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The Errors in Russian Agreement and Case Government made by French-speaking Students

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ABSTRACT

To study the acquisition of Russian agreement and government, we conducted two studies:

1. the study of the errors in agreement and case government in Russian.
2. the study of errors in the endings of nouns taking into account the correct forms.

Moreover, we compare errors made by French students with errors of Russian-speaking monolingual children.

CORPUS

The working corpus includes 61 students aged 17 to 26. This corpus is collected in the Russian Learner Corpus (RLC, <http://www.web-corpora.net/RLC/>).

Study	A1	A2	B1	B2	Total words
1	2006	1988	2014	922	6930
2	777	1414	626	149	2966

ANNOTATION

Though the study relies on the RLC's error annotation system, we modified it for easier and more comfortable analysis of our data.

Type of error	Example
AgrCase (error in case agreement)	Я слушаю уроки и я играю с мой другом. (#5899, Alexis, A2) N / I
AgrNum (error in number agreement)	Спасибо большое, что помогаешь, тебя очень понравится это мероприятия . (#6592, Jade, A1) pl / sg
AgrGender (error in gender agreement)	Сегодня я иду в аэропорту а небо солнечный . (#8770, Paul, A1) m / n
AgrPers (error in person agreement)	Часто я катается на коньках. (#5797, Sarah, A1) 2 sg / 1 sg
Gov (error in government without preposition)	Я собираюсь и жду на диване мой сосед по комнате. (#5894, Jude, A2) N / G
Case (case error in government with preposition)	Я готову ужи с соседей на комнате. (#5901, Louise, A2) c G / c I
Extra (extra preposition)	Волк открывает машину для медведам . (#3756, Marion, B1) для D / D
Miss (missing preposition)	Римляне ностальгировали золотого века . (#5940, Jean-François, B1) G / o L
Subst (incorrectly chosen preposition and, possibly, case)	Когда я не хожу в уроку , я занимаюсь в библиотеке. (Louise, A2) в D / на A

STUDY 1

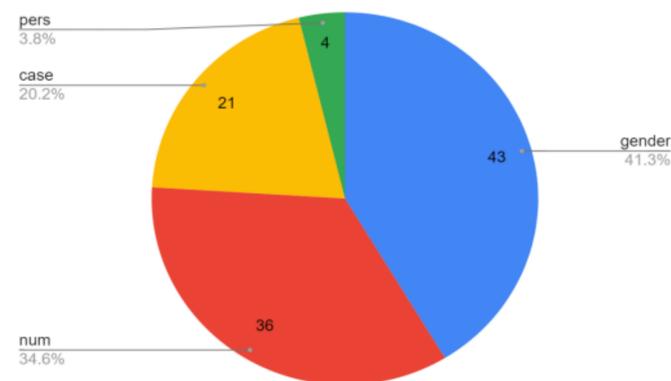


Chart 1. Distribution of errors by type of agreement.

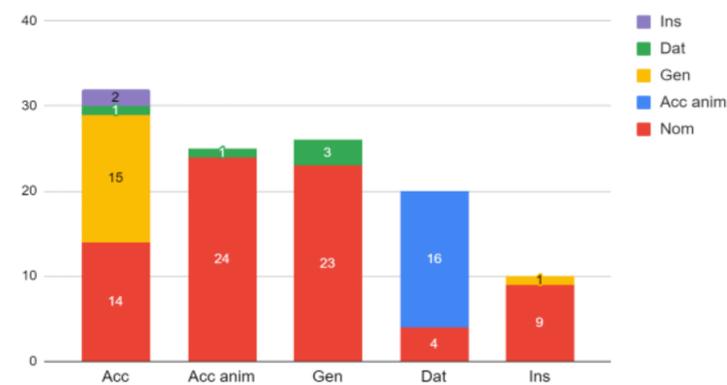


Chart 2. Distribution of errors in government without preposition.

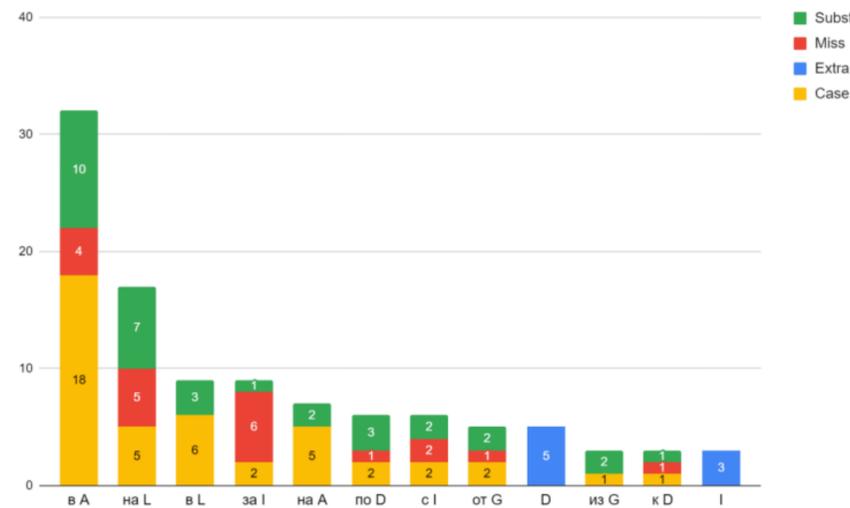


Chart 3. Distribution of errors in government with preposition.

STUDY 2

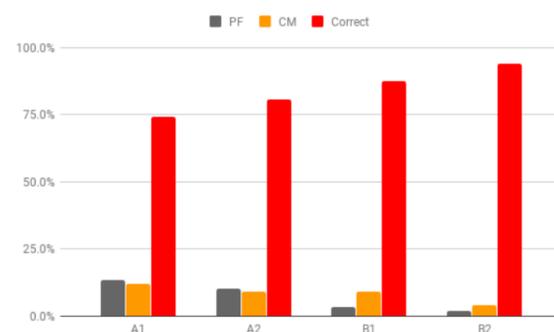


Chart 4. Distribution of the correct use of cases and errors.
PF - incorrectly used nominative
CM - incorrect case (not nominative)
Correct - correct case

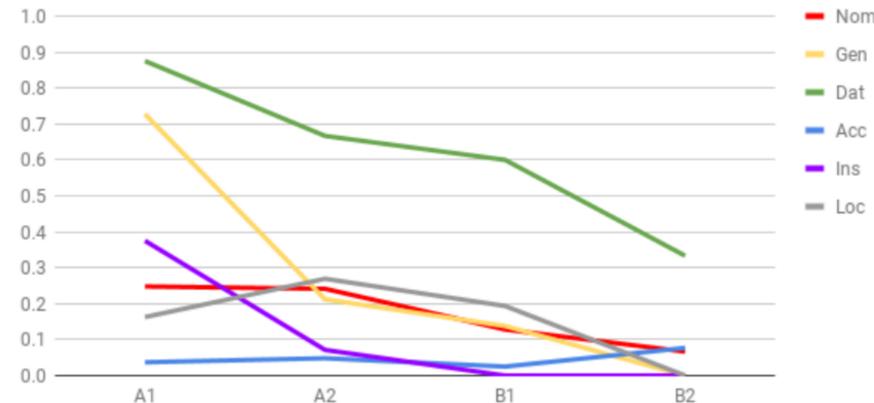


Chart 5. Distribution of errors in each case (the proportion of incorrectly used cases to all uses).

CONCLUSION

1. There are fewer errors in agreement than in government.
2. There are more errors in gender and number than in case and person.
3. Errors in person agreement are made only at the A1 level.
4. Errors in gender are more often made in adjectives, and in number and case in nouns.
5. Students use the nominative in more than half of the erroneous cases.
6. Students often confuse the accusative and locative in constructions of direction and place.
7. Students' case errors, as in case of Russian monolingual children, are caused by an incorrectly chosen gender or declension of a noun.
8. The distribution of correct forms becomes similar to the distribution from The Russian National Corpus.
9. The number of errors in cases is gradually decreasing.
10. The dative is the most problematic case for our experimental group. This is probably due to the fact that it is used less often and therefore is not practiced enough in the classroom.

FUTURE PLANS

During our work, we have a lot of questions and ideas for further research. Firstly, it would be interesting to mark up a larger corpus of texts and to conduct a full-fledged analysis of balanced corpora equally distributed by levels of proficiency in Russian in order to be able to find trends in the acquisition of Russian as a foreign language and to conduct a statistical analysis of the influence of various factors on language acquisition. Secondly, we would like to look at the number of correct forms and incorrect ones in larger corpus. For example, to find out whether there are actually more words of the first declension of the feminine than the masculine in the corpus. Thirdly, it is necessary to mark up errors for their sources (interference, the influence of context, etc.) and by the semantics of cases, to see with which verbs, in which constructions students most often make mistakes. All this would allow us to obtain more accurate data that would show trends in the acquisition of the Russian language by Francophone students at various levels.

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