

Pragmaticalization or constructional change?

New Perspectives on the emergence pragmatic markers in Russian talk-in-interaction

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The paper focuses on ongoing processes of language change in Russian, which originate in talk-in-interaction (i.e. the language used in casual face-to-face interaction, in Russian linguistics usually described in terms of Colloquial Russian (*русская разговорная речь*)), and adopts a usage-based perspective. Using data from the ORD-corpus, we trace the constructional patterns of the two most frequent verbs in colloquial Russian – *знать* ‘to know’ and *говорить* ‘to say’ (cf. statistical analyses by Ljashevskaya/Sharoff 2009). Instantiations of both have been considered to become pragmatic markers acquiring metacommunicative functions: (1) *говорит/гарит/грит/гыт* as a marker of hearsay or at least of speaker’s detachment from an utterance (e.g. Grenoble 1998, Wiemer 2008) and (2) *знаешь* as a turn-final marker of addressee-orientation (e.g. Freidhof 1996).

In line with Östman (2005, 2015), ideas from *Construction Grammar* (CxG) and *Interactional Linguistics* (IL) are combined in order to arrive at a rich description of the constructional patterns emerging in Russian talk-in-interaction, which widens the perspective on formal, as well as the functional features adding to the *gestalt*-character of a construction. The formal pole thus now also includes prosodic as well as stylistic and expressive features and the position within turn, sequence, discursive episode and conversation, and the meaning pole includes pragmatic functions such as discourse-structuring, politeness or the constitution of an activity or genre.

The analysis shows that both verbs simultaneously occur in a variety of constructions forming a network covering quite subtly nuanced functions within an overarching functional domain. Against this background, we argue that the forms presumed to be(come) pragmaticalized should rather be looked at in context, namely in the discursively entrenched constructional pattern serving a highly specific pragmatic function and the network in which this construction is situated in. We argue that ongoing processes of language change in which possibly new pragmatic marker may emerge in the future are at the given stage best described in terms of shifts within the network of constructions (cf. Imo 2007).

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