Specific Classification of Interjections in Russian.

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Abstract: The article is devoted to the classification of interjections in Russian. The author aims to compare the semantics, functions and characteristics of the discharge classification of interjections in Russian. Problem of interjections as a class of words consists in the fact that this part of speech is a special group of words, still not having a particular classification, but bearing in saying an important semantic meaning. Analysis of examples of the use of interjections lets look at the class of words on a practical level.

1. Introduction

Russian interjections differ from the significant parts of speech in that they do not have a naming function, i.e. the nominative function, as they are a kind of speech signs, signals used for the concise expression of a person’s reactions to various events of reality or for expressing requirements, desires of a person.

2. Semantics of Interjections

Expressing emotions, interjections are understandable to native speakers and are recognized by all who speak this language. Therefore, we can say that a certain semantic meaning is still assigned to interjections:

– Ау! Где же Вы? Ау!;
– Ээээ! Есть тут кто живой?;

Interjections originate from the emotional exclamations and sounds that accompany reflexes or the body’s reaction to external stimuli: «Ой, болит!», «Фух, Ну и тяжесть!», «Бррр, Как же холодно!», «Ыыы, Противно выглядит!». Such interjections often have a peculiar appearance, that is, they contain unusual or uncharacteristic sounds for a given language or sound combinations.

For example:

Я, Наоборот, – Самие Лучшие Характеристики! – Гм... Ну, Пока Поверим;
– Не-Ем, Вот Уж Это Нет, – Даже Вздрогнула Аля. – Бррр, Подумать Противно О Выпивке! И Зачём Я Только Пила Сегодня?

The group of interjections related to significant nouns is somewhat more numerous: Lord, mother; verbs: see, see, or, as well as pronouns, conjunctions, particles and adverbs.

For example:

Ты Сам Все Решил. – Господи! – Простонал Он. – Какой Я Дурак!;
Мера! Плутонами! Пли! Пли! Уу-х!

Russian interjections are an ever-increasing number of words. The main source of replenishment of new interjections in the Russian language is estimated-characterized nouns (Ужас, Смерть, Жизнь etc.) and expressive verbs (mainly in the imperative form: Дождиесь, Погоди, Постой; Ну, Погоди!):

В Одну Секунду. Ужас! А Ведь Вы Не Француз, Вы У Себя Дома;
Погоди, Василиса Егоровна, - Отвечал Иван Кузьмич;

There are three semantic speech spheres that serve Russian interjections:
3. Interjections Can Express the General Excitement or Excitement of the Speaker, as Well as Various Feelings Associated with It:

– Ох, ребята, ребята, вам бы самим в жизни закрепиться, потом уже и ребёнок соображать.


5. Interjections Can Not Only Denote, But Also Express Will, Ie Orders, Requirements, Motivation, Addressed to the Interlocutor or, Which is Very Common, to the Animal (V.V. Vinogradov, 1986):

Брысь! — прикрикнула на кота старуха; 
Тес! Это страшная тайна!

The semantic functions of sensory and emotionally evaluative interjections can be diffuse (unambiguous).

In the Russian language, semantically diffuse interjections, which mostly express negative reactions (condemnation, indignation, irritation, fear, grief, sadness, threat, mistrust, etc.) include such interjections as: Ой-ой-ой, вот тебе на, ай-яй-яй, вот это да, увы, тьфу.

– Да клещ укусил, – рассказывает Автор. – Ой-ой-ой, беда с этими клещами. У меня в прошлом году такой хороший пёс сдох!

6. Functions of Interjections

The same interjection can be used to express opposing feelings, for example, approval and censure, fear and joy. In clarifying such interjections, intonation, facial expressions and gestures play a large role. The expressive significance of emotional interjections can be enhanced word-formation using suffixes: охохонюшки, ойойошеньки, and lexically, for example, by adding to the pronoun: ох ты, иишь ты:

Иишь ты, какой вы галстук устроили - горошком! In this example, interjection expresses a feeling of joyful surprise.

Иишь ты, лошалям честь какая! In this example, interjection expresses a feeling of indignation.

Interjections with semantically unique functions can convey a general state of anxiety or excitement, so they can be used to convey dissimilar mental states of a person:

Вот это да!.. – хотя, признаться по чести, в деревне задерживаться не собирался. Interjection expresses a feeling of surprise.

Он не сводил с нее взгляда и только тихонько повторял: «Вот это да!». Interjection expresses a sense of admiration mixed with surprise.

– Мамочка моя! – голосила она, размазывая слёзы кулаком.

Interjection expresses a feeling of fright, resentment.

Ой, мамочка моя, лешй!

Interjection expresses a feeling of fear, surprise.

Interjections that serve the sphere of expression of will can fulfill the function of appealing to living beings in the form of a team or a call. Most of these interjections are the professional speech of the military, sailors, trainers, etc. In Russian there are a lot of such borrowings in this area (for example, алле ап, баста, пить):

Потому я знал ее нрав: обиду перенести она не могла! Молчит, да и баста!
Some Russian interjections are close in function to the imperative mood and exhibit a number of similar features. Such interjections include those that are used by speakers to demand silence, consent or attention (цыц, тш, ш-ш), encourage the interlocutor to respond (э-ге-геи, алло, ау-у), to implementation, or vice versa, to the cessation of actions (кышь, ату, айда, марш, трпру). Some interjections have the ability to add the «те», postfix, which is an imperative (ах-те, ну-те, ауда-те, брыс-те), to attach the particle «ка» (ну-ка, наме-ка, э-ка, нуте-ка), entering into a close semantic connection with other words, most of them with pronouns (ату его, марш домой, на речку айда):

– Ш-ш, – Русалка, закрыв глаза, прижимает палец к губам;
– Трпру! оторвался валек, и на мосту, несмотря на беспрерывные оглушительные удары, мы принуждены остановиться;
– Второй вопрос вам, Леон Черный... – Ну-те...– Я так вас понял, что общая мобилизация у вас не подготовлена.

The ability to enter into syntactic relations with other words is also observed in emotional pronouns: уже тебе, тыфу на тебя. However, in such interjections, this property is manifested much less frequently. Vocative interjections are close to imperative, that is, word-calls that serve to call animals and are phonetically similar to the sounds made by these animals: киес-киес, гули-гули.

L.L. Kasatkin includes such interjections in common ones. Etiquette interjections include traditional ones that have partially lost the significance of expressions, expressions of gratitude, requests, apologies, wishes or greetings: «добрый день», «до свидания», «простите», «благодарю», «прошу», «пожалуйста», «прощайте» etc.:

Прошу вас, следуйте за мной! – сказал нам лакей;
Так ты приходи потчеваться... – Благодарю. Может зайду.

Words belonging to this group can develop secondary expressive-sensual meanings, and are also used as a means of expressing amazement or objection, for example: «Дверь отворилась, и здравствуйте, ... гляжу – матушарья! – входят к нам в комнату хозяин с хозяйкой и три работника».

7. Classification of Interjections

Note that interjection in Russian studies is traditionally divided into 3 main classes. But the classification of interjections is, in fact, much more complex and diverse. For example, in his «Russian Grammar» A. Vostokov singled out ten categories of interjections (V.V. Vinogradov, 1986):

8. Interjections That Express Feelings, Emotions (e.g.: А! Ах! Ба! (Surprise); Айда!, Ура! (Approval); Спасибо! (Gratitude), Etc.):

Чтобы Биг Бен – бубум! И все – ура! ... Или в Париже, на Эйфелевой башне...

The group of interjections derived from nouns adjoins the category of primary non-derivative emotional interjections in their semantic nuances: господи! глупости! старость! ужас! etc. Interjections of this kind are distinguished not only by virtue of their genetic connection with nouns. They differ from other interjection discharges both in the nature of intonations, and in semantic capabilities, and syntactic features:

Какой ужас! Я не хочу это узнать!

A separate category in the Russian language is interjection, which is not so much a direct expression of emotions, moods and feelings as an emotional characteristic or assessment of a state (дело – табак!): С тачкой было сложно лавировать среди идущих войск. – А что, хлопцы, дело табак? – сказал дед.
9. The Fourth Category of Interjections is Formed by Words That Express Volitional Expressions, Motives. This is a Peculiar Group of Interjection Imperatives:

– Ну я ж бобруяни, провинциал, стало быть; вот и брюяю – ну-те: бездомок!

Interjection belongs to the fifth category, with the help of which an emotional-volitional attitude to the interlocutor’s speech is expressed, a reaction to it or in which affective assessments are caused by replicas of the interlocutor. These are interjections with shades of modality, and sometimes modal words that turn into interjections:


A special category in the Russian language is interjection, which is a kind of expressive sound gestures that are exchanged according to social etiquette by friends or counterparts in different cases of life. In these interjections, a complex chain of everyday emotions and rituals is expressed:

– Ага, – опять кивнул головой Гарднер. – Ну, спасибо, спасибо! Ценю.

10. As a Separate Category in Russian, There Are Swearing Interjections:

– Ах, черт возьми! – вскликнул он, мгновенно оживляясь.

Vocative interjections are also closed into an independent category. These include a lot of differently formed forms: from completely mesmerized to those that still retain close ties with the forms of nouns: Пламед. Боже мой! Что хочешь ты сказать?

Finally, a numerous and rich discharge of reproducing or onomatopoeic exclamations adjoins interjections. This discharge is intermediate between interjections and onomatopoeia: Вдруг другое домино, светло-лиловое, опять-таки француженка, подскакивает к ним, срывает с черного домино маску и – бац, бац!

Outside of interjections, on the border of the verb category, there are so-called «interjective verb forms», used usually or especially often in the meaning of the past tense of a perfect form. This includes forms such as трих, хлоп, прыг, хвать, шасть, стук et al. (P.B. Shakhbanova, 2006).

Вдруг другие домино, Боже мой!

In this classification, the interjection of the Russian language is quite fully and accurately represented.

V.V. Vinogradov among the verbal interjections distinguishes two groups:
1) reproducing or onomatopoeic words adjacent to interjections (бац), for example: Бац, бац! – раздались выстрелы;
2) interjective verb forms (хлоп, шасть, трих, фью), for example: Так и ждешь, что вот отворится дверь и шасть.

The words of the first group, according to V.V. Vinogradov, stand on the border between onomatopoeic words and interjections. The words of the second group are «almost beyond the boundaries of interjections, on the border of the category of the verb (почти за пределами междометий, на границе категории глагола)» (V.V. Vinogradov, 1986).

In terms of productivity, the primary ones are Russian interjections consisting of one sound (vowel), pronounced with a lesser or greater degree of duration, or a combination of two or more sounds (vowels and consonants).

Primary interjections have connections with some significant parts of speech by origin and are undifferentiated. Interjections are not grammatically framed by signs of sensual and volitional expression. This includes interjections such as: о! э! эх! ух! эх! ой! ай! на! но! ну! гм! уф! эх! эге! эхма! ува! ага! ого! and etc.:

Подождем! Ух! – сказал человек, подходя. Совсем пристал. Ну и шасть у вас;
Я лучше курагу. – Ага! На диете, значит, сидите.

Interjections are also adjacent to this category, which are combinations of two or more primary interjections: – Ай-аи-аи! – закричал головой директор, сияя и поворачиваясь к ней всем корпусом. – Ах ты, такая-сякая, умница-разумница, ты что ж думаешь, что агитация с
Derivatives include such interjections that are related in origin to the significant parts of speech, but which have lost the function of name and become simple spokesmen for feelings and wills (N.S. Valgina, D.E. Rozental, M.I. Fomina, 2002).

This includes interjections formed from frozen verb forms (брось! вали!) from adverbs (полно! тишь!), from case forms of nouns (батюшки! беда! боже мой! господи!) or from whole combinations that have lost their original form and merged into a whole word (спасибо – из спаси бо):

Жизнь продолжалась. – Ладно, Левичик, вали! И Рубин вышел на ту же тропку;
Беда! – Он засмеялся и покрутил головой. Усмехнулась и Аникеева.

A special place within derivatives of interjections is occupied by stable phraseological combinations that have lost their independent lexical meaning and fulfill the function of interjections (N.S. Valgina, D.E. Rozental, M.I. Fomina, 2002), for example: была не была, вот еще, вот так клюква, вот тебе на. Derivatives also include a small group of interjections borrowed from other languages (айда, ало, браво, бис, караул):

– Сенька кричит. – Айда! Носилки схватил – и по трапу;
– Пушкина ругает на чем свет стоит и все время кричит: “Куролесов, бис, бис!” – говорил гость, тревожно дергаясь.

Numerous words, calls of animals formed from truncated and modified household names of these animals (кис-кис) are adjacent to derivative interjections in the Russian language. For example, – Кис-кис! – осторожно пропел Березин: Васька не повел ухом.

11. Characteristics of Interjections

The search for a common feature for a unified classification of interjections leads scientists to revise and expand existing knowledge about this category of words. In this regard, one should turn to the general system of all parts of speech in the modern Russian literary language, based on classification according to the principle of consistency - serviceability (E.V. Sereda, 2002).

As you can see, new parts of speech can be formed in the language due to the resources of the language system itself, in-depth knowledge of previously known parts of speech. The study of the pronoun helps establish its semantic connection with the nominal parts of speech and determine the position of the pronoun in the general system of language. The study of such parts of speech as an adverb and a verb allows you to identify and highlight a special grammatical class of words in the category of status. On closer inspection, it becomes possible to separate interjection and onomatopoeia from each other. Consider these problems in more detail.

The specificity of interjections leads to the fact that in grammars there is no strict and consistent classification of all interjections, based on some common feature that could be based on it. The Russian language has developed three different approaches to understanding the categorical essence of interjection.

1) Interjection is a heterogeneous syntactic class, standing outside the division of words into parts of speech. In Russian linguistics, such an approach was followed by such scientists as F.I. Buslaev, D.N. Ovsyaiko-Kulikovsky, A.M. Peshkovsky, D.N. Ushakov, and in foreign science G. Paul was inclined to this point of view. K.S. Aksakov, on the other hand, believed that interjection was not entitled to be called not only a part of speech, but also words in general.

2) Interjections are included in the system of parts of speech, but stand in it in isolation. The followers of this point of view should be attributed to F.F. Fortunatov, who divided all the words into «complete», «partial» and interjections, P.S. Kuznetsov, who separated interjections from words of significant and official, as well as A.A. Shakhmatov and V.V. Vinogradov, in the classification of which interjections occupied a separate position.

3) O. Jespersen believed that interjections are included in the circle of parts of speech, and within the latter - in the category of «particles of speech» along with prepositions and conjunctions. Also, O. Jespersen approached interjections with adverbs, through a stage of unchanging «speech particles». In addition, it should be noted the grammatical concept of M.V. Lomonosov, which is
characterized by the combination of interjections with adverbs and pronouns, and he found a common contractile function in all these parts of speech. Interjection was defined by Lomonosov as part of speech, intended for «a brief expression of the movements of the spirit». For example, the complex sentence «I am surprised to see you here» with the help of interjection can be reduced to a simple exclamation «Bah!».

12. Conclusion

In modern linguistics, the substitution functions of interjections and their living connections are actively studied, both with significant parts of speech and with official ones.

References