
Zürich-Bern Kolloquium für slavistische Linguistik

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Rival forms in modern Russian

Quite often languages present their users with more than one way to say (approximately) the same thing. For instance, English has the words *universality* and *universality*, which at least on the face of it seem to have the same meaning. We may refer to cases of this type as “rival forms”. This talk addresses two cases of rival forms in modern Russian. The first case study concerns the rivalry between singular and plural agreement in sentences with quantified subjects. In Russian, the meaning ‘five persons came’ can be expressed in two ways:

- (1) a. Pjat’ čelovek prišlo_{SG} (Singular agreement)
- b. Pjat’ čelovek prišli_{PL} (Plural agreement)

A detailed corpus study of the factors conditioning the choice between singular and plural agreement will be presented.

The second case study concerns the rivalry between so-called long and short forms of adjectives in modern Russian. The meaning ‘the answer is simple’ can be expressed in two ways:

- (2) a. Otvet prostoj_{LONG} (Long form of predicative adjective)
- b. Otvet prost_{SHORT} (Short form of predicative adjective)

In order to shed new light on this classic issue in Russian linguistics, data from the syntactic subcorpus of the Russian National Corpus will be analyzed in detail.

The talk will situate the two case studies in a general theory of rival forms and discuss methodological issues concerning the use of corpus data for the study of rival forms.

Tag: Donnerstag, 5. Oktober 2023

Zeit: 18.00 Uhr

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Interessierte sind herzlich willkommen!