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PARTICLES AS A TOUCHSTONE TO DETERMINE THE LEVEL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' RUSSIAN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Summary. The article considers the content and methods of teaching Russian as a foreign language (RFL) within the framework of a special course on Russian particles; the skills in their proper usage are absolutely necessary and reflect the international learners' proficiency in the Russian language.

Key words: particles, classification of particles, meanings of particles, monosemy and polysemy, frequency, context, Russian as a foreign language.

Introduction. Particles can be described as a necessary and most creative auxiliary part of speech completely unrepresented in the academic programs on Russian as a Foreign Language (RFL) for both humanities and non-humanities, as well as for Breakthrough / Waystage / Threshold / Vantage levels. And this is despite the fact that among the auxiliary parts of speech, particles make up the largest group of 149 (cf. prepositions – 141, conjunctions – 110 [2]) with high frequency of use (here are some data from the frequency word book: *ведь* (after all) – 1074, *ли* (whether) – 1160, *даже* (even) – 1299, *уже* (already) – 1937, *только* (only) – 2782, *вот* (now) – 2830, *бы* (would) – 3941 [3]), and they are particles which introduce subtle nuances of meaning into the text, enrich it, and like no other lexical and grammatical group, show the learners' level of foreign language skills. It should be noted that the lack of study guides, devoted to teaching and learning particles, aggravates the particle acquisition problem for RFL learners.

Review of literature. However, it must be conceded availability of adequate researches aimed at helping international learners, acquiring Russian as a second language, to command Russian particles, and most of the works are directly related to them.

Dissertation [8] presents a study of the functions and the position in an utterance of certain high-frequency discourse particles in Russian – in particular, *же* and *ведь*.

In work [4], a semantic / syntactic analysis of Russian *хоть* is given; the mental spaces that serve as contexts for *хоть*-constructions are divided into four overall categories: axiological spaces, spaces associated with knowledge and perception, spaces associated with logical possibility, and spaces concerned with examples in argument structures.

Lexicalized prosody and polysemy of Russian discourse particles *-mo* and *вот* are analyzed in work [7]. Different usages of particle *-mo* imply very different prosodic patterns; particle *вот* can be used not only as a demonstrative particle, but also as a quotation marker which requires a specific prosody.

Dissertation [5] offers a conversation analytic study of the Russian particle *-mo* and the English discourse marker *so* which both deal with the issue of how to introduce a material that is in some way misplaced or delayed in naturally occurring conversations.

It should be noted that in the frame of a corpus-based approach, Russian particles (high-frequency words commonly classed as particles: *ещё, так, ведь, словно, даже, же, ли, да, нет*) are reclassified so that instead of not entirely consistent current tagging of particles in the manually disambiguated Morphological Standard of the Russian National Corpus, an alternative tagging scheme, that eliminates the category of "particle" altogether, could be offered [6].

The purpose of this study is to present content and methods necessary for a special RFL course aiming at development of international learners' skills in proper use of Russian particles.

Main body of the research. Particles are auxiliary words that communicate most diverse semantic, modal, and emotional-expressive meanings to words, terms of a sentence, a whole sentence, i.e. unlike other auxiliary words (prepositions, conjunctions), they do not express the relationship between the elements of a sentence / whole sentences, but merely serve to express the shades of a single word, phrase or whole sentence.

The prevailing grammatical characteristic of particles is, undoubtedly, their lack of independence; there is also no performance of a definite syntactic function in them. But although particles cannot act as a member of a sentence, they can easily form a holistic statement in a dialogue with a very distinct and unambiguous semantics for a native speaker: – *Я скоро поеду на море. – Неужели? – А ты? – Вряд ли!* (– I am going to the seaside soon. – Really? – And you? – I doubt it!).

An international learner should be given a chance to understand the semantics, and it is possible to implement not through just ordinary texts with random interspersing of several particles, and not while consulting (even if it is special consulting), but during (at least) a short special course using targeted grammatical information, a number of specific exercises, and a bank of texts replete with appropriate vocabulary.

It should be noted that particles, like prepositions and conjunctions, are unchangeable words, but they not only serve different semantic and modal needs of words, sentence parts or whole sentences, but also increase the information content, accuracy and expressiveness of these units.

Like other auxiliary parts of speech, particles are divided by origin into non-derivative ones, monosyllabic, having in the modern Russian language no living word-forming relations and formal

relationship with other parts of speech: *бы* (*would*), *де* (*they say*), *ж* (*indeed*), *-ка* (*do*), *уж* (*certainly*), and derived ones (the rest of the particles). Moreover, even today, particles in their structure and functions come close to adverbs, conjunctions, pronouns, verbs, interjections and cannot always be strictly opposed to them often acting as homonyms that have not lost their meaningful ties with the words they are derived from. The latter have lost their categorical meaning: cf. adverbs *как* (*how*), *куда* (*where*), pronouns *это* (*this*), *все* (*all*), verbs *ведь* (*know*), *мол* (*said*), conjunctions *и* (*and*), *хоть* (*although*) and particles derived *как* (*what*), *куда* (*what for*), *это* (*on earth*), *все* (*only*), *ведь* (*but*), *мол* (*something like*), *и* (*even*), *хоть* (*at least*). Like adverbs, particles can adjoin to other words or sentences giving them a certain shade of meaning: *Но* (*but*) *был ли счастлив мой Евгений?* (Пушкин) (interrogation); *Вот здесь* (*over here*), *вдали от любопытных глаз*, *Берёза шелестела молодая* (Исаковский) (indication). And all these set another “trap” for international learners.

Particles, like other words, can be monosemantic *разве* (*really*), *неужели* (*indeed*) and polysemous (most particles). Polysemy is not typical for compound particles: *отнюдь не* (*by no means*), *что за* (*what a*).

For an international learner, it is also important to know about the possible positions of particles in the Russian sentence, because there are both particles occupying a fixed place (prepositive particles: *да* (*but*), *ну* (*well*), *давай* (*let's*), *кое-* (*some*), *пусть* (*let*); postpositive particles: *ли* (*expressed by question structure*), *же* (*after all*), *-ка* (*just*), *-либо* (*some*)), and any place (*ведь* (*but*), *ещё* (*at least*), *уже* (*certainly*), *хоть* (*indeed*)).

However, the particles, despite their formal diversity and semantic potential, can be grouped according to functions.

1. Particles expressing different shades of word meanings in speech: indicative particles – *вот* (*here you are*), *вон* (*there*); specifying particles – *именно* (*exactly*), *как раз* (*just*), *прямо* (*directly*), *точь-в-точь* (*exactly the same*); excretory and restrictive particles – *только* (*only*), *лишь* (*only*), *исключительно* (*exclusively*), *почти что* (*nearly*), *единственно* (*only*); amplifying particles: *даже* (*even*), *ни* (*nor*), *же* (*again*), *ведь* (*after all*), *уж* (*indeed*), *все-таки* (*all the same*), *все* (*all*).

2. Modal particles express the subjective modality: incentive particles – *пусть* (*let it*), *пуסקай* (*let it*), *давай* (*давайте*) (*let's!*); affirmative particles – *ага* (*aha*), *да* (*yes*), *именно* (*precisely*), *точно* (*exactly*); negative particles – *не* (*not*), *ни* (*nor*); particleless expressing a doubt – *вряд ли* (*hardly*), *едва ли* (*hardly*); comparative particles – *как* *будто* (*бы*) (*as if*), *вроде* (*it seems*), *словно* (*as if*).

3. Exclamation particles contributing emotional and expressive tone to the speech – *что за* (*what a*), *как* (*what*).

4. Morphogenetic and word-forming particles: those serving to form the conditional and the imperative mood – *б* (*would*), *бы* (*would*), *да* (*and*), *давай* (*давайте*) (*let*), *пусть* (*пуסקай*) (*let*); particles contributing to the meaning of uncertainty – *кое-*, *-то*, *-либо*, *-нибудь* (*some*); negative word-forming particles – *не*, *ни* (*некогда* – *никогда* (*once – never*), *ничто* – *ничто* (*something – nothing*)).

5. Linking particles: particles-conjunctions combining the modality with the meaning of linking words – *а* (*and*), *вот* (*so*), *все-таки* (*all the same*), *просто* (*simply*), *ровно* (*absolutely*); conjunctive particles in complex sentences which can always be removed – *так*, *то*, *тогда* (*so*) (*Вот придёт декан, так* (*so*) *он нам поможет*).

A separate propaedeutic attention deserve obsolete particles (they can be easily found in authentic texts of classic authors

of the 18th and 20th centuries (*чай* (*maybe*), *ужель* (*really*), *-де* (*they say*), *авось* (*perhaps*)) as well as the peculiarities of use of particles in artistic (poetic) texts which are not always relevant even for philologists and translators.

Some peculiarities of functioning of particles in the texts are represented in the examples given below.

1. Particles, normally employed for the beginning of a sentence, may occur in the middle or even at the end of a sentence: *В Париже, в Лондоне, в Нью-Йорке Пусть* (*Let*) *слышат эти голоса* (Сурков); *От этой грязи скроешься разве* (*really*)? (Маяковский).

2. Particles in parallel lines: *Грудь под поцелуи, как под рукоюйник! Ведь* (*Indeed*) *не век, не сряду лето бьёт ключом, Ведь* (*Indeed*) *не ночь за ночью низкий рёв гармоник Подымаем с пыли, топчем и влечём* (Пастернак).

3. Some particles can be used together: «*Как вы улыбаетесь редко, Вас страшно, маркиза, обнять!*» *Темно и прохладно в беседке. «Ну что же! (Well now!) Пойдём танцевать?»* (Ахматова).

4. Addition of interjection to a particle: *О нет! (Oh no!) Ведь я не насильник, Не обманщик и не гордец, Хотя много знаю...* (Блок).

5. Using synonymous particles in the near context: *В тени у высокой колонны Дрожу от скрипа дверей. А в лицо мне глядит, озарённый, Только* (*only*) *образ, лишь* (*just*) *сон о ней* (Блок).

6. Postposition of a particle with respect to the word logically stressed: *Помилуй, – говорит, – как можно это снести? Львам, барсам и слонам везде такая честь; Притом, с великого и до меньшого, Все* *речь о них лишь* (*only*) *да о них* (Крылов).

7. Particle parceling in the text: *Назавтра бой. Поспешен без минут. Все спят. Все стит. И пусть. (So be it.) Я – верный тут. До завтра сном беспечным усладитесь* (Пастернак).

8. Particle repetition: *Если бы* (*would*) *я поэтом не был, Я б* (*would*) *стал бы* (*would*) *звездочётом* (Маяковский).

9. Repetition of part of a particle: *Что за* (*What a*) *ночь, за луна, Когда друга я жду!* (Кольцов).

The skills in synonymy, antonymy, and homonymy of particles is also of importance to international learners; homonymy of particles and other parts of speech is most difficult to trace which may cause semantic dissonance when communicating or unprepared working with texts.

Some examples of homonymy are given below.

1. *На концерте были я да моя подруга. Да* *здравствует любовь!* (да – conjunction; да – word-forming particle); – *Ты пойдёшь на концерт?* – *Да, только решу задачи по физике. / – Да нет, я решаю сейчас задачи по физике.* (да – affirmative particle; да – amplifying particle).

2. *Он так пел, что мама заплакала. Так, я пойду на концерт.* (так – adverb; так – affirmative particle); *Я приеду минут так через десять. Так не доставайся же ты никому!* (так – particle contributing to the meaning of approximateness; так – amplifying particle).

3. *Иди прямо! Здесь прямо рай!* (прямо – adverb; прямо – amplifying particle); – *Ты, был на концерте?* – *Прямо! Чего я там не видел?* (прямо – negative particle).

4. *На бал собралась вся местная знать. Ты это должен знать. Ай, Моська! знать, она сильна, Что лает на Слона!* (Крылов) (*знать* – noun; *знать* – verb; *знать* – modal particle).

5. *Я приехал сюда, чтоб учиться. Что б я ни делала, тебе не нравится! Чтоб тебе ни дна, ни покрывки!* (чтоб – conjunction; что б – pronoun and word-forming particle; чтоб – word-forming particle).

Conclusions. As one can see, for qualitative comprehension of particles, it is required a serious and systematic work of both international students and their Russian teacher, capable to gradually develop learners' skills and abilities in this field.

The authors' practical experience in this work is realized in a special study guide [1] including theoretical background and 155 exercises. In the theoretical part, categorical meaning of particles, their origin, composition, structure, functions, synonymy and homonymy, and connection with other parts of speech are considered. Comprehension of theoretical part is controlled by advancement questions and tasks. The exercises are divided into communicative and illustrative ones; there are numerous examples taken from Russian poetic texts of the 19th and 20th centuries in which semantic meaning, frequency, and diversity of particles are most vividly realized.

It is quite obvious that without special preparation it is very difficult or even impossible to understand the proposed statements with Russian particles, and that is why it is the particle that is a kind of touchstone that allows determining the level of international learners' language skills.

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Нагайцева Н. И., Романов Ю. О. Частицы как «лак-мусинки» для визначення рівня володіння іноземця російською мовою

Анотація. У статті розглянуто зміст і методику навчання російській мові як іноземній (РЯІ) в межах спецкурсу з російських часток; навички їх правильного вживання є абсолютно необхідними і відображають рівень володіння іноземних учнів російською мовою.

Ключові слова: частки, класифікація часток, значення часток, моносемія і полісемія, частотність, контекст, російська як іноземна.

Нагайцева Н. И., Романов Ю. А. Частицы как «лак-мусинки» для определения уровня владения иностранца русским языком

Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются содержание и методика обучения русскому языку как иностранному (РКИ) в рамках спецкурса по русским частицам; навыки их правильного употребления являются совершенно необходимыми и отражают уровень владения иностранными учащимися русским языком.

Ключевые слова: частицы, классификация частиц, значения частиц, моносемия и полисемия, частотность, контекст, русский как иностранный.