

Russian shortenings in *-ka*

The case for constructions

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Shortening

- ▶ Shortening is a widely known and variegated phenomenon that is attested in many languages
- ▶ Main types of "word creation" (from Booij 2007:20-21)
 - ▶ a) blends (also called portmanteau words)
 - ▶ *motel* < *motor+hotel*
 - ▶ b) acronyms
 - ▶ *NATO* < *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*
 - ▶ c) alphabetisms
 - ▶ *SMS* < *Short Message Service*
 - ▶ d) clipping or truncation, including hypocoristics
 - ▶ *mike* < *microphone*; *Elizabeth* < *Liz*
 - ▶ e) shortening of compounds
 - ▶ *electronic mail* < *e-mail*
 - ▶ f) ellipsis
 - ▶ *penalty* < *penalty kick*

Shortening

- ▶ Shortening is often regarded as an atypical (or marginal or extragrammatical) word formation process (cf. Dressler 2000 for a discussion)
 - ▶ It makes use of “reduction for the creation of new words, unlike normal morphology” (Booij 2007:21)
 - ▶ It generally gives rise to new expressions that cannot be properly considered as new lexemes, but as stylistic variants of already existing lexemes (Thornton 2004:557-558)
 - ▶ The output of shortening is often opaque, since there is little or nothing in their form that can suggest something about their semantics, contrary to most synchronic word formation mechanisms

Shortening

- ▶ Despite this, shortening mechanisms are rather active in a variety of languages and also raise interesting theoretical questions
 - ▶ How can we **represent formally** these shortening mechanisms (→ they are based on subtraction, not addition)?
 - ▶ How can we account for the **semantic relation** that holds between the shortened lexeme and its base (→ the output seems to be a synonym of the input)?
 - ▶ Which are the **motivations** behind the formation of shortened lexemes?

Shortening in Russian

- ▶ Russian has a wide range of shortening mechanisms
 - ▶ a) *MGU* < *Moskovskij gosudarstvennyj universitet*
 - ▶ b) *Aleksandr* < *Sanja, Saša, Saška, Sašen'ka, ...*
 - ▶ c) *čel* < *čelovek*
 - ▶ ...
- ▶ Our case-study: short forms with the suffix *-ka* (cf. Mazon 1920, Seliščev 1928, Vinogradov 1947, etc.)
 - ▶ a) *vizitka* ‘visiting card’
 - ▶ b) *maršrutka* ‘minibus, fixed route taxi’
 - ▶ c) *gazirovka* ‘sparkling water’

Shortening in Russian

- ▶ Short forms in *-ka* are created by shortening AdjN sequences rather than single words

- ▶ a) *vizitka* < ***vizitnaja*** ***kartočka***
visiting card
'visiting card'
- ▶ b) *maršrutka* < ***maršrutnoe*** ***taksi***
route_{ADJ} taxi
'minibus, fixed route taxi'
- ▶ c) *gazirovka* < ***gazirovannaja*** ***voda***
gas_{ADJ} water
'sparkling water'

Phrasal nouns in Russian

- ▶ These AdjN sequences are not canonical phrases, but **lexical phrases** or **phrasal lexemes** (Booij 2009, Masini 2009), i.e. constructions that have a phrasal structure, but a lexical nature
 - ▶ Since the output is N, we will call them **phrasal nouns**
- ▶ Russian has also other types of phrasal nouns, although the AdjN type is predominant
 - ▶ $N+N_{\text{CASE}}$
 - ▶ *zub mudrosti* (lit. tooth wisdom.GEN) ‘wisdom tooth’
 - ▶ $X+\text{CONJ}+X$ (binomials)
 - ▶ *spros i predloženie* (lit. demand and offer) ‘supply and demand’
 - ▶ $N+\text{PREP}+N$
 - ▶ *vid na žitel'stvo* (lit. permit for stay) ‘permit of stay’
- ▶ Phrasal nouns in Russian can be distinguished from both noun phrases and nominal compounds (Benigni & Masini 2010)

Phrasal nouns vs. noun phrases

- ▶ Phrasal nouns are superficially similar to free phrases, but they are more fixed. In fact, they generally cannot:
 - ▶ a) be **interrupted** by lexical material
 - *služebnyj sotovyj telefon* 'office/company mobile phone'
office_{ADJ} cellular telephone
 - **sotovyj služebnyj telefon*
cellular official telephone
 - ▶ b) undergo paradigmatic **commutability**
 - *železnaja doroga* 'railway'
iron_{ADJ} road
 - **železnyj put'*
iron_{ADJ} way
 - ▶ c) be internally **modified**
 - [*rynočnyj [spros i predloženie]*] 'market supply and demand'
market_{ADJ} demand and supply
 - **[[rynočnyj [spros]] i predloženie]*
market_{ADJ} demand and supply

Phrasal nouns vs. noun compounds

- ▶ Phrasal nouns are also different from nominal compounds:
 - ▶ a) they are always formed by **full words**, while compounds are mostly made up of **bound forms** (roots/stems plus linking vowel)

<i>Bel-oe</i>	<i>mor-e</i>		<i>bel-o-volos-yj</i>
white-NEUT.SG.NOM	sea-NEUT.SG.NOM	VS.	white-LV-hair-SUFF
‘White Sea’			‘white-haired’

- ▶ b) they display regular **agreement** and **government** within the members, contrary to compounds

<i>rabočee</i>	<i>mesto</i>		<i>such-o-frukty</i>
work-NEUT.SG.NOM	place-NEUT.SG.NOM	VS.	dry-LV-fruits
‘workplace’			‘dry fruit’
<i>točka</i>	<i>zrenija</i>		<i>golov-o-kruženie</i>
point.F.SG.NOM	view-NEUT.SG.GEN	VS.	head-LV-whirling
‘point of view’			‘giddiness, vertigo’

Phrasal nouns vs. noun compounds

- ▶ c) they may display overtly expressed **relational elements** (prepositions, conjunctions), which are absent in compounds

priëm na rabotu
reception for job
'employment'

VS.

gaz-o-snabženie
gas-LV-supply
'gas supply'

den'i noč'
day and night
'night and day, 24 hours'

VS.

vagon-restoran
car-restaurant
'dining car'

- ▶ d) the **order** of constituents is sometimes reversed in phrasal nouns and compounds

vladelec doma
owner.M.SG.NOM house.M.SG.GEN
'householder'

VS.

dom-o-vladelec
house-LV-owner
'householder'

Shortening with *-ka*: formal properties

How do we obtain short forms with -ka?

- ▶ Short forms with *-ka* are obtained by means of **three operations** (cf., a.o., Hooker 1999)
 - ▶ a) deletion of the head noun
 - ▶ *vizitnaja kartočka* > *vizitnaja*
 - ▶ *maršrutnoe taksi* > *maršrutnoe*
 - ▶ *gazirovannaja voda* > *gazirovannaja*
 - ▶ b) truncation of the adjective (normally to the accented syllable)
 - ▶ *vizitnaja* > *vizit-*
 - ▶ *maršrutnoe* > *maršrut-*
 - ▶ *gazirovannaja* > *gazirov-*
 - ▶ c) addition of the suffix *-ka*
 - ▶ *vizit-ka*
 - ▶ *maršrut-ka*
 - ▶ *gazirov-ka*

Shortening with *-ka*: spread and use

Paradigmatic sets

Homonymic sets

mašina 'car'

- ▶ *sportivnaja mašina* > *sportivka*
sporting car
'sports car'
- ▶ *avarijnaja mašina* > *avarijka*
breakdown car
'tow truck'
- ▶ *poputnaja mašina* > *poputka*
passing car
'passing car'

personalka

- ▶ *personal'naja mašina* > ***personalka₁***
personal car
'official/business car'
- ▶ *personal'nyj komp'juter* > ***personalka₂***
personal computer
'personal computer'
- ▶ *personal'noe delo* > ***personalka₃***
personal thing
'personal / private matter'

Shortening with *-ka*: semantic properties

Propositional synonymy

- ▶ Shortenings in *-ka* and full forms as **propositional synonyms**
 - ▶ Two forms that “can be substituted in any expression with truth-conditional properties without effect on those properties” (Cruse 2004)
- ▶ Cruse (2004) observes that propositional synonyms entail:
 - ▶ differences in expressive meaning
 - ▶ differences at the stylistic level (on the colloquial-formal dimension)
 - ▶ differences as regards the presence of a presupposed field of discourse
- ▶ With respect to the corresponding full forms, *-ka* forms:
 - ✓ are more expressive
 - ✓ generally belong to the colloquial register
 - ✓ are used when the speakers have a certain degree of familiarity with the referent
 - ▶ This is probably why *-ka* formations are so much used in jargons

Shortening with *-ka*: semantic properties

Diminutives

- ▶ *-ka* is also used to create diminutive forms in Russian
 - ▶ *sobaka* > *sobač-ka* ‘doggie, little dog’
- ▶ Is it a coincidence that a diminutive suffix is used to create shortened phrasal nouns?
- ▶ Dressler & Merlini Barbaresi (1994)
 - ▶ The morphopragmatic core of diminutives is embodied by a feature called “[**non-serious**]”, which requires that “**familiarity** [\neq raw frequency!] and **intimacy**” characterize “the relation between the speaker and the various components of the speech situation”
- ▶ The core pragmatics of diminutives is perfectly compatible with the properties outlined for short forms in *-ka*

Shortening with *-ka*: semantic properties

-ka formations as diminutives?

- ▶ Can we regard *-ka* formations as the diminutive form of corresponding phrasal nouns?
- ▶ Not really
 - ▶ They can be subject to diminutive derivation themselves
 - ▶ *gazirovannaja voda* > *gazirovka* > *gazirovočka*
 - Recursion?
 - Semantically, we do not get an effect of intensification of “smallness” (*gazirovočka* is felt as a “normal” diminutive)
 - Structurally, the two processes are not identical: the first is truncation, the second one is true suffixation with *-ka*
- ▶ Short forms in *-ka* certainly share some aspects of diminutive pragmatics, but are not really diminutives
 - ▶ They tend to develop a “life of their own”

-ka short forms as autonomous lexemes

Semantics

- ▶ Short forms in *-ka* may acquire **polysemic senses** that cannot be attributed to the full phrasal noun (Andrey Shluinsky, p.c.)
 - ▶ *maršrutka* < *maršrutnoe taksi*
route_{ADJ} taxi
'minibus, fixed route taxi'
 - ▶ *maršrutka*₁ 'minibus, fixed route taxi'
 - ▶ *maršrutka*₂ 'a car that resembles a *maršrutka*,
a *maršrutka*-like car' (by metonymic extension)
 - ▶ *Naša nemaršrutnaja maršrutka okazalas' dlja neë spaseniem ...*
'Our unrouted *maršrutka*-like car was her salvation ...'

-ka short forms as autonomous lexemes

Morphology

- ▶ Albeit very occasionally, -ka forms may be the input of morphological operations, whereas corresponding phrasal nouns cannot (although it would be theoretically possible!)
 - ▶ *sguščënnoe moloko* > ***sguščënka***
'condensed milk'
 - ▶ *sguščënka* > ***sguščënočnyj***
'related to condensed milk'
 - ▶ *sguščënnoe moloko* > ****sguščënn-o-moloč-nyj***
condensed-LV-milk-SUFF
'related to condensed milk'

A theoretical account

- ▶ Construction Grammar and Construction Morphology (Booij 2010)
 - ▶ Constructions
 - ▶ are the basic units of linguistic analysis
 - ▶ conventionalized associations of a form and a meaning
 - ▶ have different degrees of abstractness / specificity and different degrees of complexity
 - → the lexicon-syntax continuum
 - ▶ can be connected to one another via inheritance links
 - ▶ can be merged together by means of unification

Advantages of a constructionist account

- ▶ Phrasal lexemes (and multiword expressions in general) are an expected case rather than an exception
- ▶ Morphology and syntax are not separate and independent components, but levels of analysis that closely interact with each other
- ▶ Subtraction can be handled
 - ▶ Constructions are “templatic” in nature
- ▶ The “meaning” side of the construction covers not only semantic but also pragmatic and stylistic information

-ka shortenings as constructions

Formal representation

ADJN PHRASAL NOUN CONSTRUCTION

FORM: $[[a]_{\text{ADJ}^\circ_x} [b]_{\text{N}^\circ_y}]_{\text{N}'_z}$

MEANING: $\langle \text{NAME for SEM}_x \text{ with the property SEM}_y \text{ (& SEM}_w) \rangle_z$

I_I

$[[sguščēnnoe]_{\text{ADJ}^\circ} [moloko]_{\text{N}^\circ}]_{\text{N}'}$
 $\langle \text{NAME for condensed milk} \rangle$

$[[kreditnaja]_{\text{ADJ}^\circ} [karta]_{\text{N}^\circ}]_{\text{N}'}$
 $\langle \text{NAME for credit card} \rangle$

$[...]_{\text{N}'}$
 $\langle \dots \rangle$

-KA CONSTRUCTION

FORM: $[[c]_{\text{N}'_z} -ka]_{\text{N}^\circ_k}$ where $\text{SYN}_z = [[a]_{\text{ADJ}^\circ_x} [b]_{\text{N}^\circ_y}]_{\text{N}'_z}$ & $\text{PHON}_z = \text{truncated ADJ}$

MEANING: $\langle \text{NAME for SEM}_z \text{ & [+familiar] (& [+jargon])} \rangle_k$

THE UNIFICATION BETWEEN THE TWO

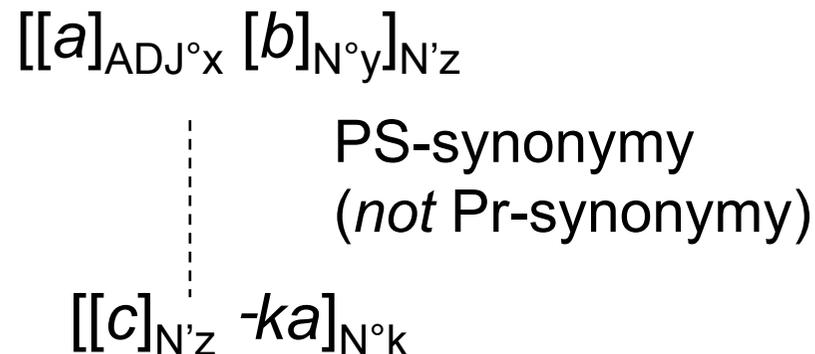
FORM: $[sguščēnka]_{\text{N}^\circ}$

MEANING: $\langle \text{NAME for condensed milk & [+familiar]} \rangle$

-ka shortenings as constructions

Semantic relationship

- ▶ Propositional synonymy
 - ▶ MEANING: < NAME for SEM_z & [+familiar] (& [+jargon]) >_k
- ▶ Goldberg's "Principle of no synonymy of grammatical form" (1995:3)
 - ▶ A difference in form always entails a difference in meaning



- ▶ PS = Propositional Semantics
- ▶ Pr = Pragmatics

What about motivation?

- ▶ Why should we “pack” an already existing lexeme into a new form?
- ▶ A difficult (and much more general) question to answer...
 - ▶ A first – by now obvious – fact is that the lexeme is not just “packed” into a new form, but acquires new (formal, pragmatic, stylistic) features
 - ▶ A second, more specific, observation is that the *-ka* construction might be a strategy to “morphologize” lexical items that are larger than a word
 - ▶ Apparently in contrast with the tendency towards **analiticity** of contemporary Russian
 - ▶ But in line with Duličenko (2004:23): contemporary Russian has a propensity for analyticity, but at the same time it presents a tendency towards **synthesis and condensation**

Thank you for your attention!



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