

Psycholinguistics, Experimental Syntax, and Syntactic Theory of Russian

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Since the introduction of formal experimental methods to syntactic theory (Cowart, 1997; Schütze, 1996) implemented in experimental syntax (Myers, 2009; Sprouse et al., 2016), there is an ongoing debate about what experimental methods can tell us about syntactic theory. On the one hand, informal grammaticality judgments traditionally used in theoretical syntax are the necessary starting point for a systematic reflection on linguistic phenomena (Phillips, 2010). On the other, formal methods may be necessary to give us more precise and stable tools for developing the empirical basis of theories and thus significantly contribute to establishing these theories. However, a complete switch from informal judgments to formal experiments is costly in terms of time and money.

In this talk, I will explore a potential contribution of formal experimental data from adult participants to morphosyntactic theories by applying Sprouse's (2016) experimental syntax framework to Russian. In Study 1, *Wh-Movement vs. Scrambling*, I will compare a syntactic explanation of filler-gap dependencies with an explanation from another cognitive system. In Study 2, *Gender Prediction*, I will present online empirical evidence for restructuring of the category of grammatical gender in heritage Russian. Finally, in Study 3, *Genitive of Negation*, I will discuss preliminary data from a factorial design experiment with a large sample that investigates constraints on usage of the genitive of negation in modern Russian.