

A Study on the Use of Particles in Russian

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Abstract

The present paper is the study on the use of particles in Russian language. The particles in question were grouped into four main categories: semantic particles; formative particles; negative particles and auxiliary particles. Among the four types of particles, semantic particles such as demonstrative particles, affirmative particles, interrogative particles, emphatic particles, limitative particles, definite particles and exclamatory particles constitute a large part of Russian particles. All the particles were analysed in this paper by using the descriptive method. In Russian Grammar, most of the words in a sentence can change forms. Particles, however, remain in the same form since they are not the content words in the Russian sentence structure. Through this paper, it can be learnt that everyday Russian consists of particles and these participles have specific position and function in a sentence, which can decide that use of the participles. The data about participles and their use collected from the Russian prescribed texts such as *The Comprehensive Course of Russian Grammar* and *Russianbody* were given with examples.

Keywords: participles, position, function, everyday Russian

Introduction

Participles are words which constitute in everyday discourse of a language and they function as one of the main parts of speech of the language. Participles modify the meaning of a word in a sentence. In Russian, participles are the common constituents of spoken language. Some semantic participles such as *вот, это, даже, ведь, же, неужели, только, лишь, именно, какраз, ну, разве, and ли* pinpoint the emotions, thoughts and attitudes of the interlocutors in a conversation. Formative participles such as *давай, пускай, пусть, and бы* are used to suggest or persuade others to do something. Participles which are negatives such as *нет, не, and ни* are used to negate a word or a sentence. There are also particles which lack definite meaning of their own and they are known as auxiliary participles (e.g. *-то, -нибудь, кое-*). These auxiliary particles are used with interrogative pronouns and adverbs to talk about something or somewhere indefinite. With regard to their position in sentences, participles are usually placed at the beginning of a sentence, and either before or after a word they modify. Participles which are commonly found in everyday Russian lessons are affirmative participle- *Да*, and negative participles *Нет* and *Не*. For the present study, the focus was on such participles as well as others found in the Russian prescribed text books currently used in teaching Russian as a foreign language.

Aim

The aim of the study is to explore the Russian participles found in everyday conversations, and lessons, and their use in sentence construction with example sentences. It is hoped that learners of Russian language can have a better understanding of the participles in the language they are learning. With their sound understanding of the participles, the learners will be able to construct sentences and write dialogues in Russian correctly.

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Literature Review

The data for the study were collected from various sources such as Comprehensive Course Russian (2002), Грамматика Русского Языкав Упражненияхи Комментариях. Морфология (2007), books on Russian language and internet website. According to Грамматика Русского Языкав УпражненияхиКомментариях. Морфология (2007), participles are part of speech that modifies a word or a sentence. The book is currently prescribed as a text book for MA first year students studying Russian as a foreign language. The data were taken with reference to the books on Russian and Comprehensive Course Russian (2002) to identify the types of participles and their place in a sentence.

Materials and Method

The materials for the data were mostly prescribed text books for teaching Russian language (i.e. prescribed texts for BA Russian classes, MA Russian classes at Mandalay University of Foreign Languages), Грамматика Русского Языкав УпражненияхиКомментариях. Морфологияω Comprehensive Course Russian, Russian-Myanmar dictionaries and internet websites. A descriptive method is used to analyse the data into categories.

Research Questions

1. What are the most common participles in Russian?
2. Why are those participles more common than others?
3. Why do participles in Russian Grammar not change in form?

Finding and Discussion

There are a lot of particles in everyday Russian language. Particles are the words which emphasize the meaning of the words. They play an important role when talking about emotions and thoughts. There are four main types of particles in Russian ad they normally keep the same forms. Though some of the particles do not have any definite meaning of their own, their meaning can be interpreted with the help of the words around them. The function and the word formation of the particles are quite similar to those of adverbs and exclamation in nature.

1. Classification of Particles in Russian

There are four types of particles in Russian. They are semantic particles, formative particles, negative particles and auxiliary particles. The particles are classified as in the following table.

Разряды частиц category of particles	Частицы = Particles	оттенки значения shades of meaning
Смысловые частицы Semantic particles	вот = there, here, вон = there, over there , это = this is	указательные Demonstrative
	да = yes, действительно = indeed, really конечно = certainly , ещё бы = I'll say	утвердительные Affirmative
	ли = no meaning , разве = really, неужели = really?	вопросительные Interrogative
	же = ever, уж = so, be sure, даже = even ведь = is it? , так = so , всё-таки = still, however	усилительные Emphatic
	только = only , лишь = only , исключительно = solely, почти = almost , чудь-не = nearly	ограничительные Limitative
	именно = exactly , точно = true , как раз = just, просто = simply, прямо = really	Определительно- уточняющие Definite
	что за = what!, как = how! , ну и = there's ...!	восклицательные Exclamatory
Формообразующие частицы Formative Particles	давай = let us , пусть = let, may, бы = would	повелительное наклонения глагола imperativemood
Отрицательные частицы Negative Particles	нет = no , не = not, ни = not a	выражение отрицания express negation
Вспомогательные частицы Auxiliary Particles	- то, -нибудь, - либо, кое - = no meaning	новое слово New word

2. Semantic Particles

In Russian language, particles which indicate the meaning and sources of words used in the sentences (utterances) are termed as semantic particles. Semantic particles can be further divided into seven sub-categories: demonstrative particles, affirmative particles, interrogative particles, emphatic particles, limitative particles, definite participles and exclamatory particles.

2.1 Demonstrative Particles

Demonstrative particles are used to talk about places, things and persons in a sentence. *вот, вон, and это* are demonstrative particles in Russian and they are usually placed at the beginning of the sentence modifying either a phrase or the whole sentence. Their use in the sentences can be studied as shown in the following examples.

e.g. 1. **Вот = here is**

Вот ваш ключ *о* номер *з* *о* *л* на третьем этаже.

- Here is your key. It's Room 312 on Third floor.

2. Вон = overthere

Эти приятные комнаты. Где ванная?

Вон там.

- A: The rooms are nice. And, where is the bathroom?

B: Over there.

3. Это = thisis

Здравствуйте! Это говорит Владимир Попов, друг Марка.

- Good morning! This is Mark's friend Valadime speaking.

2.2. Affirmative Particles

To confirm about something, affirmative particles are used in Russian language. They are да, действительно, конечно, точно, ещё бы, and ну. Among them, да is mostly found in both spoken and written language. The examples below classify their use in the context.

e.g. 1. **Да = Yes**

Я много о вас знаю. Ну, например, я знаю, что вы замужем.

Вашему мужу 45 лет. Он работает в банке. Это так?

Да, это так.

- A: I know you well. You've got married. Your husband is 45 and he works in a bank. Is that right?

B: Yes, right.

2. Действительно = indeed, really

Ты знаешь, мне *действительно* нужно купить шапку.

- You know you really need a hat.

3. Конечно = of course , certainly

Вы свободны?

Конечно, садитесь, пожалуйста.

- A: Do you have some time?

B: Of course. Take a seat.

4. ещё бы = of course, I'll say!

Ещё бы! Ведь ты сам хорошо играешь в футбол.

- Of course, I'll say you can play football very well.

5. ну = well

А как мы друг друга узнаём?

Ну, я блондин высокого роста с бородой.

- A: Hey, how can we identify each other?

B: Well, I'm tall with blond hair and a beard.

2.3 Interrogative Particles

In everyday Russian language, interrogative particles are used to make questions without interrogative words. ли, разве, and неужели are interrogative particles in Russian. Of these, the particle ли does not have own meaning. In

Russian Grammar, *ли* is usually placed after a word in a sentence and then the sentence becomes a question conveying the meaning of the word the particle is used together. The particles *разве* and *неужели* have the same meaning and usually found at the beginning of a sentence. *разве* is used when the speaker wants to make sure something during a talk whereas *неужели* is used express a doubt by the speaker about something talked about.

e.g. 1 **ли - непереводится**

Сможет *ли* вы бросить мое письмо в почтовый ящик.

- Can you please send my letter to the mailbox, please?

2. **разве = really?**

Разве он приезжает в три часа?

- Will he really be here at 3?

3. **Неужели = really?, is it possible?**

Неужели этому дому столет?

- Is it possible that this house will last for a century?

2.4 Emphatic Particles

In order to give an emphasis on a word in a sentence or on an utterance, the speakers can use emphatic particles in Russian. Such emphatic particles are *даже*, *же*, *ведь*, *уж*, *так*, and *всё-таки*. The particle *даже* is usually found before the word which the speaker wants to emphasize. The other two particles *же* and *ведь* have similar meaning, the former being next to the word which needs emphasis while the latter being at any place in a sentence. The examples given below are the use of emphatic particles.

e.g. 1. **же = so**

Почему *же* ты не играешь?

- So why don't you play?

2. **уж = be sure**

Я не принимаю решения, это *уж* точно.

- It's sure I haven't decided yet.

3. **даже = even**

Это *даже* ребёнок понимает.

- Even a child can understand it.

4. **ведь = is it**

Почему ты меня не слушаешь, *ведь* желаю тебе только добра.

- Why don't you listen to me? It is my desire for you to be good.

5. **так = so**

Конечно. *Так* .. Дайте *оо* пожалуйста *оо*
ваш паспорт и водительские права.

- Ok, so could I have your passport and the driving license, please?

6. **всё-таки = still**

Вы мне *всё-таки* скажите, если я сделаю ошибку, хорошо?

- You are still here to correct me if I make mistakes, aren't you?

2.5 Limitative Particles

Particles used to limit the time, number and things being talked about in Russian are known as limitative particles. *только, лишь, исключительно, почти, and чутьне*. The particles *только* and *лишь* have similar meaning and their position in a sentence is usually before the word to describe the limitation. Example sentences are given as below.

e.g. 1. *только* = only

Я только посмотрел статью, но не успел внимательно прочитать.

- As I don't have much time, I only run through the article.

2. *лишь* = only

Лишь мы вышли из дома, пошёл дождь.

- It started to rain only when we went out of the house.

3. *исключительно* = solely

Окончательно решение будут принимать *исключительно* государства-участники.

- The decision will be made solely by the government officials.

4. *почти* = almost

Ты теперь говоришь по-русски *почти* без акцента.

- Now, you can almost speak like a native Russian.

5. *чуть не* = nearly , almost

Знаешь, вчера *чуть не* забыл твоей просьбе.

- You know I almost forgot what you have asked for yesterday.

2.6 Definite Particles

Definite particles modify the important matter in sentences and utterances in Russian. Some of them are quite similar to adverbs. What distinguishes between the definite particles and adverbs in Russian is their use in the sentence. *именно, точно, как раз, просто* and *прямо* are definite particles in Russian. They are never used in collocation with the words which show or express uncertainty. In interrogative sentences, *как раз* is not used with question words and conjunctions in one sentence. The following are the examples of the use of definite particles.

1. *именно* = exactly

Скажите мне, кто *именно* сообщил тебе об этом.

- Please, tell me who gave you information about this matter exactly.

2. *точно* = true

Бесконечность. Выправы. Абсолютно *точно*.

- It's true that you are always right.

3. *как раз* = just

Он пришёл *как раз* в то время, когда его ждали.

- He has just arrived while we are waiting for him.

4. *просто* = simply

Нет, я никуда не спешу, *просто* не хочу вас задерживать.

- No, I'm not in a hurry. I simply don't want you to be late.

2.7 Exclamatory Particles

In Russian sentences and utterances, exclamatory particles are used to express surprise, joy or terror of the speakers. *что*, *как*, *ну* are such particles to express exclamation. The examples are as follow.

e.g. 1. **что за = what!**

Что за ребёнок!

- What a child!

2. **как = how!**

Леон, *какая* радость тебя видеть!

- How glad I am to see you, Leo!

3. **ну и = there's ...!**

Ну и молодец!

- There it is! The clever child!

3. Formative particles

Formative particles are particles which change their form based on the situations they are used in, for example, for a request, commend, or suggestion. *давай*, *пусть*, *пускай*, *бы* and *-ка* are formative particles in Russian. The particle *-ка* is used in speech to express politeness. It is usually placed behind the verb to make the action sound polite. Another particle *бы* is used before or after a verb to express an imaginary situation. The particle *давай* has got its form from the verb *давать* and express a suggestion (e.g. Let's go.). The particles *пусть* and *пускай* have similar meaning and are used to make a wish or give a blessing. The following are the examples of formative particles.

e.g. 1. **Давай = let us**

Давай пойдём вместе.

- Let's go together.

2. **Пусть = let, may**

Пусть в Новом году исполнятся все ваши желания.

- May your wishes come true in the new year.

3. **бы = would**

Я бы хотела видеть его два года назад.

- I would really like to see him since two years ago.

4. **- ка = will you**

Закрой *-ка* окно.

- Will you please close the window?

4. Negative Particles

To say something is not true or to make a negation in sentences or utterances, negative particles are used in Russian. The negative particle *нет* is used to give a negative answer to an interrogative sentence. Another negative particle *не* is used before the word (either verb, noun, pronoun, or adverb) to express negation. Generally in negative sentences, the negative particle *ни* is used together with *не*. The examples for the use of negative particles are given as below.

e.g. 1. **Нет** = **No**

Добрый вечер. Вы из России?

Нет.

- A: Good evening. Are you from Russia?

B: No.

2. **Не** = **not**

Будьте добры, это самолёт летит до Москвы.

Незнаю.

- A: Excuse me. Is this the flight to Moscow?

B: I do not know.

3. **Ни** = **not a**

Не хочется **ни** есть **ни** пить.

- I do not want to eat or drink. (I have no appetite.)

5. Auxiliary Particles

The auxiliary particles in Russian are **-то**, **-нибудь**, **-либо**, and **кое**-. They do not have definition of their own. The particle **-то** is used when the speaker talks about something he is not sure or something he doesn't know. The particle **-нибудь** also shows uncertainty but the speaker can make out it is about something or someone among many others. The particle **кое**- is used when the speaker does not want to express something or when he thinks there is no need to express that thing. In Russian Grammar, only indefinite pronouns and adverbs, not the particles, in the sentences change in word forms. When the interrogative pronouns and adverbs are placed before or after the auxiliary particles, they change forms into indefinite pronouns and adverbs and become meaningful words in sentences.

e.g. кто - **то** (someone)

что - **нибудь** (something)

когда - **либо** (sometime)

кое - **где** (somewhere)

Particles are part of speech which constitutes everyday spoken and written language. Particles are the words which modify the other words in sentences and utterances. In Russian Grammar, among the six cases used in sentences, verbs, nouns, adjective, and pronouns change their word forms according to the context they are used. In the case of particles, they do not change forms since they are not the content words in sentences. Particles are just words which are used to help the speakers express their emotions, thoughts and attitudes. In Russian dialogues, the most common particles are affirmative particle **Да** and negative particles **Не** and **Нет**. The interrogative particle **ли** does not have original meaning but carries the meaning of the word before it, and it is used in questions depriving of question words. The auxiliary particles **-то**, **-нибудь**, **-либо**, and **кое**- do not have own meaning. When interrogative pronouns are placed before or after these auxiliary particles, they change forms as indefinite interrogative pronouns and adverbs which finally become meaningful in sentences. This paper is a study to report the particles in Russian language with reference to the prescribed texts to teach Russian as a foreign language.

Conclusion

As the present paper highlights the particles in Russian and their use in everyday language, it is hoped that the readers can have some benefits to construct the dialogues in Russian correctly. The particles are described in four main categories as semantic particles, formative particles, negative particles and auxiliary particles. Each category is further explained in details according to their sub-categories with examples. It can be learnt that in Russian language, particles are usually placed either before or after the words they modify, or right before the sentence. They do not change in forms in sentences. With this report in mind, the learners of Russian language will be able to learn the target language more effectively and appropriately.

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