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**On adaptation of Russian discourse
particles *ved'* and *že* in Eastern
Finno-Ugric languages**

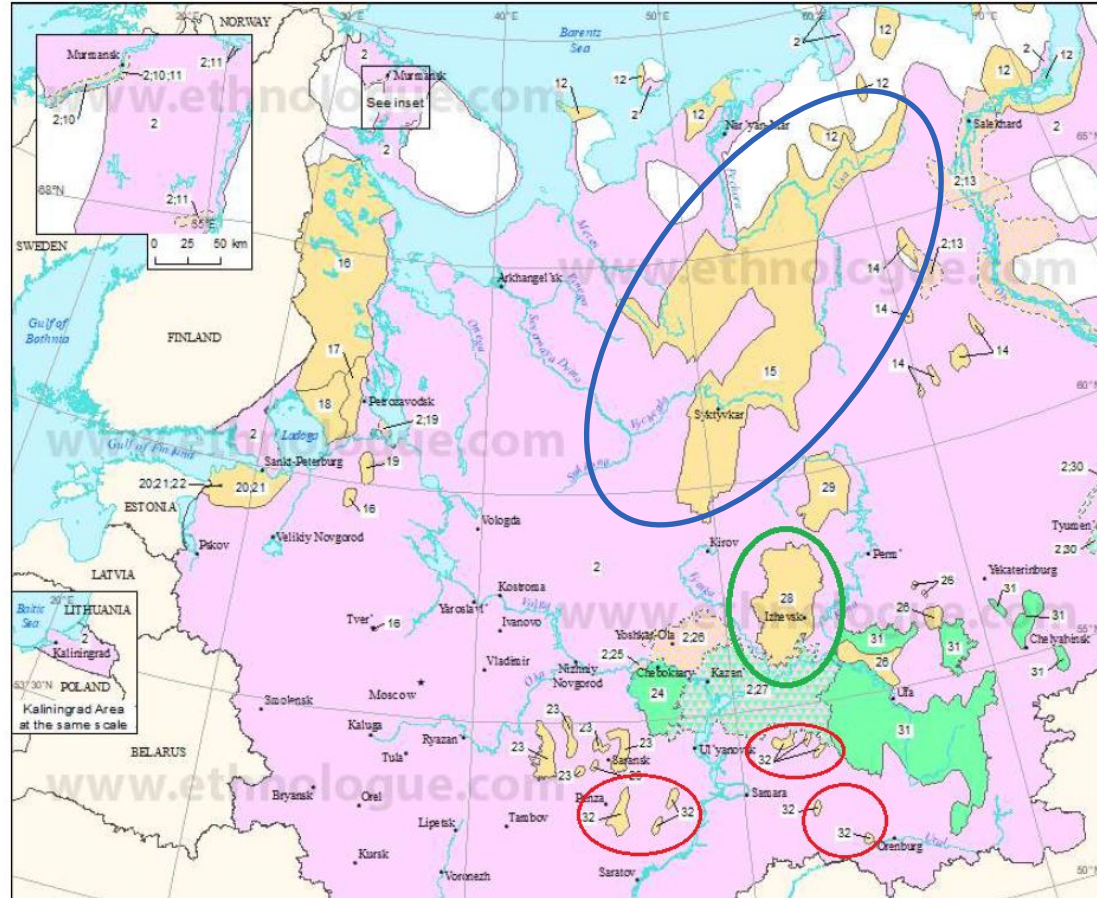
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Introduction

- There are two particles in Russian whose meaning is often analyzed together due to partial overlap: *ved'* and *že*.
- Russian particles *ved'* and *že* were borrowed by almost all Finno-Ugric languages that have been in close contact with Russian.
- This research looks at the model of adoption of the particles *ved'* and *že* in Udmurt, Komi-Zyrian (Permic, Uralic), and Erzya (Mordvinic, Uralic)



Some properties of *ved'* and *že* in Russian

=*že*: 3 520 words per million (RNC)

-Sentential:

- (1) *Ona spravitsja, ona že sposobnaja.*
'She can handle it, she's *že* capable' (Paducheva 2019: 340)

-Thematic (contrastive topic marker):

- (2) *Ivan rabotaet, Petr že ničego ne delaet.*
'Ivan is working, Petr *že* is doing nothing'.

-Phrasal (< Old Church Slavic *žde*, cf. Paducheva 2019):

- identity: *tot že* 'the same',
immediacy: *segodnja že* 'exactly today'

(Hagstrom & McCoy 2003 following Parrot 1997)

Some properties of *ved'* and *že* in Russian

ved'/=*ved'*: 653 words per million (RNC)

The particle *že* can substitute *ved'* in all its meanings (Paduceva 2019: 340):

(3) *Ona spravitsja, ona že/ved' sposobnaja.*
'She can handle it, she's *že/ved'* capable'
(adapted from Paduceva 2019)

The particles introduce «weak argument» (Paduceva 2019: 341);

Ved' marks the information that is a part of the common ground and of which the speaker reminds the hearer (Bonnola 2008).

Some properties of *ved'* and *že* in Russian

Panov (2020)...

...labels the particles *ved'* and *že* as ‘**enimitive**’, i.e. marking uncontroversial information:

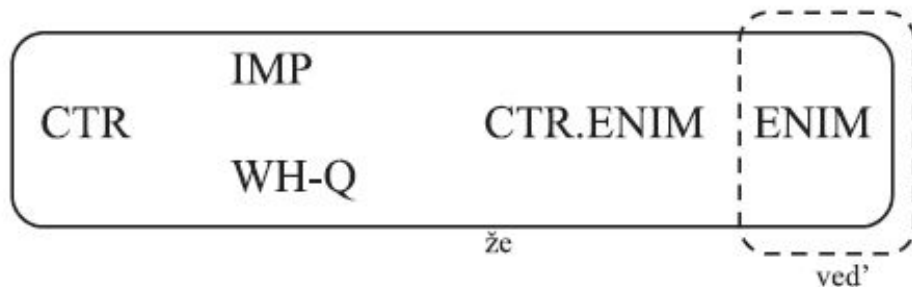
“the speaker [...] marks the proposition as uncontroversial [...] and] implies [...] that s/he expects the hearer to take the proposition which appears evident to him/herself into account in order to interpret better the surrounding context, and not to contradict.” (ibid.: 12)

...proposed enimitives to be a cross-linguistic category.

Panov's (2020) semantic map for enimitives

- Simple enimitive in declarative sentences
- Contrastive enimitive (argumentation, reminding, correction)
- Impatient imperatives
- Wh-question
- Contrastive ('though')

Polar questions are not discussed.



(Panov 2020: 26)

Ved' and *že* in Udmurt, Komi, Erzya, and Russian

Udmurt	<i>že</i> Corpus frequency, per million		<i>ved'</i> Corpus frequency, per million	
	15,88		111,78	
	Sentential +; thematic –; phrasal –			
Komi	<i>žö</i>	<i>že</i>	<i>öd</i>	<i>ved</i>
	4943	0,2	2409	126
	Sentential +; thematic +; phrasal –			
Erzya	<i>žo</i>	<i>že</i>	<i>eđ</i>	<i>ved'</i>
	2881	2,22	490	172
	Sentential +; thematic +; phrasal +			
Russian	3 520		653	

Autochthonous counterparts in Udmurt, Komi, and Erzya

	Declarative sentences	Non-declarative sentence
Udmurt	<i>uk</i>	<i>ben, ní, meda, aj</i>
Komi	<i>taj</i>	<i>bara, nö, eško</i>
Erzya	<i>eno</i>	

Research questions

1. Do borrowed particles have pragmatical and grammatical restrictions on being used in particular sentence types in recipient languages the same way as *ved'* and *že* in the source language (Russian)?
2. How do *ved'* and *že* interact with grammatical features that are lacking in Russian?
3. To what extent the usage of *ved'* and *že* in recipient languages is different from the usage of competing particles with similar functions?

Methodology

Questionnaire:

- Declaratives
- Polar questions
- Wh-questions
- Tag questions
- Exclamatives (wh-constructions)
- Orders (including impatient orders)
- Compatibility with the discourse marker ‘or what’

1. Translating sentences without particles from Russian into target languages.
2. Adding particles to the translated sentences.
3. Presenting the sentences with particles and context as multiple choice questions (including the option without particles).

Methodology

Respondents:

- 5 Udmurt
- 6 Komi(-Zyrian)
- 5 Erzya
- 3 Russian

All speakers are Udmurt/Komi/Erzya-Russian bilinguals.

The level of Standard language proficiency varies.

<i>ved'</i>	Russian	Udmurt (out of 5 responses)	Komi (out of 6 responses)	Erzya (out of 5 responses)
In an answer to polar question (positive/negative)	NO	2/3	2/3	1/0
Simple reason conjunction	NO	4	4	2
Polar question with a question particle	NO	NO	NO	N/A
Polar question of the type A-not A	N/A	NO	NO	NO
Wh-questions	NO	1	1	NO
Wh-exclamatives	1 out of 9	5	3	2
Wh-contradiction	NO	2	3	NO
orders	NO	2	NO	NO
'or what' marker	NO	1	NO	1

Polar questions

- In Russian, *ved'* and *že* in polar questions changes the force of question to “rhetorical” (McCoy 2003:124).
- Intonation is a default mean of forming a polar question in Russian

(4) Russian

On ved' / že priedet na svad'bu?
he VED' / ŽE come.PRF.NPST.3SG PREP wedding.F.SG.ACC
'He will come to the wedding, [won't he]?'

Content (wh-)questions

- In Russian, *ved'* in the second position is ungrammatical in constituent questions:
*Kogda *ved' on priedet?* ‘When will he come?’
- *Že* is appropriate in this context:
Kogda že on priedet? ‘When [in the world] will he come?’
- “The force of such questions is mostly rhetorical; the question is asked but no answer is expected, because in asking the question itself the speaker seems to presume that no (reasonable) answer is true.” (Hagstrom & McCoy 2003)

Polar questions with *že*

Russian polar questions with *že* «are not in fact *yes/no* questions at all. Rather, they are simply declaratives with *že* and a sort of “contradiction intonation”» (Hagstrom & McCoy 2003):

(5) *Èto že ne slomalos’?*

this ŽE NEG got.broken

‘This isn’t really broken, is it?’ (Hagstrom & McCoy 2003)

Polar questions

- “In Russian, however, there is no corresponding indicator of a yes-no question: the question is just like the declarative but for the intonation. Unfortunately, this leaves us with no way to tell for sure, but our account makes the (as far as we know, unverifiable) prediction that *že* is in fact impossible with a true yes-no question due to the fact that it would raise a contradictory presupposition (or at least a presupposition that the addressee holds directly contradictory beliefs).”
- The data of Udmurt, Komi, and Erzya help to test the prediction.

Polar questions with and without question particle

Udmurt

(6a) Q-particle is obligatory

So *vu-o-z=a* **ved' / *že / *uk?*

that come-FUT-3SG=**Q** PTCL

(6b) without Q-particle

So *vuoz* *⁵ved' / ³že / ⁵uk?*

that come-FUT-3SG PTCL

'He will come, [won't he]?'

Polar questions with and without question particle

Komi

(6c) Q-particle is optional

*Loktas=ö *öd/*ved/žö sijö?*

come.FUT.3SG=Q PTCL 3SG

(6d) without Q-particle

Sijö öd/ved loktas?

3SG PTCL come.FUT.3SG

‘He will come, [won’t he]?’

Polar questions with and without question particle

(6e) Erzya: no Q-particle

Son ³*ed* / ³*žo* / ³*eno* *si?*

3SG PTCL come.PRS.3SG

‘He will come, [won’t he]?’

A-not A questions

In Komi, polar questions may be formed by cliticizing a form of the negative auxiliary on the finite verb (Bartens 2000: 346).

(8) Komi

Voaz **ved/*taj/že* *oz?*
come.FUT.3SG PTCL NEG.FUT.3SG

‘Will he come or not?’

Doesn't allow for either *VED'* or *taj*; possible with *ŽE*.

A-not A questions

- All three languages exploit a strategy of the type ‘A-not A’ to form a polar question (sometimes classified as disjunctive question)
- In Udmurt, this construction is obligatorily formed by attaching the question particle to the element in the question focus and the negative verb (thus, the construction looks like ‘A-*a* not A-*a*’):

(7) Udmurt (Udmurt duńńe, 2014.08.28)

Kelše=a ug=a so tynyd?
like.PRS.3SG=Q NEG=Q DEM 2SG.DAT

‘Do you like it or not?’

Doesn’t allow for either *ved’*, *že*, *uk*.

A-not A questions

In Erzya, this construction does not allow for *VED'* or *ŽE*; however, some informants find the variant with autochthonous *eno* possible: the speaker emphasizes their impatience.

(9) Erzya

²*Eno* *si* *a* *si* *son* (**eđ*/**žo*)?

PTCL come.PRS.3SG NEG come.PRS.3SG 3SG PTCL

‘Will he come or not?’

Possible explanation

The particles *VED'* and *ŽE* in recipient languages are ungrammatical in polar questions when the question operator is expressed lexically (a particle) or syntactically (A-not A).

- *ŽE* has contradictory meaning: speaker assuming that the **addressee thinks that *p*** and **contradicts that non-*p*** using contradictory/question intonation (Hagstrom & McCoy 2003). In true question, when the question operator is expressed lexically or syntactically, the speaker doesn't express any assumptions as to what the addressee thinks of *p*.

Possible explanation

- *VED'* doesn't have the contradictory meaning. Rather the marking of p as belonging to the common ground can explain the restrictions.
- In true questions, question operators can only be used if the proposition does not belong to the common ground (making a request to update the common ground).
- In polar questions with *VED'*, the speaker suggests that p and it belongs to the common ground.
- This can also explain inability of *VED'* to occur in wh-questions.

Possible explanations

In Russian, in case of lexically expressed question operator *li* (which is not a default but a possible way of forming a question), the speaker does not show “a preference to one of the alternatives” (Merkulova 1998: 337). This semantic component blocks the usage of *ved'* as the element that strongly suggests the speaker's preference for the alternative expressed in a sentence as the speaker has reasons to think that this alternative holds.

(10a) *Ne priedet li *ved'/*že on na svad'bu?*
NEG come.PRF.NPST.3SG Q PTCL he PREP wedding.F.ACC.SG
'Won't he come to the wedding?'

(10b) *On ved'že ne priedet na svad'bu?*
he PTCL NEG come.PRF.NPST.3SG PREP wedding.F.ACC.3SG
'He won't come to the wedding, right?'

Wh-questions

In Russian, *ved'* in the second position is ungrammatical in constituent questions:

- (11) *Kogda *ved' on priedet?*
'When will he come?'

In Udmurt, except for one consultant, all respondents marked this sentence as ungrammatical:

- (12) *Ku so lyktoz ¹ved'/¹uk?*
'When will he come VED'/UK?'

One Udmurt respondent allows to use *VED'* in wh-questions: in the respondent's idiolect, the functions of *ved'* merged with the functions of *že* (can be used in wh-questions indicating speaker's impatience:

- (13) Russian
Kogda že on priedet?
when ŽE he come.PRF.NPST.3SG
'When *že* will he come? [I've been waiting for so long!]

Wh-questions

In Komi, except for one consultant, all respondents marked this sentence as ungrammatical.

(14) *Kor* ¹*öd*[^]*ved* *sijö voas?*
'When will he come?'

The Komi respondent who opted for *VED'* in wh-questions commented that there's no connotation of speaker's impatience. We assume that the function of *VED'* was perceived as a that of Russian sentence-initial *ved'* **wh-questions** which is possible when “starting a complex argumentative block” (Bonnot & Kodzasov 1998:442).

Wh-questions

In Erzya, all respondents agreed that it is not possible to use *VED'* in wh-questions.

However, for the majority of respondents, the autochthonous *eno* is an acceptable option:

(15) *Žardo *ed'/eno son si?*

when PTCL 3SG come.PRS.3SG

‘When *VED'/ENO will he come?’

Conclusions

1. There are two types of polar questions in recipient languages - exploiting lexical or syntactic means and exploiting intonation only. The particles *VED'* and *ŽE* are allowed only in the latter case (although for different reasons).

A typological question: are particles indicating uncontroversiality compatible with polar question operators across languages?

2. In case of wh-questions, we observed a case of *VED'* acquiring the functions of *ŽE* in Udmurt dialectal use (& in some Komi idiolects).
3. In Erzya, the autochthonous particle *eno* was opted for in many cases where *VED'* or *ŽE* were rejected; the rejection cannot always be explained by syntactic and pragmatic restrictions.

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RNC = Russian National Corpus 2003-2021. <https://ruscorpora.ru>

Western Russian Federation. Map. Ethnologue.Languages of the world. <https://www.ethnologue.com/>

Appendix: additional results

1. Udmurt and Komi have specific autochthonous particles for “impatient imperatives”; Erzya uses the autochthonous particle *eno* often overlapping in functions with *ved'* and *že*.
2. *VED'* in wh-exclamatives (*Kakoj ved' on idiot!* ‘What an idiot he is!’) is strongly accepted in Udmurt, accepted by half of respondents in Komi and not accepted in Erzya. We assume this fact to reflect the dialectal varieties of Russian that were acquired by recipient languages.
3. In Komi and Erzya literary texts, *VED'* is used as a simple reason conjunction.