

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18454/RULB.2023.41.20>**PARTICLE ‘TOCH’NO’ IN RUSSIAN FOR FOREIGNERS: A FUNCTIONAL AND COMMUNICATIVE  
APPROACH**

Research article

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**Abstract**

The article discusses the problem of meaning and functioning of the particle *toch’no* (точно) in the teaching of Russian for foreigners. The necessity of such analysis and formation of natural use of particles is determined by the educational program of teaching Russian as a foreign language at the advanced levels of studies. Utterances with particles imply subjectivity, expressiveness and demonstrate the speaker’s attitude towards the described event. Analysis of the particle *toch’no* focuses on its syntactical peculiarities, co-occurrence with other particles in the structure of the utterance, importance of intonational accentuation of the utterances containing *toch’no*. The study of this particle broadens foreign students’ vocabulary, develops their ability to use synonyms both in oral and written speech, teaches how to use intonation in the corresponding pragmatic situations.

**Keywords:** Russian for foreigners, particles, functioning, communicativeness.**ЧАСТИЦА ТОЧНО В АСПЕКТЕ РКИ: ФУНКЦИОНАЛЬНО-КОММУНИКАТИВНЫЙ ПОДХОД**

Научная статья

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**Аннотация**

В статье рассматривается значение и функционирование частицы *точно* в аспекте преподавания русского языка как иностранного. Необходимость анализа и навыков использования в речи такого класса слов как частицы обусловлена требованиями программ по РКИ на продвинутых этапах обучения. Высказывания с частицами субъективны, выразительны, демонстрируют позицию говорящего. При анализе частицы *точно* обращается внимание на синтаксические особенности, сочетаемость с другими частицами в структуре высказывания, на важность интонационного оформления высказывания с *точно*. Изучение частицы *точно* расширяет словарный запас иностранных студентов, развивает умение оперировать синонимами как в устной, так и в письменной речи, учит использованию интонации в соответствующих прагматических ситуациях.

**Ключевые слова:** русский язык как иностранный, частицы, функциональность, коммуникативность.**Introduction**

Learning Russian by foreign students at the advanced levels of studies as well as preparing for the test in Russian as a Foreign Language (B2, C1, C2) necessitates the analysis and ability to use particles in one’s speech [1]. Particles may render various nuances of sense, qualifications, subjective reactions and attitudes and perform different pragmatic functions – they express agreement and disagreement, doubt, uncertainty, specification, etc. Thus, they become a much desired linguistic unit in the communicative sphere [3], [7], [8]. Particles are essential constructive elements in the language system, and their competent use by foreigners demonstrates language proficiency of the students.

**Discussion**

A vivid pragmatic component in the meaning of Russian particles makes these grammatical elements perform a dominating semantic function – the function of conveying to the addressee pragmatically obligatory meanings, meanings which are valued by the speaker. Particles are structurally non-obligatory, but communicatively valuable linguistic units in the semantic structure of an utterance [2].

Utterances containing particles are expressive and demonstrate the speaker’s attitude. For instance, when a student does an exercise in which he/she is asked to agree with the words of his/her interlocutor: “The performance failed,” he/she may say: “Yes, I agree” (Да, согласен) or he may use particles: “I agree, it certainly failed” (Согласен, точно не удался. Вот-вот, не удался. Точно уж не удался). We must teach students to use emotional and expressive means of the language, including particles, according to the situation and the purpose of an utterance. A functional approach to the study of particles helps to understand with what purpose and in what way the speaker qualifies his or someone else’s utterance.

*Toch’no* is one of the least studied particles, however it is widely used in the oral speech and is recorded in the oral, main, newspaper corpora of the National Corpus of the Russian Language. To make students learn how to use the particle *toch’no* correctly, it is important to pay attention to the following.

Lexeme *toch'no* is multifunctional, i.e. according to dictionaries [9], [10], [11] it may be used as (1) a short adjective (*Вычисление, сделанное студентом, точно / The calculation made by the student is exact*), (2) an adverb (*Поезд прибыл точно по расписанию / The train arrived right on schedule*), (3) a conjunction (*Апрель, а снега в саду, точно в январе / It is April and there is so much snow in the garden as if it is January*), (4) a particle (*Тебе точно не холодно? – Точно! / Are you sure you are not cold? – Quite sure!*) and (5) a parenthetical word (*Гость раскрыл было рот, но ночка, точно, была беспокойная / The guest was about to start speaking, but the night was really a troubled one. M. Bulgakov*). Functioning as different parts of speech, this word has different grammatical properties. In order to find out to what part of speech the lexeme belongs, one must examine its syntactical function, the type of sentence and the pragmatic aspect of the utterance.

*Toch'no* belongs to the sphere of subjective modality, i.e. expresses a subjective attitude towards an utterance [7, P. 728]. Being a particle, it has a conversational character, which is registered in dictionaries. Its primary function is pragmatic, a feature characteristic for all particles. As a verbal means of performing actualization, it participates in the communicative structure of the utterance and brings changes into its semantic structure. It carries the semantic relations of specification, and its meaning is determined by the situation and context.

*Toch'no* as a particle is polysemantic. Study of various dictionaries [5], [9], [10], [11] reveals its two main meanings.

1) It is used to denote uncertainty, supposition, doubt in the veracity of something; in its meaning it is similar to the words: *budto, budto by, kak budto, kak budto by* (as if, it seems).

(1) *Я ваши глаза точно где-то видел. (Ф. Достоевский) / It seems I have seen your eyes somewhere (Fyodor Dostoyevsky).*

(2) — *Ладно, пошли. — Точно? — спросил я (А. Волос. Недвижимость) / 'All right. Let's go.' 'You sure?' I asked. (Andrei Volos. Estate Property);*

(3) — *Под самыми окнами! — Точно? — А ты забыл? (А.Алексин. Раздел имущества) / 'Right under the windows!' 'Are you sure?' 'Have you forgotten?' (Anatoly Alexin. Devision of the Estate).*

(4) *На пляже вдруг всех точно ветром сдуло (В.Аксенов.Звездный билет) / On the beach everybody disappeared as if blown away by the wind (Vasily Aksyonov. Ticket to the Stars).*

Some scholars treat *toch'no* as a comparative particle (ex.1, 4). A.B. Letuchy points out that it is used as a particle for modifying the verb group (ex. 1), introducing a metaphor (ex. 4). “It seems we may suggest that constructions of this type are not comparative, but modal with the semantics of partial veracity of the situation, its probable inadequacy to the reality. Modality unlike comparison does not imply the obligatory juxtaposition of unreal and the other, real, situation, but only marks the **degree** of its reality. However, this suggestion is in fact dubious. It is highly likely that, although the object is not expressed, these constructions are still comparative and not modal” [4, P. 171].

Whereas E. N. Orekhova and E.S. Grechina point out that *toch'no* incorporates a modal meaning of uncertain supposition with the shade of comparison into the utterance and takes part in the formation of the total modal meaning of the sentence [6]. However, in practical teaching, this problem does not seem so urgent. It is important though that the students should understand that *toch'no* may act as a synonym to such words as *slovno, budto, kak budto, vrode etc.* (as if) in certain contexts of comparison.

2) It is used to express convinced confirmation; corresponds in meaning to such words as *da, tak, verno* (yes, sure/surely, certainly, exactly, that's it).

(5) *Вот уж точно мой любимый фильм (Форум: рецензии на фильм «Служебный роман»). / This is certainly my favourite film (Forum: reviews on movie 'Workplace Romance').*

(6) — *Это верно. Точно, точно! Только не голубое, пардон, а белое (Ю.Трифонов). / 'This is true! Exactly! Only not blue, pardon me, but white' (Yuri Trifonov).*

The examples show that *toch'no* is used as an element in the structure of a complete sentence (ex.1, 4, 5) and as a self-sufficient utterance in the form of a verbal reaction to someone's words (ex. 2, 3, 6). It can be used with other particles, more often with *a, da, nu, vot, uzh* (*a, да, ну, вот, уж*). These combinations are characteristic for oral unprepared speech, where additional particles either weaken (ex.7) or intensify doubt or confirmation (ex. 8, 9).

(7) — *Давай сейчас все вместе посидим, а потом пойдём. — А, точно. Ты же со мной пойдёшь! Ну, давай. [Праздний разговор молодых людей, Московская область (2005)] / 'Let's sit together a while and then go there.' 'Oh, yes, you are going with me, don't you? Let's sit. [Idle conversation of young people, Moscow Region (2005)].*

(8) — *А, ну точно, мне же мама говорила; все, я вспомнила. [Рассказ об отпуске (2006)] / Oh, yes, mother told me; that's it, I remember now. [From the story about holidays (2006)].*

(9) *И это вот точно моя культура, это мой язык, это мои чувства... вот это, конечно, огромное... [Беседа о фильме Глеба Панфилова «В круге первом» на радиостанции «Маяк» (2006)] / 'And this is certainly my culture, this is my language, these are my feelings... This is, of course, something huge... [A talk about Gleb Panfilov's film *In the First Circle*. Radio Mayak (2006)].*

The lexical meaning of the word *toch'no* is abstracted from the relationships it has in a sentence, that is why intonation as a non-verbal means of communication becomes very important. “... Intonation is a short-time interpretant of the particle, the meaning of which becomes clear only at the moment of communicative situation with consideration to the implied verbal and non-verbal communication <...> Intonation organizes speech phonetically <...>, it provides various nuances of expressive and emotional colouring. Intonation, accenting a Russian particle with the voice, activates the deeper meanings of the concrete sub-sign coded by the sender of an utterance – addressant” [12, P. 329-330]. By practicing the use of *toch'no* in different communicative situations, students learn to use practically all intonational constructions.

## Conclusion

The National Corpus of the Russian Language shows that the most frequent contexts in which the particle *toch'no* is found are the contexts where there is a convinced confirmation of certain information; and its typical fields of usage are oral speech

and literature. The study of this particle broadens vocabulary of foreign students, develops their ability to use synonyms both in oral and written speech, teaches them to use non-verbal sign system – intonation – in corresponding pragmatic situations.

### Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

### Рецензия

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### Conflict of Interest

None declared.

### Review

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