

Xenomarkers in Russian

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Abstract

Narrative retelling is usually considered within the frame of evidentiality (verification) that constitutes a grammatical category, such as special mood or similar, in some languages, for example, in American Indian, Tibeto-Burman, Bulgarian, Lithuanian, or Turkish. Cf. the use of Konjunktiv I in German: *Er habe das vergessen* ('According to his words, he has forgotten') by contrast with the indicative form: *Er hat das vergessen* ('He has forgotten').

As far as Russian is concerned, the same function is usually ascribed to the so-called "xenomarkers", more specifically, to the particles *мол*, *дескать*, *де*, as well as *якобы*. Since the speaker uses xenomarkers to distance himself or herself from another person's stand, these words quite often pragmatically imply a valuation, most often a negative one, of the reported speech.

It turns out, however, that the repertoire of means used as markers of quotation or retelling is much broader than it is generally admitted. Thus, the words *ах*, *вот*, *так и так*; the construction with imperative reduplication and the conjunction *да* (*Привязалась: расскажи да расскажи*), specific intonations of retelling, and some other phenomena can take over the same function.

Keywords

Xenomarkers, quotation, semantics, intonation, Russian language.

1 General remarks

Xenomarkers (or quotatives, or quotation and rendering markers) have been attracting linguists' attention long since. Thus, R. Jakobson in his classical work on shifters mentions the evidential mood in Bulgarian. Bulgarian has two forms, namely direct narration and indirect narration. Jakobson discusses a dialogue about a boat, where the form *zaminala* means 'it is claimed to have sailed' while *zamina* means 'I bear witness; it sailed' [Jakobson 1957]. It goes without saying, that similar meanings can be expressed in different languages. Note the use of Konjunktiv I in German: *Er habe das vergessen* ('According to his words, he has forgotten') by contrast with the indicative form: *Er hat das vergessen* ('He has forgotten').¹

Narrative retelling is usually considered within the frame of evidentiality (verification) that constitutes a grammatical category, such as the special mood or similar, in some languages, for example, in American Indian, Tibeto-Burman, Bulgarian, Lithuanian, or Turkish. Cf. [Slobin, Aksu 1982; Chafe, Nichols 1986; Anderson 1986; Willett 1988; Bybee et al. 1994; De Haan 1998; Эвиденциальность 2007]. Compare also such terms as *quotative evidential*, *renarrative* [Плунгян 2008]. It should be stated however that in the above mentioned article a certain doubt is expressed that items in question are in fact semantically homogenous. Plungian suggests distinguishing between renarrative evidentiality markers on one hand, and subjective quotation modal markers (модализованные показатели «субъективного цитирования») on the other hand. Nevertheless we are not making this distinction here.

As far as Russian is concerned, the same function is usually ascribed to the so-called "xenomarkers", more specifically, to the particles *мол*, *дескать*, *де*, as well as *якобы* and *зрит* (*зым*). Most of them are etymologically connected with *verba dicendi*. Since the speaker uses xenomarkers to distance himself or herself from another person's stand, these words quite often pragmatically imply a valuation, most often a negative one, of the reported speech. Special attention has been paid to *дескать* and *мол* [Отин 1966; Колодезнев 1969; Fontain

¹ It goes without saying that this idea can be expressed directly (*Он сказал, что..., По его словам...*). In writing quotation marks, in Russian spoken public speech the expressions, «Цитата» and «Конец цитаты» are used. Compare also the new in Russia iconic gesture "quotation marks", performed simultaneously with two fingers on each hand.

1983; Камю 1992; Баранов 1994; Арутюнова 2000; Шестухина 2003, Levin-Steinmann 1997].

These two particles can function in direct as well as in indirect or experienced speech. Their position in a phrase is relatively free. Their function, according to N. D. Arutiunova, consists in “marking Somebody Else’s presence” («маркировать присутствие Другого») [Арутюнова 2000: 448]. It should be mentioned, that a speaker can present this way his or her own utterance, which took place earlier or is planned, as well as an interpretation of a person’s non-verbal behavior.

In [Камю 1992] an attempt is made, to fix some semantic differences between the particles *мол* and *де*, although these distinctive features are subtle and are rather slight preferences. Roughly, *мол* is more closely connected with the original utterance, while *де* allows unrestricted interpretation of the situation in question.

The finest description of semantic differences between *мол*, *де*, and also *да* can be found in [Баранов 1994]. The meaning of these particles is considered within the framework of “the self” and “the other” («свой-чужой») opposition and the idea of “communicative responsibility”: «*Де* отражает нежелание говорящего брать на себя ответственность за чужое (в целом или частично), а *мол*, напротив, свидетельствует о том, что за какие-то фрагменты чужого опыта он готов разделить ответственность с автором цитаты». [Баранов 1994: 116]. In [Плунгян 2008] *мол* is considered as an approximate renarration marker, *де* – as an interpretative renarration marker, and *да* implies a valuation or makes an ironical comment.

Returning to the repertoire of xenomarkers in Russian, it should be mentioned that the word *якобы* differs from *мол* and *де* in some more evident and important properties. *Якобы* is incompatible with direct speech, it presupposes the rendering of somebody’s words rather *de re*, than *de dicto*. Moreover, *якобы* expresses a speaker’s doubt about the contents of the reported utterance. See also [Плунгян 2008].

It turns out, however, that the repertoire of means used as markers of quotation or retelling is much broader than it is generally admitted.

2. *Ах*

Thus, the word *ах* can take over the same function, cf.:

- *Время идет быстро, а между тем здесь такая скука!* - сказала она, не глядя на него.
 - *Это только принято говорить, что здесь скучно. Обыватель живет у себя где-нибудь в Белеве или Жиздре - и ему не скучно, а приедет сюда: "Ах, скучно! ах, пыль!" Подумаешь, что он из Гренады приехал.* (А. П. Чехов, Дама с собачкой).

"The days pass quickly, and yet one is so bored here," she said, not looking at him.

"It's the thing to say it's boring here. People never complain of boredom in godforsaken holes like Belyev or Zhizdra, but when they get here it's: '**Oh**, the dullness! **Oh**, the dust!' You'd think they'd come from Granada to say the least." (Anton Chekhov, Lady with Lapdog) [As The Lady with the Dog, translated by Ivy Litvinov, A. P. Chekhov: Short Novels and Stories, Moscow: Foreign Languages Printing House, no date.]

Note that the word *ax* cannot be used in a similar utterance outside of the context of retelling, cf.:

- *Вы хорошо съездили?* [Did you have a pleasant trip?]

- * *Ах, скучно! ах, пыль!* [Oh, the dullness! Oh, the dust!]

The central meaning of the interjection *ax* corresponds to a specific part of the human emotional spectrum (Cf. Tsvetaeva's «Ах», *когда чудно*). The context of the reported speech, however, loosens the restrictions on its use. Sentences with *ax* as a xenomarker may have two kinds of prosodic arrangement. *Ax* can function as a proclitic (*ахскуучно, ахпыль*. A famous Russian reciter Dmitry Zhuravlev intones this phrase like this), at that, the word is prolonged, and the tone slightly rises and then falls down. *Ax* can also be pronounced separately, in this case with the rising tone, and the next word is pronounced with falling intonation (So does the other reciter of "Lady with Lapdog" Igor Yasulovitch).

3 *Вот*

One more interesting xenomarker was discovered in [Подлеская, Кибрик 2009], namely the interjection *вот* as a means of "expressing threat and condemnation" in reported speech, cf.:

\тоже на меня ' /посмотрела ,

«\Вот!

Я тебя /-в-выгону-у и-из-зз ..(0.2) этой из ш= ..(0.2) 'из ..(0.2) ' /школы!» [She looked at me too: "I'll throw you out of this school!"]].

See also:

Я стала говорить дома: вот, Наташа просила у меня прощения, я не простила ее... [I started telling at home – well, Natasha asked me to forgive her, and I didn't...] [Н. Горланова, *Метаморфозы*].

Interestingly enough, the meaning of *вот* is not confined to threat or condemnation. Compare the following examples:

А она сидит и ноет: «Вот, я такая несчастная...» [And she is sitting around, whimpering: “Oh, I’m so miserable...”];

Он расхвастался: «Вот, я самый крутой» [He started bragging: “Yeah, I’m such a cool guy”];

Привязалась: «Вот, как тебе не стыдно, что у тебя за юбка» [She kept intruding on me: “Hey, what kind of a skirt is that? Shame on you!”];

А он все обещает: «Вот, деньги будут со дня на день, все отдам [And he keeps giving promises: “The money will be there any day, I will return everything I owe”].

Ну и что же, что она первая позвонила? А ты бы ей сказал: «Вот, я сам собирался тебе позвонить, поздравить» [Yes, she called first, so what? You should have said – I was planning to call you with the greetings myself].

Now we are going to point out the common features of *ах* and *вот* as well as semantic differences between them. Both items function as a sort of forward quote, marking the beginning of reported speech. However, unlike *мол* and some other particles, these two items do not presuppose that the speaker is going to cite someone’s speech. Normally they antecede a brief retelling of reported speech. The word *вот* tends to choose one or several representative phrases at that, while *ах* rather conveys the general idea of the speech and its emotional coloring. Moreover, *ах* stresses, that the speech in question was too emotional.

Russian has some more segmental xenomarkers at its disposal.

4 Так и так

Он пришёл в городское ГАИ и сказал, что вот так и так, Кио на гастролях, неизвестно, когда вернётся [He came to the local traffic police office and said that Kio is on tour and no one knows when he will be back]. [И. Э. Кио. *Иллюзии без иллюзий* (1995-1999)]

Прошло, наверное, уже полгода занятий в институте, когда он решился профессору сообщить: так и так, мол, мы с вами, Николай Васильевич, в некотором роде знакомы.

[The half of the academic year has passed when he ventured on telling the professor – Nikolaj Vasil'evich, you and I have, um, met before][Юрий Трифонов. Дом на набережной (1976)]
In [Плунгян 2008] this item is considered as an explicit marker of approximate retelling. In my opinion *так и так* rather involves the idea of well-ordered narration, step by step.

5 Видите ли

In sentences like *Он, видите ли, занят!* [He is supposed to be busy] a specific meaning of *видите ли* is presented, namely, the meaning of disapproving retelling. Note, that the “regular” *видите ли* has both plural and singular forms (*видишь ли / видите ли*), while the “rendering” *видите ли* – is presented only by the plural.

6 Construction *расскажи да расскажи*

The construction with imperative reduplication and the conjunction *да* (*Привязалась: расскажи да расскажи* [She is intruding on me: tell me! tell me!]) also expresses the meaning of disapproving retelling. In this case the speaker does not like persistence and importunity of the author of reported speech. See also [Теоретические проблемы... 2010: 205]: *На меня стали бросаться: расскажи да расскажи им секрет самогона* [They started asking me to tell them the secret of making samogon] (И. Ильф, Е. Петров). Note that this construction cannot be used in a similar utterance outside of the context of retelling. Cf.:

Пристал, как с ножом к горлу: «Скажи да скажи про Аматурова Софье Михайловне: это скорей дело подвинет!» [He stuck to me like glue: tell Sofja Mihajlovna about Mr. Amaturov, it will help!] [А. Ф. Писемский. Просвещенное время (1875)]

Подсыпался к ней однажды бухгалтер: дай да дай выручку на два дня [The bookkeeper stuck to her once asking to lend him some cash from the box office for two days]. [Ю. О. Домбровский. Факультет ненужных вещей].

17 Intonation

In [Янко 2008: 109] an intonation pattern is described, called “the intonation of mental activity”, i.e. situations of remembering, perplexity, sinking into daydreams, and also reported

speech (*Тетя сказала, надо чего-то там уко-олы делать* [Aunt said we should make injections...]). This intonation pattern is described as follows: «Соответствующий акцент характеризуется подъемом тона и существенным удлинением ударного слога акцентоносителя ремы. Вся заударная область ровная (иногда с небольшим естественным падением)».

Yanko notes, that by retelling a speaker doesn't copy somebody else's intonation, but arranges his or her utterance with a specific "remembering" prosody.

However, although the prosody of retelling and remembering has much in common, these two intonation patterns are somewhat different. First of all, retelling is often affective and emotive, and the prosody in this case is emphatic, which is hardly possible in the case of remembering, perplexity, or sinking into daydreams.

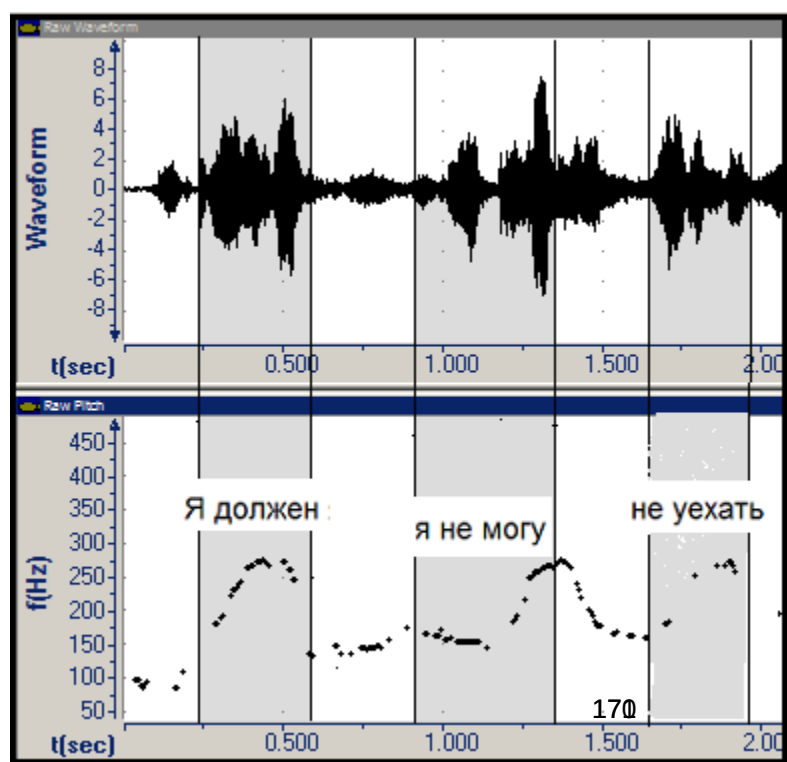
Secondly, by retelling, the phrase is often split into minor segments as against original speech. Cf.:

- *И что он ответил?*

- *Да что ответил! «Маама не разрешиаает»*² [And what did he say? What could he say? Mommy won't let me].

From the point of view of intonation, reported speech often turns to sound rhythmical, pronounced with seriate tone rises and falls, similar to "listing" intonation: *А он мне и говорит: «Воот, Лдеевушка, какая вы краЛсиивая, как вас зоЛвут, а пойЛдеемте, погуЛяем, а Лдаайте телеЛфоончик»* [And he tells me: Hey lady, you're so pretty, what's your name, let's go for a walk, please give me your phone number]. See the picture below:

Figure 1.



The phrase (*Ты говорил:*) *Я должен, я не могу не уехать* [(You said:) I must go, I cannot stay here] from the film «Проездом» (“Drive-by visit”) (1982).

“Retelling” intonation distorts the original utterance so that a listener understands, that the respective speech fragment doesn’t belong to the speaker. Thus, in the phrase *Как вас зовут?* [What is your name?] rising tone on *зовут* is in regular Russian impossible. But in reported speech slight tone rise on this word is quite natural.

Last but not least, if a speaker disapproves the original utterance, such phenomenon as “aping” (передразнивание) may appear. There are different means of aping in Russian. Now we will mention only two of them. In [Камю 1992] S. Kodzasov’s remark is adduced, that nasalization is often used as a means of aping.

One more means of this kind is “bleating” («блеяние») (*ма-а-а-ама*).

8 Speech substitutes

There is one more interesting phenomenon, connected with someone else’s speech reporting. Besides xenomarkers, there are some items, substituting or imitating someone’s speech. Usually such items are senseless combinations of sounds, including iterations and rhymes and characterized with the same intonation pattern as was already discussed. These are units like *ля-ля тополя, ля-ля-фа-фа, тэ-тэ-тэ, тэ-тэ-нэ-нэ, тэто-это, тра-ля ля* and a relatively new borrowing *бла-бла(-бла)*; *Я ему объясняю: «У меня много работы, а завтра теща приезжает, тэ-тэ-нэ-нэ <ля-ля тополя> ...»* [I’m telling him: I’ve got a lot of work, and tomorrow my mother-in-law is coming, bla-bla-bla]; *Ты ему скажи, что ты к нему хорошо относишься, но только как к другу, бла-бла-бла* [You should tell him that you like him but only as a friend, bla-bla-bla]. Compare also: *Прибегает: «А! О!» А чем я могу ему помочь?* [He came crying “Ah! Oh!”, but how could I help him?]; *Опять наехала на меня: «Аа! Даа!» Надоела уже* [She started picking on me again: “Aa! Oo!” – I’m sick of her]. Moreover there are expressions *тыры-пыры* and *тыр-пыр восемь дыр*. Normally such units are not reflected in written texts, but quite often occur in oral discourse. Some of these expression are used not only to substitute someone else’s speech, but also to denote it: *Вот сейчас, я пролистал ЖЖ и думаю что-то вроде - вот я лошара и неудачник, так бездарно проводил время и сох на разным тёлкам и всё бес толку и писал какую-то пургу какие-то рассказы и бла бла*

[Just now I looked up my LJ and I'm thinking something like 'I'm such a jerk and a loser, I wasted so much time dreaming of different babes, writing all kinds of fluff and bla-bla-bla].

It should be mentioned that some items with a broader meaning also often function as xenomarkers. Thus, the word *вроде* – a marker of uncertainty – can be used in reported speech as xenomarker. Compare two sentences: *Ты вроде похудела* [You seem slimmer] [the speaker is not sure] and *Он вроде уволился* [They say he quit the job]. The word *типа* – a marker of approximate nomination – can function in a similar way: *А она стала говорить, что муж типа так занят* [And she started saying that her husband is sorta busy]. As was already noticed (see for example [Булыгина/Шмелёв 1993; 1997, Арутюнова 1999]), this meaning is typical of some expressions with the verb *говорить* ('to say'), predicatives *слышно*, *похоже*, etc., and also constructions with *(как) будто (бы)* and some others. In [Летучий 2008] comparative constructions with conjunctions *как будто*, *будто*, *словно*, *как бы*, *как будто бы*, *будто бы* are considered in detail, as a source of units with the meaning of evidentiality.

One more interesting item is a new meaning of the pronominal *такой*: *А я такая: «Как тебя зовут?»* [And I'm like – what's your name?]. Sometimes it is considered as an evidential marker, because very often it precedes direct speech [Савчук 2011]. In my opinion it has a rather iconic function (a speaker wants the listener to vividly imagine what happened) and does not obligatory presuppose reported speech: *А я такая подхожу, беру сигарету и закурываю. Все в шоке* [And I'm like coming up, taking a cigarette and lighting it. All are shocked].

So we tried to show that xenomarkers in Russian are numerous, various and belong to different levels of language. They demand careful examination.

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