

# **More facts about syntactic amalgams: Evidence from Russian exclamatives**

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# Syntactic amalgams

Since Testelefs and Bylinina (2005a, 2005b), syntactic amalgams have been acknowledged in Russian.

*On otdal eti žurnaly neizvestno začem.*

he gave these journals **it.is.unknown what.for**

lit. 'He gave these journals, it is unknown what for (why).'

# Syntactic amalgams

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he gave these journals it.is.unknown what.for

lit. 'He gave these journals, it is unknown what for (why).'

*On otdal eti žurnaly, neizvestno začem otdal.*

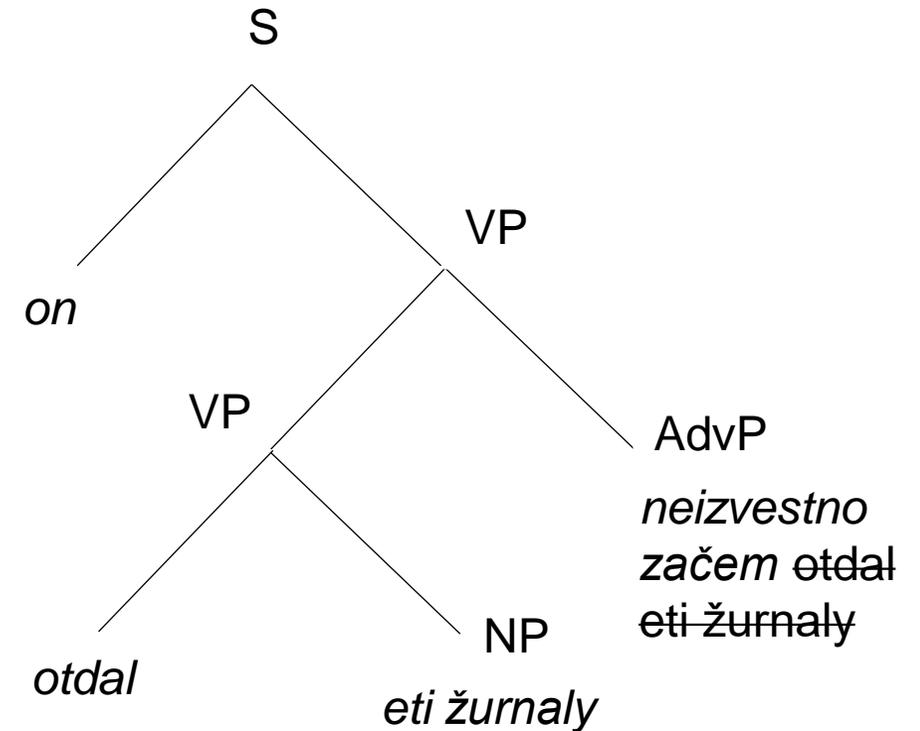
he gave these journals it.is.unknown what.for gave

'He gave somebody these journals, it is unknown why he did so.'

# Syntactic amalgams

The amalgams are a **lexicalized phenomenon** formed on the basis of sluicing, so they function as **words**. It means they take terminal nodes in a syntactic structure and can be arguments or adjuncts.

*On otdal eti žurnaly **neizvestno začem**.*



# The goals of the study

The paper further investigates syntactic amalgams in Russian and focuses on those of them which originate as embedded exclamatives.

*Ja vstretil segodnja ne predstavljajš kogo!*

I met today you.don't.imagine whom

'Today I've met a person, you don't imagine whom I've met.'

(lit. 'Today I've met you don't imagine whom.')

# Collection of data

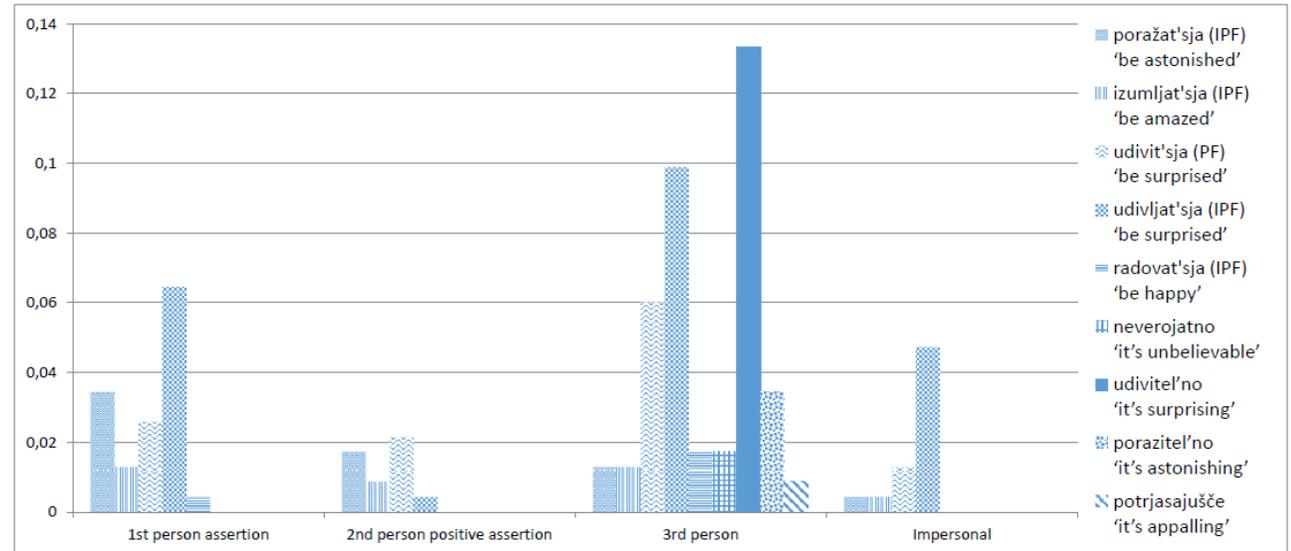
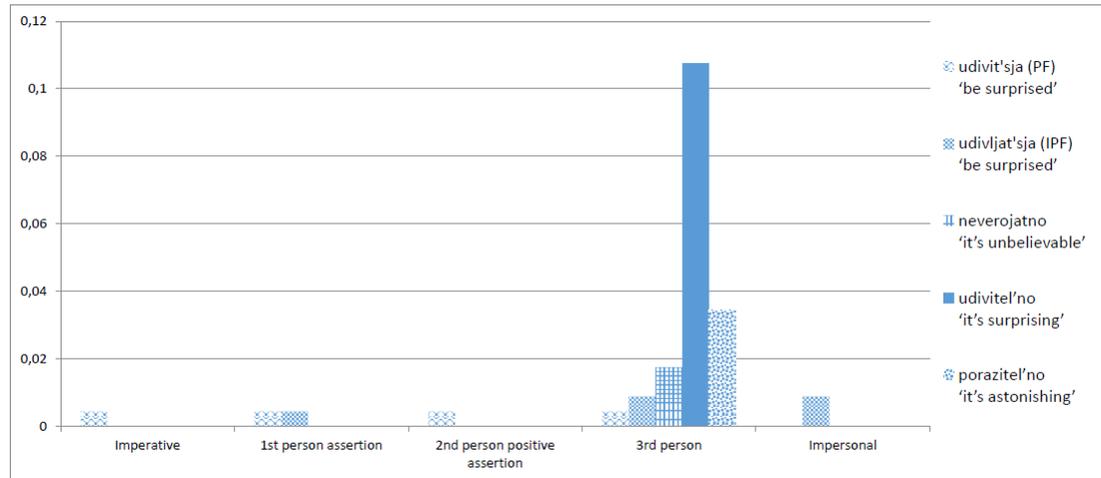
- Which **lexical items** (predicates) and in which **grammatical forms** function as matrix predicates of embedded exclamatives?
- This was done with help of the **Russian National Corpus**, in which the search query was as follows: any verb (V) at a distance of 1 word to the wh-word *kakoj* ‘what’ at a distance from 1 to 20 words to an exclamation mark (bexcl).
- As a result of that, 1213 contexts were detected and manually browsed.





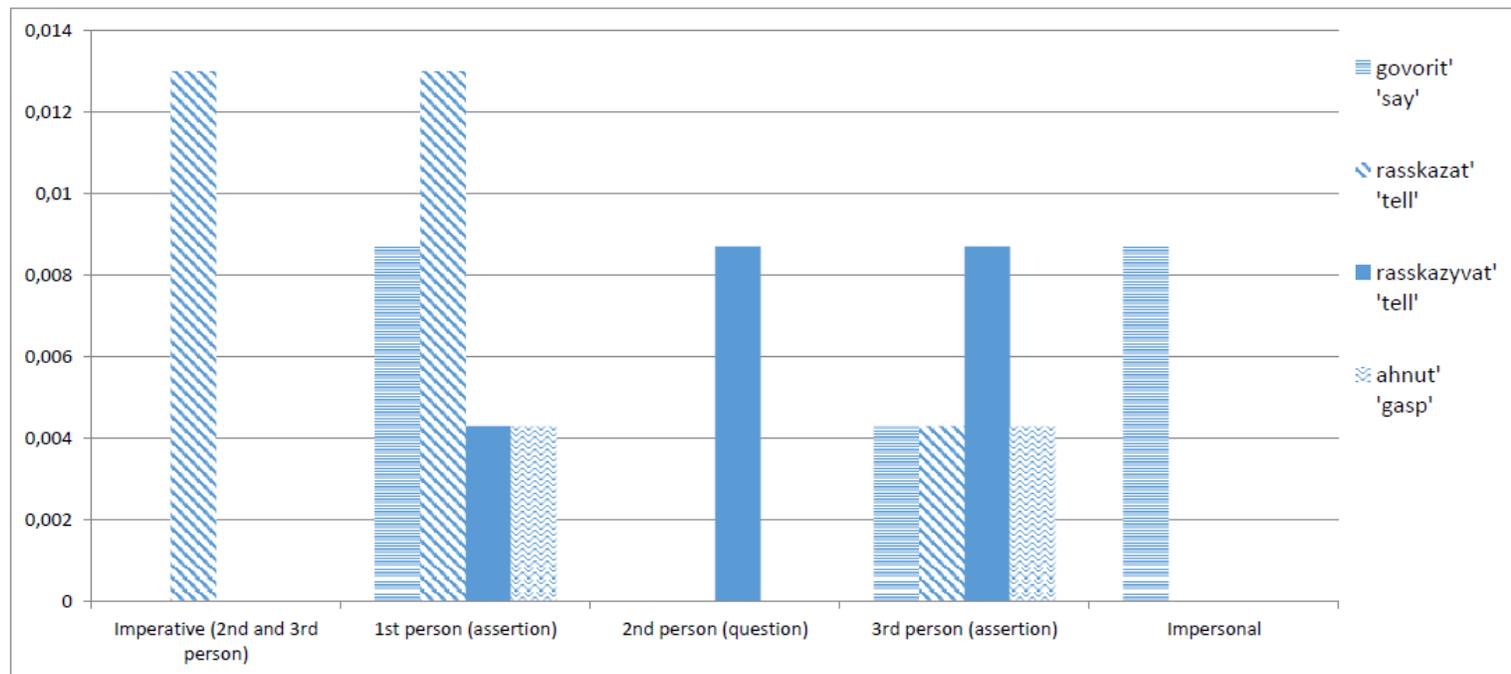
# Data: Matrix predicates

**Emotive verbs and predicatives:** *udivit'sja* (PFV) 'be surprised', *udivljat'sja* (IPFV) 'be surprised', *izumljat'sja* (IPFV) 'be surprised', *izumit'sja* (PFV) 'be surprised', *neverojatno* (predicative) 'it's unbelievable', *udivitel'no* (predicative) 'it's surprising', *porazitel'no* (predicative) 'it's astonishing'



# Data: Matrix predicates

**Speech verbs:** *govorit'* (IPFV) 'say', *rasskazat'* (PFV) 'tell', *rasskazyvat'* (IPFV) 'tell', *axnut'* (PFV) 'gasp'



# In a cross-linguistic perspective

Generally, the revealed groups match the **cross-linguistic expectations** found in the literature:

- perceptual verbs
- mental verbs
- emotive verbs
- speech verbs

The only group attested in the cross-linguistic studies but not frequent in Russian was a group of **speech verbs**.

see Huddleson (1993) for English, Villalba (2003) and Castroviejo (2006) for Catalan, Beyssade (2009) for French, d'Avis (2002) and Sæbø (2010) for German, Ono (2006) and Yamato (2010) for Japanese, Lipták (2006) for Hungarian, Hualde and De Urbana (2003) for Basque a.o.

# Embedded contexts

The verbs found in the search query were additionally tested in embedded exclamatives with other **wh-words**:

*kto* 'who', *čto* 'what', *skol'ko* 'how many/much', *gde* 'where' (location), *kuda* 'where' (direction), *kogda* 'when', *počemu* 'why', *začem* 'what for'.

# Embedded interrogatives vs. embedded exclamatives

Wh-words in embedded exclamatives have **semantics of noteworthiness**,  
cf. Nouwen and Chernilovskaya (2015).

*Smotri kto prišol!*

*Smotri kakoj tsvetok!*

‘Look who has come!’

‘Look what a flower!’

The wh-word *kto* refers to some noteworthy individual, whereas the wh-word *kakoj* refers to some noteworthy characteristic of an object.

# Embedded interrogatives vs. embedded exclamatives

Testing the semantics of wh-words in embedded exclamatives revealed that **not each grammatical form** of the found verbs is possible in wh-exclamatives.

Necessary condition: such forms should be **factive** in terms of Kiparsky and Kiparsky (1970).

# The most frequent grammatical forms

- **Imperatives (2<sup>nd</sup> person):** *smotri* (IPFV) / *posmotri* (PFV) ‘look!’, *slušaj* (IPFV) / *poslušaj* (PFV) ‘listen!’
- **Optatives (2<sup>nd</sup> person):** *esli by ty znal/ znal by ty* ‘if only you knew!’, *esli by ty videl / videl by ty* ‘if you had seen!’
- **Positive and negative declaratives (2<sup>nd</sup> person):** *podumaeš* ‘you think’, *sam znaeš* ‘(you) know by yourself’, *ne predstavljaeš* ‘you don’t imagine’

# The most frequent grammatical verbal forms

- **Interrogatives (2<sup>nd</sup> person):** *vidiš?* ‘do you see?’, *znaeš?* ‘do you know?’,  
*ponimaeš?* ‘do you understand?’
- **Positive and negative declaratives (1<sup>st</sup> person):** *predstavljaju* ‘I can imagine’,  
*ne predstavljaju* ‘I can’t imagine’
- **Predicatives:** *udivitel’no* ‘it’s surprising’

# The most frequent grammatical verbal forms

All these forms in combination with wh-words can function as amalgams.

*Ja postroil smotri kakoj dom.*

I built look.IMP what house

‘Look what a house I have built.’ (lit. ‘I built look what a house.’)

*Ja sobral vidiš skol’ko jagod.*

I picked see.PRS.2SG how.many berries

‘I have picked so many berries.’ (lit. ‘Do you see how many berries I picked?’)

# Restrictions

Amalgams-exclamatives have the following restrictions:

lexical

morphological

syntactic

semantic

prosodic

# Restriction 1

Not all found verbs and predicatives can function as amalgams.

E.g., predicatives (e.g., *udivitel'no* 'it is remarkable'), despite their frequencies, cannot function in amalgams.

\**On poznakomilsja udivitel'no s kem.*

he got.acquainted **it.is.remarkable with whom**

'It is remarkable with whom he got acquainted.'

(lit. 'He got acquainted it is remarkable with whom.')

# Restriction 2

Amalgams-exclamatives are impossible with a verb in the past tense form.

*\*On postroil {našol/vspomnil} kakoj dom.*

he built found/remembered what house

‘{It is funny/I remembered} what a house he has built.’

(lit. ‘He built {it is funny/I remembered what a house}.’)

# Restriction 3

Amalgams-exclamatives impose semantic restrictions on a wh-phrase. It has to be presupposed and out of the scope of negation.

*\*On ne stroil predstavljajěš kakoj dom.*

he not built imagine what house

lit. 'Imagine what a house he did not build.'

*On ne stroil doma predstavljajěš skol'ko let.*

he not built houses imagine how.many years

lit. 'Imagine for how many years he has not built houses.'

# Restriction 4

Amalgams-exclamatives cannot be split, in which the wh-phrase is inserted within the subjunctive clause.

*\*On postroil esli by ty kakoj dom znal.*

he built if SUBJ you what house knew

‘If you knew what a house he built.’

# Restriction 5

The forms that are originally used in questions impose question prosody.

E.g., the following sentence can only be pronounced as a question.

*Ja      sobral vidiš                      skol'ko              jagod.*

I            picked see.PRS.2SG    how.many            berries

‘I have picked so many berries.’

(lit. ‘Do you see how many berries I picked?’)

# Restriction 6

- Only the following wh-phrases occur in amalgam-exclamatives: *kto* ‘who’, *čto* ‘what’, *skol’ko* ‘how many/much’, *gde* ‘where’ (location), *kuda* ‘where’ (direction).
- The following wh-phrases are not entirely grammatical in such amalgams: *kogda* ‘when’, *počemu* ‘why’, *začem* ‘what for’.
- This surprisingly resembles their behavior in matrix exclamatives:

??(*Predstavljaj*š) *kogda on prišol!*

‘(Imagine) when he came!’

??(*Predstavljaj*š) *počemu on eto sdelal!*

‘(Imagine) why he did this!’

# Conclusion

- Amalgams-exclamatives are not fully lexicalized: they are in-between embedded *wh*-clauses and *X*-phrases (where *X* is identical to a *wh*-phrase).
- Amalgams-exclamatives expose idiosyncratic (lexical, morphological, syntactic, semantic, prosodic) features.
- Amalgams-exclamatives are formed on the basis of the most frequent grammatical forms of the most frequent lexical items of some cross-linguistically valid semantic classes.
- Adjuncts *kogda* ‘when’, *počemu* ‘why’, *začem* ‘what for’ are not absolutely grammatical in amalgams-exclamatives, just like in matrix exclamatives.

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