More facts about syntactic amalgams: Evidence from Russian exclamatives

Natalia Zevakhina
National Research University Higher School of Economics (Moscow)

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Syntactic amalgams

Since Testelets 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

*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).’

*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 predstavljaš 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

**Perceptual verbs**: *smotret’* (IPFV) 'look', *posmotret’* (PFV) 'look', *glyadet’* (IPFV) 'look', *poglyadet’* (PFV) 'have a look', *glyanut’* (PFV) 'have a look', *videt’* (IPFV) 'see', *slušat’* (IPFV) 'hear', *poslušat’* (PFV) 'hear'
Data: Matrix predicates

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**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.

Embedded contexts

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

Embedded interrogatives vs. embedded exclamatives


\textit{Smotri kto prišol!} \quad \textit{Smotri kakoj tsvetok!}

‘Look who has come!’ \quad ‘Look what a flower!’

The wh-word \textit{kto} refers to some noteworthy individual, whereas the wh-word \textit{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 (2nd person)**: smotri (IPFV) / posmotri (PFV) ‘look!’, slušaj (IPFV) / poslušaj (PFV) ‘listen!’

- **Optatives (2nd 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 (2nd person)**: podumaeš ‘you think’, sam znaeš ‘(you) know by yourself’, ne predstavljaeš ‘you don’t imagine’
The most frequent grammatical verbal forms

• **Interrogatives (2nd person):** vidiš? ‘do you see?’, znaeš? ‘do you know?’, ponimaeš? ‘do you understand?’

• **Positive and negative declaratives (1st 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 *predstavljaeš *kakoj dom.*

he not built imagine what house

lit. ‘Imagine what a house he did not build.’

On ne stroil doma *predstavljaeš *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.

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

‘I have picked so many berries.’

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

  ??*(Predstavljaeš)* *kogda on prišol!*  ??*(Predstavljaeš)* *počemu on eto sdelal!*

  ‘(Imagine) when he came!’  ‘(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.
Bibliography


Bibliography


