

Razve-questions in Russian

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- ▶ Overview of *razve*-questions in Russian
 - Strong negative bias in conflicting-evidence scenarios (belief revision)
 - Rhetorical polar questions
- ▶ Focused comparison with Italian *mica* (Frana and Rawlins 2019)
- ▶ Several issues related to research on bias/CG management operators (Gutzmann and Castro-viejo Miró 2011; Repp 2013)

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

- ▶ *Wh*-questions in Slavic: well-studied in the context of multiple *wh*-movement (Rudin 1988 a.o.)
 - ▶ Polar questions: less research even on syntax (though see Schwabe 2004; Dukova-Zheleva 2010)
 - ▶ Polar question formation in Russian (NB: word order not fixed, reflects information structure)
 - Rising intonation: only matrix clauses
 - Particle *li* (possibly related to other Q-particles in the sense of Szabolcsi 2015)
 - second-position clitic, likely C₀ (Franks and King 2000:349-357)
 - placement signals focus, similar to Turkish *mi* (Kamali and Krifka 2020)
 - obligatory only in embedded polar questions (unlike e.g. Bulgarian)
- (1) a. Ty ljubish kapustu? ↑ [matrix PQ]
you love.2SG.PRES cabbage.ACC
'Do you like cabbage?'
- b. Ljubish li ty kapustu? ↑ [matrix PQ]
love.2SG.PRES Q you cabbage.ACC
'Do you like cabbage?'
- c. *Masha sprashivaet, ty ljubish kapustu. [embedded PQ]
Masha ask.3SG.PRES you love.2SG.PRES cabbage.ACC
Intended: 'Masha asks if you like cabbage'
- d. Masha sprashivaet, ljubish li ty kapustu. [embedded PQ]
Masha ask.3SG.PRES love.2SG.PRES Q you cabbage.ACC
'Masha asks if you like cabbage.'

- (7) a. Gde ty byla? [wh-q]
 where you be.FEM.SG.PST
 'Where have you been?'
 b. ***Razve** gde ty byla? [wh-q + razve]
 RAZVE where you be.FEM.SG.PST
- (8) *Masha sprashivaet, razve ty ljubish kapustu. [embedded razve]
 Masha ask.3SG.PRES RAZVE you love.2SG.PRES cabbage.ACC
 Intended: 'Masha asks if you like cabbage.'

► *Razve*-clauses are interrogative

- Like PQs, they license *nibudj*-pronouns, otherwise banned in simple declaratives without suitable quantifiers (Yanovich 2005)
- Like PQs, they license bare *wh*-indefinites, marked in Russian but possible in some non-veridical contexts (Tretyakova 2020)
- Like PQs, they have rising intonation

- (9) a. **Razve** vas kto-nibudj uzhe priglshal v Ameriku?
 razve you.ACC someone already invite.MASC.SG.PST to America
 ≈ 'No one has already suggested your going to America, have they?'
 (Dostoevsky "The Brothers Karamazov", Ruscorpora)
- b. *Kto-nibudj/✓kto-to uzhe priglshal menja v Ameriku.
 someone already invite.MASC.SG.PST me to America
 'Someone has already suggested my going to America'.

► Has another life in exceptive constructions, combined with the complementizer *chto*: nominal exceptives and exceptive conditionals

(10) Nominal exceptives

Zapomnilisj iz togo poxoda **razve** chto medvedi i
 remember.PASS.PL.PST from that.PREP trip.PREP RAZVE that bear.NOM.PL and
 klouny.
 clown.NOM.PL
 'I remember only bears and clowns from that trip.'
 = 'I remember nothing from that trip except bears and clowns.'

(Ruscorpora)

(11) Exceptive conditionals

Vrjad li CB RF pojdyot na masshtabnye
 unlikely Q Central.Bank Russian.Federation go.3SG.PRES on massive.ACC.PL
 intervencii— **razve** chto esli naselenie nachnyot v panike
 intervention.ACC.PL RAZVE that if population.NOM start.3SG.PRES in panic.PREP
 izbavljatsja ot rublej.
 get.rid.of.INF from ruble.GEN.PL
 'Unless households start selling rubles in panic, the central bank is unlikely to intervene heavily'.
 = 'The central bank is unlikely to intervene, except if households start selling rubles.'

(Ruscorpora)

► Ideally: derive the link between bias and exceptives in a non-arbitrary way; task for the future

2 Negative bias

2.1 Types of bias

► Previous descriptions

- Incredulity question particle (Shvedova et al. 1980:386-390)
- Likened to English tag-questions (Shmelev 2015)
- Negative bias, but only based on combination with negation *razve ne* (Geist and Repp 2021)

► Novel data: as far as bias goes, very similar to Italian *mica* (Frana and Rawlins 2019)

- Obligatory bias: out in neutral contexts
- Only negative bias: out in positive bias scenarios
- Good in conflicting-evidence scenarios: bias for $\neg p$, contextual evidence for p

(12) Interview context (out of the blue)

- a. Ordinary PQ (Frana and Rawlins 2019:ex.28a)

(#Veramente) È laureato?
 (#Really) be.3sg graduate?
 'Do you (#really) have a college degree?'

- b. Mica PQ (Frana and Rawlins 2019:ex.35); #*razve*

#Mica è laureato?
 MICA be.3sg graduate?

(13) Typical *mica*-question (Frana and Rawlins 2019:ex.3); ✓*razve*

A: I know that Alex hates me and tomorrow there's gonna be big drama.
 B: Non sei #(mica) stato invitato alla sua festa a sorpresa?
 'You aren't invited to his surprise party, are you?' (roughly)

(14) **Positive bias context** (Sp expected p , evidence for $\neg p$)

Clara invites Miles for drinks late in the evening and tells him to come after dinner. When he gets there, Miles asks if she has any food. Clara asks him:

- a. Italian: Negative PQ (Frana and Rawlins 2019:ex.33)

Non hai già mangiato? ('Didn't you eat already?')

- b. Italian: *mica* PQ (Frana and Rawlins 2019:ex.33)

#Mica hai già mangiato?
 MICA have.2sg already eaten?

- c. Russian: #*razve*

#**Razve** ty uzhe poel?
RAZVE you already eat.MASC.SG.PST
 Intended: 'Didn't you eat already?'

- d. Russian: ✓*vedj* (or *razve*+negation, see below)

Ty **vedj** uzhe poel?
 you VEDJ already eat.MASC.SG.PST
 'Did't you eat already?'
 = Sp thinks Ad already ate.

- Possible belief revision situation: bias for $\neg p$, evidence for p (F&R dub it “epistemic conflict”; I believe it’s a misnomer, see below)

- Conversational evidence (Ad’s commitment; cf. [Gunlogson 2003](#) on rising declaratives)
- Contextual evidence (not necessarily linguistic)

(15) **Negative bias context, conversational evidence for p** (from F&R)

Alex is throwing a party and invited us both. You and Alex hate each other and I expect you would not attend the party. While we are on the phone, you say: “I am looking forward to seeing you at the party”. I ask you:

- a. English
Are you really going to Alex’s party?/Are you GOING to Alex’s party?
([Frana and Rawlins 2019:ex.25](#))
- b. Italian
Mica PQ (see ex.(13) above, [Frana and Rawlins’s \(2019\) ex.3](#))
- c. Russian
Razve ty pojdziesz k Aleksu?
RAZVE you go.2SG.PRES to Alex.DAT
≈ ‘You’re not going to Alex’s, are you?’

(16) **Negative bias context, contextual evidence for p** (from F&R)

Clara invites Miles for dinner and makes clear to him that she will prepare her best dishes. When he gets there, Miles barely touches any food. Clara asks:

- a. English
Did you really eat already?
✓ Oh no, you didn’t eat already, did you? ([Frana and Rawlins 2019:fn.16](#))
- b. Italian
Mica hai già mangiato? ([Frana and Rawlins 2019:ex.34](#))
- c. Russian
Razve ty uzhe poel?
RAZVE you already eat.MASC.SG.PST

- Additional properties of *mica*, not shared by *razve*

- Used in negative assertions as denial/rectification; non-exceptional *razve* limited to questions
- Embeddable in attitudes (but not under question-embedders)
- Used in bias scenarios without evidential conflict: confirmation/double-checking

(17) *Mica*-denial

- A: Mario cried when his girlfriend broke up with him.
S: Non é vero. M. **mica** ha pianto quando lei l’ha lasciato.
NEG is true. M. MICA has cried when she him-has left.
‘That’s not true. Mario DIDN’T cry when she left him!’

([Frana and Rawlins 2019:ex.9a](#))

(18) **Negative bias, neutral evidence**

Your mother doesn't want you to hang out with me. We still want to hang out, but to avoid trouble I asked you to not tell her when you come over. As I open the door to you, I get a bit paranoid and I ask you: (expectation: you didn't tell)

a. Italian: *mica* PQ

Mica hai detto a tua madre che venivi qui?

MICA have.2sg said to your mother that come.2sg here

'You didn't tell your mother that you were coming over, right?'

(Frana and Rawlins 2019:ex.36)

b. Russian: #*razve* (only *vedj*+negation or some other particle)

Razve ty skazala svoej mame, chto ja pridu?

RAZVE you say.FEM.SG.PST REFL mother.DAT that I come.1SG.PRES

► NB: Another possible typological parallel: German *etwa* (Gieselman and Caponigro 2013; Xu 2017)

► Summary

	Russian <i>razve</i>	English <i>really</i>	Italian <i>mica</i>	German <i>etwa</i>
declaratives	#	✓	✓	#
clausal complements	#	#	✓	#
positive bias (any kind)	#	#	#	#
negative bias; neutral evidence	#	#	✓	?
negative bias; conflicting conversational evidence	✓	✓	✓	✓
negative bias; conflicting contextual evidence	✓	#	✓	?
any chance uses	#	#	✓	✓
rhetorical uses	✓	#	#	✓

2.2 **Negation in negative bias**

► Negation isn't real (much like high negation in negative questions in English and German; cf. Romero and Han 2004); *mica* behaves similarly

— Does not license negative *ni*-indefinites or genitive of negation

— Does not anti-license PPIs (such as disjunction *ili*, Szabolcsi 2002)

(19) Ungrammatical without negation

Razve ty *(ne) chitala nikakix knig po epistemologii?

RAZVE you NEG read.FEM.SG.PST any.GEN.PL book.GEN.PL on epistemology.DAT

≈ 'Haven't you read any books on epistemology?'

(20) Fixed scope with ordinary negation in declaratives: only OR > NEG, $(\neg A) \vee (\neg B)$

Razve ona govorit po-nemecki ili po-franzuski?

RAZVE she speak.3SG.PRES German or French

≈ 'She doesn't speak German or French, does she?'

= Sp was not expecting that she speaks one of the languages. (bias for NEG > OR)

= Sp was expecting that she speaks neither. (bias for OR > NEG)

2.3 Interaction with ordinary negation

- Interaction with negation: *razve* can co-occur with ordinary negation
- Unclear if negative questions without *razve* can be biased
- *Razve*+negation: can have both inner and outer readings (Geist and Repp 2021)

(21) **Positive bias context** (Sp expected p , evidence for $\neg p$)

Sp wants to go to the Hampshire Mall and has been told that the B43 stops there. While on route, the bus goes past what the speaker thought was the stop. Sp asks the driver:

- a. (What are you doing?) Doesn't this bus stop at the Hampshire Mall? [OuterNeg]
Sp had prior expectation that the bus stopped here (p) and thinks driver may have skipped the stop, so is double-checking the prior expectation that p .
- b. (Oh no!) Does this bus not stop at the Hampshire Mall? [InnerNeg]
Sp had a prior expectation that the bus stops there (p) and now thinks she may have been wrong, so is double-checking the implied inference that $\neg p$.

(adapted from Frana and Rawlins 2019:ex.42)

(22) **Razve** etot avtobus zdesj ne ostanavlivaetsja?

RAZVE this bus.NOM.SG here NEG stop.3SG.PRES

'This bus doesn't stop here, does it?'

or 'This bus stops here, doesn't it?'

3 Falsum

► *Razve*

- Clearly a CG management operator in the sense of Repp (2013)
- Signals a meta-conversational move

► Bias: commonly analyzed via VERUM/FALSUM operators (Romero and Han 2004 and later work)

(23) $\llbracket \text{VERUM} \rrbracket^{c,w} = \lambda p.p$

Defined for p, c, w only if $\forall w' \in \text{EPIST}_{x,w} : (\forall w'' \in \text{CONV}_{x,w'} : (p \in \text{CG}_{w''}))$

X is sure that, in all worlds satisfying their conversational goals, p is in CG.

(24) $\llbracket \text{FALSUM} \rrbracket^{c,w} = \lambda p.\neg p$

Defined for p, c, w only if $\forall w' \in \text{EPIST}_{x,w} : (\forall w'' \in \text{CONV}_{x,w'} : (p \notin \text{CG}_{w''}))$

X is sure that, in all worlds satisfying their conversational goals, p is not in CG.

(F&R connect x to Origo, term from evidential literature; see below)

(25) F&R's semantics for *mica* (FALSUM-based)

$\llbracket [Q[mica[p]]] \rrbracket^{c,w} = \{p, \neg p\}$

Defined if $\forall w' \in \text{EPIST}_{Sp(c),w} : (\forall w'' \in \text{CONV}_{Sp(c),w'} : (p \notin \text{CG}_{w''}))$

Sp is sure that, in all worlds w satisfying their conversational goals, p is not in CG.

► **Issue 1: type of bias**

- Bias is a pre-existing belief, not knowledge
- Should use DOX instead
- Using epistemic alternatives makes wrong predictions: question can't be information-seeking if Sp knows the answer

► **Issue 2: Sp's attitude informational status**

- Semantics above: bias as a presupposition
- Gutzmann and Castroviejo Miró (2011); Xu (2017): bias as new NAI
- Main problem: diagnostics!
- Sp's attitude (certainty/uncertainty) can't be challenged
- Non-challengeability: diagnoses propositional anaphora rather than at-issueness across the board (Jasinskaja 2016; Snider 2017; Koev 2018)
- Self-attributions (such as 1-person mental states): not-challengeable for non-linguistic reasons (Bar-On 2004), evidential expressions fall into that category (Korotkova 2016a, 2020a)
- Still: bias can be a type of hedging

(26) A. Tom really is tired.

B. That's not true.

= He isn't.

≠ You're not sure.

(Frana and Rawlins 2019:ex.60)

(27) F&R: **incorrect** assessment of such examples

Epistemic modals are about group knowledge (Hacking 1967 and later work)

Sp's individual knowledge: never challengeable, even with overt expressions *For all I know*

A. The keys have to be in the car.

B. No, they don't have to be, they might be somewhere else. (Frana and Rawlins 2019:ex.59)

► **Issue 3: Perspectival anchoring**

- Whose bias?
- Typically, bias is described as Sp's attitude
- Romero and Han (2004) (and much later work): VERUM anchored to Ad in questions (Sp's bias arises as an inference)
- F&R: bias in context of Interrogative Flip
- Interrogative Flip: perspectival recentering in questions (term from Tenny 2006), *can* affect everything except true indexicals (Korotkova 2020b)
- Expectation that VERUM/FALSUM undergo flip: only if perspectival shift achieved via unselective binding from the speech act operator (Speas and Tenny 2003; Zu 2018; Krifka 2019)
- But what if NCQs have a different syntax?
- More to think about here (Korotkova 2016b; Korotkova & Anand in progress)

- Given *razve*'s similarity to *mica*, it looks very much like a case of FALSUM + evidential presupposition (Geist and Repp 2021 seem to say as much, but for *razve*+negation)
- NB: how is different from expressions of surprise then? (aka mirativity) Is it the case that expressions of surprise aren't information-seeking, unlike even biased questions?

4 Rhetorical uses

- *Razve*: very common in rhetorical polar questions (Bulgarian *nima* seems to behave very similarly, own data + remarks in [Tisheva 2001](#); also German *etwa*, [Caponigro and Sprouse 2007](#); [Xu 2017](#))

(28) S Bogom **razve** posporish?
 NEG.BIAS I express.SG.M.PST admiration.ACC
 ≈ ‘You won’t argue with God, will you?’ (*Ruscorpora*)

(29) a. **Razve** ja vyrazil vosxischenie?
 NEG.BIAS I express.SG.M.PST admiration.ACC
 ≈ ‘I didn’t express any delight, did I?’
 b. Larger context:
 A: The foreign agent expressed his delight with Moscow.
 B: I expressed delight?
 C: No sir, you didn’t express any delight.
 B: Then what is this man saying?
 C: He just lied! (adapted from Bulgakov’s “The Master and Margarita”)

- How to differentiate between negative bias and rhetoricity?
 - Both types of Qs can be answered
 - Both types of Qs steer the conversation in one direction
 - RhQs: no belief revision
 - RQs: Sp knows the answer (not just believes $p/\neg p$)
 - Very likely: intonation (cf. [Braun et al. 2018](#) on German); no prosodic data yet, but punctuation *may* be suggestive of rhetorical uses
- Typical views on RhQs ([Caponigro and Sprouse 2007](#); [Biezma and Rawlins 2017](#))
 - Answer is known to Sp
 - Answer already in the CG / obvious to Ad / should be obvious to Ad
 - Raise singleton issue (unlike PQs): a different semantic object

- How to square the FALSUM-based analysis of biased Qs with RhQs? Maybe rhetoricity comes about only in contexts that support it (Sp does know the answer), rather being hard-wired as with English *after all* and German *schon*?

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