-*, *из-*) help to identify differences between very close synonyms with different prefixes; they explain the choice of a specific prefix as purely aspectual by verbs with particular semantics; they give interpretation of micro-diachronic changes in the frequency of the use verb stems with or without prefixes.

8. The analysis of micro-diachronic processes of transformation of various combinations into quantifier ones, that is, the process of constructionalization of phrases and prepositional-case groups in a grammaticalized meaning, has shown the significance of the precedent text as a push to start the process, and the motivation of every stage of construction development. Language rearranges the construction so that the morphology, and sometimes also the phonetics and spelling, coincide with the stable correlation already existing in the language between the syntactic structure and a particular meaning.

9. In the domain of vocabulary, corpus analysis allows us to draw conclusions about shifts in meanings that are difficult to describe with pre-corpus methods. In particular, micro-diachronic studies have yielded interesting results in the domain of religious vocabulary, which was subjected to complex processes due to historical and social reasons. In the era of growing atheism, the meaning of religious lexemes shifted towards ironic evaluative use. On the contrary, in the period of the recovering significance of religion, there appeared a need to revive the original meaning, and in religious texts meta-discussions of the lexemes’ meanings based on **derivational motivation** became common.

The scientific and practical impact of the study lies in the fact that it enriches knowledge about many variable and substandard units of the Russian language and about the methods of corpus micro-diachronic studies of the Russian language. The **practical significance** of the study is also very important as it contains information that other Russian studies researchers can use when mastering corpus micro-diachronic methods. Some features of the use of the analyzed units which were revealed during the study can be included in courses describing the syntax, morphology and derivation in the Russian language, as well as in practical courses of the Russian language. Also, the results concerning substandard units are significant in the preparation of standard language recommendations in textbooks of higher and secondary schools, of grammars and dictionaries.

Approbation

The scientific results obtained during the work on the study were reported at international and domestic Russian linguistics conferences, such as:

- Диалог (Dialog). Computational Linguistics and its Applications. International workshop. 2000, 2001;

- Slavische Wortbildung: Semantik und Kombinatorik: 5 Internationale Konferenz der Kommission für Slavische Wortbildung beim Internationalen Slavistenkomitee / Swetlana Mengel (Hrsg.). — Munster; London; Hamburg: LIT, 2002;

— Annual theological conference of the Orthodox St. Tikhon Humanitarian University. Russian Studies Section. 2009, 2020, 2021, 2022;

— International conference «Aktivnye processy v različnyx tipax diskursov: funkcionirovanie edinic jazyka, sociolekty, sovremennye rečevye žanry». June 18-20, 2009;

— IV International Congress of Russian Language Researchers «Russkij jazyk. Istoričeskie sud'by i sovremennost'». Faculty of Philology, Moscow State University Lomonosov. Moscow. March 20-23, 2010;

– International conference «El'Manuscript-12. Informacionnye texnologii i pis'mennoe nasledie», Petrozavodsk, September 3-8, 2012;

– International conference «Glagol'nye i imennye kategorii v sisteme funkcional'noj grammatiki», St. Petersburg, April 9-12, 2013

In addition, the results of the study are reflected in three monographs, two of which are co-authored (for full details, see the list at the end of the summary), published in 2001, 2014, 2018. The first of the monographs over the past years has become a frequently cited study on the problems of the theoretical approach to the semantics of Russian prefixes.

The author has also published numerous articles on the topic of the study in international and domestic periodicals, including those indexed in Scopus.

Structure of the study

The work consists of an introduction, four chapters devoted to different levels of the Russian language: derivational, inflection, lexical and syntactic, and a conclusion. The list of used literature includes more than three hundred publication titles.

Content of the study

The **Introduction** formulates the provisions submitted for defense, substantiates the relevance of the study, its novelty and its theoretical and practical significance, and describes scientific work in the domain of corpus research and micro-diachrony, as well as in other areas of linguistics significant for this research.

The work is **based on** studies of micro-diachronic processes in the Russian language in the pre-corpus era, primarily on the classical Russian studies works by L. A. Bulakhovsky, V. V. Vinogradov, N. Yu. Shvedova, considering the changes in language in the 19th and early 20th century. Also, the methodological basis of our micro-diachronic corpus work with language are the works of modern researchers. Firstly, these are the works of V. A. Plungian, E. V. Rakhilina, T. I. Reznikova, M. A. Borodina, dedicated to the special corpus of the 19th century language, which was created under the direction of E. V. Rakhilina, marked in terms of differences between the language of texts and the modern one. Secondly, important are the works of N. R. Dobrushina and M. A. Daniel, who studied the history of twenty Russian words over the period of 200 years using corpus methods, and I. B. Levontina, who described the shifts in the understanding of lexemes that occurred at the end of the 20th century. Thirdly, O. E. Pekelis in a number of works described micro-diachronic shifts in the syntactic and syntactic-pragmatic behavior of a number of language units. Fourthly, the data of the Rusgram project, published in three volumes of “Materials of Corpus Grammar of the Russian Language”, authored by G. I. Kustova, A. B. Letuchy, E. V. Paducheva, O. E. Pekelis, S. S. Say, D. V. Sichinava, M. A. Kholodilova, and others. We would also like to mention the work of the participants of the special seminar of the Department of Slavic Studies of PSTGU under the guidance of the author of the study. Within it, a group of researchers was formed, including graduate students and students involved in the analysis of micro-diachronic changes in the oral and written speech of the Internet based on natural corpora and GICR - E. O. Borzenko, M. I. Sidorova, A. P. Vyalsova and others.

In Western linguistics, as well as in Russian studies, corpus micro-diachrony is just beginning to develop. The methodology of corpus studies is used primarily in the studies of M. Hilpert and E. Goldberg, for which corpus micro-diachrony is primarily associated with the use of Construction grammar methods. The theory of Construction grammar was formed at the turn of the century on the basis of the works of Fillmore, Goldberg and Croft. One of the most important ideas of this theory in relation to constructions is their non-compositionality: the semantics of the whole is not unambiguously made up of the meaning of the parts and the relations between them. Having become popular in Russian studies, the theory of Construction grammar, with the development of corpus methods for studying the Russian language, has become one of the main reasons for the emergence of micro-diachronic methods in the modern works of Russian researchers listed above.

In addition to corpus micro-diachrony, the most important topics discussed are Russian verbal prefixes, problems of variability, prescriptive language standard and the specificity of the language of the Russian Internet. When describing Russian verbal prefixes, the works of M. Krongauz, D. Payar, L. Yanda are primarily important for the author. Considering the

study of grammatical variability, it is impossible to overestimate the importance of the monograph “Grammaticality of Russian speech. Towards a frequency-stylistic dictionary of linguistic variation”, which recorded data on variability for 1976. In discussing theoretical problems of the correlation of the prescriptive standard with deviations from it, the work is based on the studies of L. P. Krysin, A. Mustajoki and V. A. Itskovich. In the domain of studying the language of the Russian Internet, the works of M. A. Krongauz are important.

The first chapter "Methods of corpus micro-diachronic description of derivational level units" consists of three sections and a conclusion.

The first section of the first chapter is devoted to a discussion of the semantics of non-compound words of the modern Russian language with the root *благ-* (*благж-*). In questioning the description by I. B. Levontina, which defines *добро* as an absolute concept in the Dictionary of Synonyms, and *благо* as a relative one, the semantic correlation of the words *добро* and *благо* is clarified. It is concluded that the words *добро* and *благо* in their basic meanings both correspond to absolute, not relative concepts, and the main difference in their meaning is that *добро* is characteristic of man, while *благо* is characteristic of God. The micro-diachronic method shows how the root semantics, primarily its evaluative part, have transformed over the past centuries.

The second section of the first chapter is devoted to the description of the bound root *-каз-*. Research conducted in collaboration with Denis Paillard was dedicated to the description of certain prefixed verbs: based on the developed semantic characteristics of the studied prefixes, we considered the interaction "prefix - non-prefixed verb stem" in order to show that the meaning (or meanings) of a particular prefixed verb can be described as a result of the semantic interaction of the non-prefixed verb stem and the prefix. The central hypothesis is that we can separate and identify the semantic contributions to the formation of the meaning of a prefixed verb with a non-prefixed verb stem on the one hand and a verbal prefix on the other, even when the root is bound and its own semantics is not as obvious as that of non-bound roots. The purpose of the section is to demonstrate that all the meanings of the discussed verbs are the result of the interaction of the verb stem *-каз(амь)* and the prefixes *но-*, *до-* and *ом-*. The section includes a brief corpus description of the history of the root in the last three centuries, making it possible to show that, contrary to the common opinion, its specificity comes from the Russian language rather than from Church Slavonic.

The third section of the first chapter is devoted to the problem of describing the semantics of verb prefixes. Russian verbal prefixes are very ambiguous, but at the same time, one would like to believe that behind the many uses of a single prefix, something semantically unified is hidden. Since the 1980s, different researchers have picked different viewpoints to describe the semantics of prefixes in search of formulations that would justify this generally intuitive feeling.

Over the past forty years, a generally accepted position has not been developed. Moreover, the use of the term “invariant” for prefixes is rather unreliable. Thus, analyzing the interpretations proposed in the monograph by E. R. Dobrushina and D. Payar, Yu. P.

Knyazev concludes that in the sense of “the ease of transition from an invariant to real uses” and vice versa, prefixes differ greatly from each other. For example, the connection between an invariant and real uses is transparent enough for *от-*, but not for *при-*. If “it is not possible to predict which specific situations can and cannot be classified as this invariant”, “this effectively means” that such a prefix “does not have a semantic invariant”.

The origins of the semantic unity of prefixes are hidden deeper than the components of the lexical meaning of verbs. It is difficult to argue with the fact that there is no invariant meaning of prefixes. It is clear that there is no such semantic component that would be included in the meaning of all (or even most) verbs with the same prefix. The meaning of the prefixed verb is the result of a complex interaction of several semantic abstractions, and the abstractions are obviously deeper than the level of word interpretations. Therefore, a transparent connection between the semantic basis of the prefix and the semantics of the verb in which it enters should not be expected: in fact, there is no such connection for any prefix. For example, even for the prefix *от-*, one of the most semantically simple, it is hardly possible to predict that the use of *отомстить* and *отцвести* will be generated by the component “loss of connection”. On the other hand, in order to predict that, with the verb of changing place, the prefix *от-* is needed for the meaning “not far from”, and *при-* for “close to”, the traditional division of prefixed verbs into groups according to the type of meaning is sufficient.

Semantic descriptions have a practical application not in prediction, but in explanation. The semantic basis that determines the semantic unity of the use of prefixes exists, although it is not an invariant as such, if this concept is interpreted straightforwardly. Unfortunately, even a successful description of such a semantic basis will not make it possible to predict the meanings of most verbs generated by the prefix. And yet, without understanding the meaning of the prefix, it is impossible to explain the subtleties of the semantic behavior of verbs which exist at a deeper level of abstraction than the dictionary interpretation of the lexical meaning. So, the verbs *помыть* and *вымыть* are interpreted through *мыть*, and the interpretations to *ждать* and *ожидать* fully repeat each other. A functional description of the semantics of prefixes *вы-*, *по-* and *об-* should explain why in some situations one of two synonymous verbs is preferable to the other.

Prefixes can be divided into semantically more and less transparent ones. More transparent, that is with meanings that are easier to formulate in natural language and therefore easier to comprehend, are *от-* (“loss of connection”), *до-* (“final stage”), *про-* (“interval”) and *пере-* (“two positions”). Less transparent ones are, for example, *за-*, *на-*, *с-*, and *при-*. Here are concise examples of the descriptions of four “less transparent” prefixes:

- *вы-* (“model result”): the development of the process is very particular and it leads to a result that is difficult to achieve, one of multiple intended (cf.: *выработать*, *вытанцевать* — you must *работать* / *танцевать* in a very particular way);

- *у-* (“side result”): not the result that the action is normatively directed at is achieved (cf. : *уварить*, *ушить* — *варят* / *шьют* not to change the size);

- *к-* (“involvement in time”): the process in time is noted regardless of the outcome (cf .: *почитать, помыть* — *читать / мыть* took place, but the result is not discussed);

- *об-* (“peripheral influence”): the action is connected only with the periphery, but not with the essence of something (cf .: *обдернуться, оговориться* — *дергать / говорить* with the body, but not by will and desire).

The most striking manifestations of the explanatory power of the **unified approach towards semantics** of verbal prefixes:

1. Revealing differences between synonyms. The difference between *вымыть* and *помыть* is easily deduced from the following interpretations. cf: *Сейчас же вымой руки!* As a command to a child, and *Вот здесь вы можете помыть руки* as an offer to guests.

2. Explaining the reasons why verbs or groups of verbs with certain semantics choose a particular prefix as purely aspectual. For instance, the verbs “become X or look like X, where X is indicated by the root” *деревенеть, сатанеть*, etc.) choose the prefix *о-* because the essence of the object is not transformed (*одеревеневшее* is not *деревянное*).

3. Explaining the choice of the prefix for stems which produce no prefixless verbs, but choose just one particular prefix. For instance, the choice of *у-* for *уменьшить, увеличить* is determined by the fact that for *у-* the mode of action is unimportant: the result is secondary anyway, that is, different from the main goal.

4. Identifying semantic differences between non-prefixed and prefixed imperfective synonyms in the absence of a perfective verb with the same prefix. Thus, the difference between *ждать* — *ожидать* is that *ожидать* is about the external, intellectual aspect of the process, leaving out the emotional component: it is more natural to use *ожидать* when the probability of the expected event happening is high or it doesn't matter that much if it even happens, and therefore the subject is less emotionally involved in the action of waiting.

The second chapter "Methods of Corpus Micro-diachronic Description of Units of the Morphological Level" consists of five sections and a conclusion.

The first section of the second chapter considers the micro-diachronic history of the relationship of the possessive pronominal adjective *ихний* and the standard Russian language. The word *ихний*, which is beyond the standard language, in the 21st century appears more and more often in the speech of those who generally comply with the basic codified norm, and is less and less "grating on the ear" for every next generation. The section provides an overview of how this lexeme functions in fiction and in journalistic texts from the 19th century to the present day. The purpose of the overview is to research the word's relationship with the norm in its two dimensions - as prescription and as usage. It shows that in the 21st

century the word has become a well-known marker of vernacular substandard speech, but, despite this, it is regularly used by cultured people either as part of a language game, in mental quotation marks, or with a shifted indirect meaning - relative, not possessive.

Also, mainly on the materials of the Parallel Corpus of the RNC and traditional grammars, the history of the interaction of this Russian lexeme with its analogues in other East Slavic languages is shown. This form has acquired its own status in Ukrainian and Belarusian. In Standard Ukrainian, *їхній* appeared later than in Russian, but it gradually supplanted the form *їх*, and turned into the only normative variant. In modern Belarusian the word *іхні*, although often characterized in linguistic literature as colloquial, is widely used in writing, and, apparently, stylistically unmarked, at least in fiction and in journalistic texts.

For the modern language the non-normativity of the form *іхній* in the direct possessive meaning (*іхній сын*) belongs to "systemic non-standardness". In a relative sense of "alien", "foreign" (*іхняя кухня*) is between "semantic" and "game" non-standardness. Therefore, the word *іхній* in the relative sense is much more stable in cultural speech.

The second section of the second chapter considers the use of "non-standard" converbs such as **видев* and **увидя*, which, unnaturally for the modern language, combine the characteristics "aspect" and "time". The following conclusions have been made.

Widely used in the 19th century, converbs from imperfective verbs ending in **-в, -вши** of the type **видев* are now almost never used, either with or without negation. Some exceptions are the stylistically neutral form *читав*; the phraseologized, stylistically marked and negation-preferring forms *евши, пивши, спавши*; and the moderately popular in colloquial (perhaps even substandard) speech form *быв*. Some of these converbs, in particular *видев* и *слышав*, are used somewhat more actively in religious texts, often within an indirect quotation from the Synodal translation of the Bible. Thus, these converbs in the modern language are separate non-systemic forms that have survived for various reasons. They were once part of a much more grammatically extensive active system type. They can also be classified as "intentionally archaic variability".

Perfective converbs with the suffix *-а*, used in the language of the recent decades, can be conveniently divided into the following four groups, listed here from those used freely to those gradually being replaced. (1) At present, perfective converbs ending in *-а* derived from verbs ending in *-ти*, for example, *привезя, выйдя, приведя, произнеся, приобретя*, etc. are standard and have fully replaced their counterparts with the suffix *-ши*. Occasionally appearing in modern texts, forms like *вышедши* belong to "intentionally archaic variability", in their stylistic status approaching non-reflexive converbs ending in *-вши* (*подумавши*). (2) Perfective converbs ending in *-а* in the idioms *положа руку на сердце, сложа руки* and *не спросясь*, as well as converbs *помолясь* and *благословясь* in combination with *начать* and in other similar contexts are used frequently and perceived as standard. In all other idioms, non-standard converbs have by now practically been replaced by standard ones. These forms

belong to "intentionally archaic variability". (3) Converbs derived from reflexive verbs of the 2nd conjugation, such as *возвратясь, наклоняясь, облокотясь*, etc are also normative and used along with similar ones ending in *-вши-*, perhaps a little less often. This is "free non-systemic variability". (4) Several odd perfective converbs ending in *-а* continue to be used, but much less frequently than their standard counterparts; they seem to be gradually but steadily leaving the language. *Увидя* and *завидя* are used as neutral and relatively frequent forms; converbs *заметья, уставя* continue to be used, although they are perceived as non-standard and rather obsolete. This, too, is "intentionally archaic variability".

The third section of the second chapter considers the micro-diachronic history of non-reflexive converbs with the suffix *-вши*, such as *подумавши*. It is concluded that *вши*-forms are much more rare in modern language than 150 years ago. They exist on the periphery of the language, but they continue to be used - not only in idioms (*снявши голову*) or as archaisms. Perhaps, in the middle of the 20th century, their use decreased in frequency, but now, because of the general liberation of speech in the Internet texts of the 21st century, they have returned. They are active again within their own niche associated with stylistic emphasis and even language game. On the other hand, many representatives of the generation born in our century perceive *вши*-forms as strange, substandard, erroneous, comparable to the pronunciation of the word *дождь* with a single long palatalized consonant at the end. The form *выпивши* has a unique status, retaining signs of finite use rather than converb. In the modern language, *вши*-forms are balancing between "intentionally archaic variability" and "language game with non-standard use"

The fourth section of the second chapter considers language game forms used in the oral-written language of the Internet, namely, comparatives formed from verbs: *люблее, хотее* or *ждее* (*жду ждее всех*). In 2017, forms derived from verbs *любить* and *хотеть* were quite frequently found in Internet texts produced by different native speakers. The attractiveness of these forms is that they successfully meet the need of native speakers to constantly invent new, albeit non-standard, means of conveying expressive and hyperbolic meanings. In 2017, it seemed that within one or two decades, *люблее* and *хотее* would enter the informal register - oral and written - of those native speakers who are prone to using speech innovations and language games. But this expectation, apparently, has not come true: according to modern data, verbal comparatives did not take root, idioms *люблее люблю* and *хотее хочу* did not appear in the language. Some non-verbal comparatives, also uncommon and completely non-standard, are preserved in Internet speech. The most frequent ones are *звездее* and *центрее*. All of these forms belong to "game with non-standard language use"

Our research required the development of a method of searching the Internet for unusual forms of a certain type which do not necessarily exist. As a result, we introduced the concept of "grammatical generation", meaning construction of potential forms.

The fifth section of the second chapter deals with the non-standard use of the noun ending *-ов* for feminine and neuter words (*продавать рыбов*), which became popular in the Runet language in 2021. In genitive animate accusative case, the zero ending started competing with *-ов* already in the Old East Slavic language as a result of two declensions getting mixed, and

in the modern language this led to the victory of *-ов* (*нет столов, домов*). Still, the zero ending has remained standard for some groups (*нет англичан, мальчишек*) and there is a variability in colloquial speech for a number of words (*нет помидоров / помидор*), and the zero-ending option in the 21st century is clearly inferior to the “*ов*-forms”. Under the influence of the “viral” meme about the conversation between cats and a salesman, since the summer of 2021, a language game has become widespread, where the ending *-ов* is attached to “unsuitable” stems: *рыбов, книгов, деньгов*, etc. Such a language game has existed for a long time, but within rare individual jokes (for example, the traditional ironic imitation of the vernacular language - *делов-то*), and in 2021 became frequent and popular, is used in many memes and in advertising, and associated with the topic of “kitties” and a certain standpoint. The “kitties language” began to turn into a new linguocultural phenomenon, recognised almost as widely as the Albanian language, or the Padonkaffsky jargon, whose peak of popularity was in the mid 2000s. Instead of the distortion of the spelling of words (*аффмар*), characteristic for Albanian which centers on the idea of protest, the “kitties language” changes the grammatical form, centering on the idea of a quiet and tender humility before the injustice of life.

The rapidly growing frequency of language game with non-existent case forms is determined by the following reasons: along with the general tendency for grammatical unification, there is an expansion of the ending *-ов* into the literary language; the confusing distribution of endings in the standard language makes the ending *-ов* a good candidate for language game; the ending *-ов*, attached to feminine and neuter nouns, including object nouns and collective nouns, changes the gender, turns the inanimate into the animate and introduces the meaning of separateness of the constituent objects. This creates a connection with the topic of children and anthropomorphic domestic animals, more precisely with the topic of touching and tender objects; being unambiguously associated with a specific viral meme, the game form *-ов* refers to a certain socio-cultural standpoint - the acceptance of the inaccessibility of life's blessings, the readiness not to consume, but to admire.

All such forms belong to “game with non-standard language use”, which develops into “erratic non-standard language use”, and is generally accepted in a certain community as associated with a certain socio-cultural standpoint.

The study required looking at the statistics of these *ов*-forms over the period of a year (May 2021 to May 2022), leading to the introduction of the term “nanodiachrony”, which refers to a method of considering changes in the use of a language unit over a year or even a month. It became possible to use this method to study units with a non-standard appearance on the materials of “natural corpora”.

The third chapter “Methods of corpus micro-diachronic description of units of the lexical level” consists of three sections and a conclusion.

The first section of the third chapter makes a micro-diachronic description of the history of seven different expressions, which initially had nothing to do with quantity, but gradually made the transition to be quasi-grammatical quantifiers. When describing each of the seven expressions, the following is taken into account: (1) the current state of the quantifier word or expression; (2) the reflection of this quantifier in dictionaries; (3) a description of the unit from which the quantifier has derived; (4) the history of the formation of the quantifier traced by the corpus method; (5) compatibility and semantics of the quantifier unit in the modern language; (7) evidence for lexicalization of the quantifier. Two predicatives are described (*будь здоров* and *как грязь*), four adverbs and adverbial expressions (*децл, постольку-поскольку, сверх меры, на редкость*) and one quantitative noun (*толика*). Three quantifiers turned out to signify a small amount, and four - a large one.

An analysis of the processes of transformation of various combinations into quantifier ones, that is, the process of constructionalization of phrases and prepositional case groups in a grammaticalized sense, showed the significance of the precedent text as a push to start the process and the motivation of each stage of the development of the construction by the fact that the language restructures it so that the morphology, and sometimes phonetics and orthography coincide with the stable correlation already existing in the language between the syntactic structure and some meaning. So, the noun *толика*, derived from a Church Slavonic pronoun in use in Russian until 1820, was fixed in the combination *малая толика* thanks to a fable written 1805, which kick-started the emergence of a popular expression denoting a supposedly small profit. Later, the fable, and even the specific meaning were forgotten, and a variability of the adjective appeared, which served as constructionalization in a quantitative meaning, then the meaning of the construction was transferred to just the noun, it was released from the idiom and all cases became possible. Due to associations with *только* and quantitative diminutives, the stress shifted, and in modern language it is used as an independent quantifier like *капелька* («удели мне хотя бы толику»).

The second section of the third chapter is devoted to the description of the semantic properties of religious vocabulary. Its peculiarity is that many of its constituent units are regularly used in non-specialized (non-scientific and non-religious) contexts in figurative meanings containing an evaluative element. However, the initial meaning is the religious one: these lexemes did not come into everyday speech from a domestic sphere. The section analyzes the use of several such words, in particular *догма, догмат, акафист, альтруист*. Such an analysis is interesting both in itself and because two questions arise. Does the fact of giving a negative assessment to words, which originally denoted neutral or even positive religious concepts, manifest a religious nihilism, a transition to an atheistic worldview? Are there any semantic elements that make up the meaning of lexemes in the philosophical and religious spheres, the presence of which leads to their assimilation by neutral speech as containing evaluative connotations? The meaning of a word contains an evaluation if its signification includes the component "this is bad" or "this is good". The word *белобрысый* contains a negative evaluation because it can be represented as components "blond" and "this is bad" (compared with the word *блондин*, which does not contain any evaluation). The biggest difficulty is to discover that a value is used in ironic contexts, to figure out whether it

contains the component “this is bad” or whether it is an extra-linguistic evaluation associated only with the concept, compare the example of I. Kobozeva *скуной* and *скупердяй*. The diachronic analysis of examples obtained by the corpus method helps to understand the indicated problems of the appearance of the evaluative meaning in religious lexemes. The results are component interpretations of the studied words in their initial and later ironic-evaluative meanings, as well as the following conclusions. An analysis of the words *акафист* and *догма* shows that when the word, the meaning of which includes the elements "religion", "God", starts to mean denotata not related to the religious sphere, a negative component of the meaning appears. In the linguistic picture of the world, a certain attitude towards people or objects is only permissible when it is connected with God. An analysis of the features of the use of the word *альтруист* shows that the ideas of kindness, selflessness, and sacrifice are not easily combined in the consciousness of Russian language speakers with a social rather than a religious aspect.

The third section of the third chapter considers the principles of compiling the “Linguistic-Encyclopedic Dictionary of Russian Christian Vocabulary”. To solve the complicated problem of selecting specialized vocabulary, separating it from neutral vocabulary and from the vocabulary of other terminological areas, for the first time, a corpus method solution is introduced. It is proposed to consider the comparative frequency of the use of a lexeme in texts of a certain type in comparison with neutral texts as a criterion for its terminological specificity.

The fourth chapter "Methods of corpus micro-diachronic description of units of the syntactic level" consists of two sections and a conclusion.

The first section of the fourth chapter makes a corpus analysis of short forms of color adjectives in terms of semantics, syntax and style. We interpret the obtained quantitative data showing the ratio of full versus short forms of color adjectives in connection with the problem of choosing between them, considering both individual adjectives and different meanings. We compare the frequency ratio of short and full forms of color adjectives with the similar ratio in other classes of adjectives, and we introduce the concept of “predicativity coefficient” which reflects the ratio of attributive and predicative uses of an adjective.

Short forms of color adjectives exist and are used regularly, but much less frequently than short forms of other qualitative adjectives, and with noticeably greater restrictions on compatibility than the full forms. This is due to the intermediate position of color adjectives between semantic attributivity versus predicativity, and thus between their status as qualitative adjectives versus relational adjectives. Frequently used adjectives of color tend to acquire additional meanings, turning into more qualitative ones, but this is not their own feature, this is typical for all relative adjectives. The main specific feature of color adjectives is related to their direct meaning. In a narrow direct sense, they designate a distinguishing feature and behave as relative adjectives, and so the use of adverbs formed from them, their short and comparative forms, and their capacity to be combined with adverbs of measure and

degree become questionable. But there are two reasons why they are still qualitative. Firstly, this is the regular use of adjectives of color in meanings somewhat different from the direct ones, their ability to describe not a distinctive, but a temporary color. There are many colors, they are compared with each other, they can turn one into another, so objects can change color, turn green or turn purple, be green or purple because of something (for example, moss or cold). At the same time, it is impossible to acquire the sign of "wooden" or "Moscow", to be wooden or Moscow because of something. Secondly, even a permanent, not recently acquired color has vividness and artistry, and when this property of the color, rather than its distinctiveness, becomes primary for a native speaker, color adjectives also turn into qualitative ones, are used in predicative short forms, and form adverbs and predicatives, unlike relative adjectives, without changing the meaning. Therefore, these forms play a special role in poetic texts, in which they are also used in their direct meaning to create a picturesque and emotionally loaded visual image. In order to understand what forms can be considered poetic, the section introduces the "poetic coefficient", calculated by corpus methods.

The choice between the full and short forms of the color adjective in the position of predicate is determined by complex semantic factors and belongs to "semantic variability".

The second section of the fourth chapter considers the syntax of converbs, namely, the ongoing process of overlooking restrictions on the absolutive construction. Ever since the appearance of the first codifying prescriptions in Russia in the middle of the 18th century the construction is confidently rejected by the norm, although it is regularly used in the language of speakers, including those whose texts are considered examples of the standard language, such as Turgenev. Based on the prescriptions of grammar authors - Lomonosov, Barsov, Vostokov, Grech, Buslaev, Chernyshev, Peshkovsky, Shakhmatov, Shvedova, Itskovich — and on corpus research, the paper shows the chronology of changes in the correlation of the standard language and the actual usage of this syntactic construction from the 18th century to the present day. The history of the absolutive converb construction is divided into five stages. Corpus data are given showing the absence or presence of this construction in the language of writers: Lomonosov, Fonvizin, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Dostoevsky. It is shown that only at the "Soviet" stage, on the basis of the Soviet desire for strict standardization of speech, cultural native speakers formed a "traditional register" of the perception of converbs, the owners of which perceive absolutive constructions as expressly substandard: for them, the subject is automatically perceived as denoting a semantic subject action expressed by the converb. Later, after the 1990s, the "traditional register" begins to collapse. The paper gives examples of absolutive constructions from the speech of our contemporaries of different ages, including those who are definitely speakers of the standard language. It is concluded that at the modern "stage of digital communications", the "traditional register" is actively being replaced by the "free register", which does not implicate syntactic rules on how to define the semantic subject of the converb, but is limited to removing the subject from the context and often connecting it with the pragmatic subject. So, a change in the registers of perception of a converb is a change in the intuition of native speakers in relation to this form. We would like to resolve the issue of what is the status of these registers. After all, in the already traditional triple

opposition "system - norm - usage" the concept of "intuition of native speakers" is not taken into account. Apparently, the introduced concept of registers of linguistic intuition is closest to the concept of "system", the most vague of this trichotomy. Therefore, absolute converbs in the modern language belong to "systemic non-standard use".

The **conclusion** presents the main results with specific recommendations related to corpus-based micro-diachronic analysis and is intended for Russian language specialists.

The time intervals to be used depend on the frequency of the phenomenon under consideration and can be counted in one of the following two ways: either by years or by stages in language history. We need a convergent methodology of corpus studies of Russian by different authors, because it would make it possible to see a large-scale deployment of macro-processes through the workings of micro-processes. To this end, in the first type of the methodology, it is recommended to divide the data into intervals of 50 years, starting from multiples of ten (for example, 1900-1949, then 1950-1999, etc.), or, if the frequency allows, into intervals of 25 years (1900-1924, then 1925-1949, etc.) or even 10 years (1900-1909, 1910-1919, etc.). In this approach, it is also convenient to combine intervals by centuries.

In any micro-diachronic studies, one should relate the size of the subcorpus of the period under study to the frequency of the units under study and those with which they coexist, which makes it necessary to use various percentage characteristics / coefficients. Thus, in order to numerically express how much a form is more common in poetry than in prose, we introduce a "poetic coefficient", which allows to take into account not only the relative number of uses of a unit in two types of texts but also the relative sizes of the subcorpora in the comparison. Relatedly, in order to numerically express the ratio of converbs of a certain type in texts by a specific author, we propose to take into account the overall frequency of converbs for each of the writers, and as a result, to introduce two coefficients.

The absolute number of occurrences should be indicated together with coefficients and percentages, because with small numbers reliability decreases. Small data are by no means uninteresting and should be subject to descriptive analysis, but should be assigned an analytic weight which is different from that of the data that are more statistically robust. Deviations in the amount of several occurrences should be taken into account; on the order of several dozen, such deviations may be viewed as indications of variability; and on the order of fifty and more occurrences, they are robust evidence for variability. But any observed deviation should be accounted for on an individual basis. Thus, stylistically marked occurrences need to be counted separately; occurrences appearing in quotations, including implicit ones; occurrences within phraseological units; occurrences in poetry and religious texts should be counted on their own, so that only unmarked uses count as evidence of real variability.

Author's publications

The main content of the study is reflected in the following publications:

Articles published in high profiled journals recommended by NRU HSE

The main content of the work is reflected in the following publications:

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