Russian *imenno*: a diachrony[1]

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1. Setting the stage

This talk focuses on the diachrony of Russian focus particle *imenno*.

- Focus particles interact in intricate ways with syntax and semantics of clauses, have fairly abstract ("logical" meaning), and are sometimes clitics;
- This suggests that their evolution can be investigated within the tenets of grammaticalization theory;
- Traugott (1995) argues that the creation of discourse markers, which not usually viewed as the prototypical example of grammatical, nevertheless constitutes an example of a process akin to grammaticalization.

Our goal is to outline the stages of grammaticalization and, in particular, identify the stage on which *imenno* becomes a focus particle, that is, enters into a grammatical association with focus (in terms of Beaver&Clark 2008).

Our data:

- a continous sample from 1521 to 1800 (*imenno* / *imyanno* / ...);
- first 250 of the whole 484 entries from 1800 to 1830

years	number of tokens
1521—1571	30
1571—1621	64
1621—1671	125
1671—1721	84
1721—1771	104
1771—1800	85
1800—1830	250 out of 484
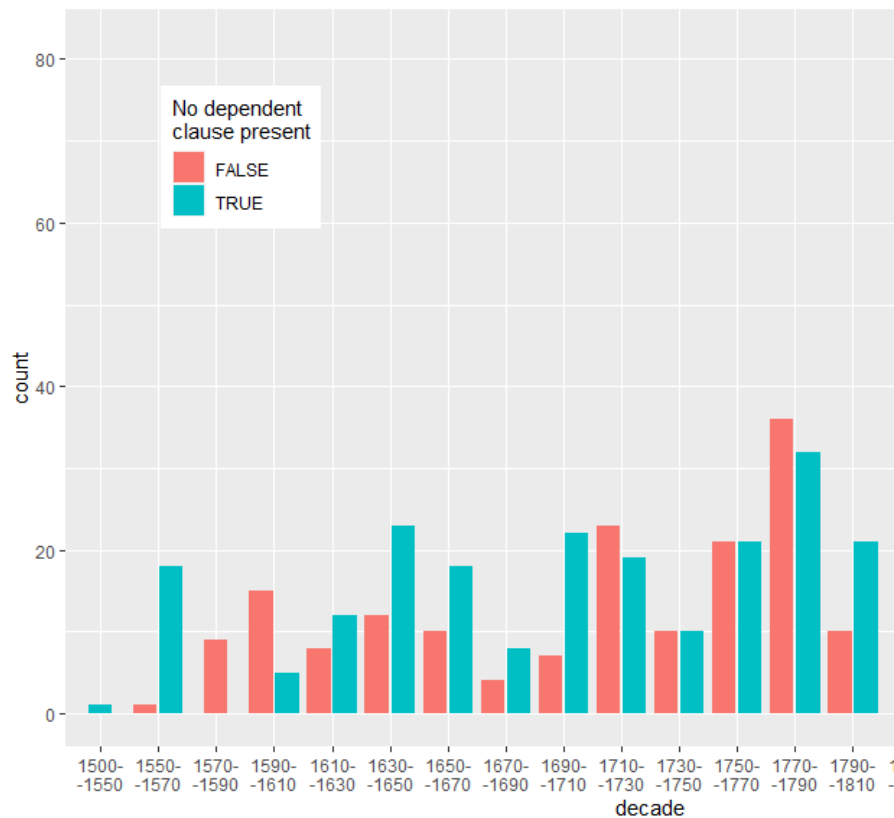
The starting point:

- In the Eastern Orthodox tradition, the first Sunday of the Great Lent is called the Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy. After the Liturgy, a special prayer service is celebrated where the Synodicon, a list of renowned defenders of Orthodoxy is read. (In Russian tradition, it is not done anymore since the late 18th century).
- After the conquest of Kazan, some newly-baptized Tatars were killed by people, opposing christianization. A 16th-century treatise called ""The Kazan History" contains a petition addressed to Tsar Ivan IV. The authors of this petition deplore the fact that during the reading of the Synodicon, the killed Christians (apparently considered by the authors as martyrs), are not listed **by names**:

(1)   Pamyat' im večnaya **imenno** ne poëtsya. [1564—1566]
        'Memory eternal' is sang **not mentioning their names**.

Henceforth we will dub this usage of imenno 'Stage A'.

Note that Stage A is morphologically transparent. It is an adverb, regularly formed from an adjective *imennoy*, which is itself a relative adjective, regularly formed from the noun *imya* 'name'.

(2)   derivational history of *imenno*:
        imen-n-o (adv.) < *imen-n-oj* (adj) < *imya* (*imen-*) (n.)

In the contemporary Russian, *imenno* has a number of uses. We focus on two of them:

- a focus particle, (quasi-)synonymous to English *it*-cleft (we will hereafter refer to it as **exhaustive *imenno***). A concise description of it is contained in [Kozlov 2020]; Kozlov claims that *imenno* asserts its prejacent and introduces two presuppositions: **exhaustivity** ('no other relevant focus alternative is true') and **givenness** (the associate of *imenno* given in discourse). Perhaps it is not the full story, though.

(3)   V konce koncov èto sdelal **imenno** Vasya
        'In the end, **it was Vasya** who did it.'

- a particle, typically following a *wh*-word in questions (hereafter dubbed **interrogative *imenno***). Its semantic contribution can be described as follows: the speaker already has some information and requests more details:

(4)   Kogda **imenno** ty svobodna?
        'When exactly are you ready?'

We do **not** consider the third use of *imenno*, a conjuction, introducing a specification of an entity previously referred to (cf. English *namely*, frequently in collocation with *a*, i. e. *a imenno*). The reason is that this latter use, unlike the former two, is in no way connected to information structure.

From a synchronic point of view, it is not clear whether (3) and (4) constitute a single lexical entry or two separate ones, i. e. whether some unified semantics accounting both for (3) and (4) can be postulated.

Descriptively, (3) and (4) seem quite different. But perhaps, this perceived difference stems from the fact that in (4), the particle is associated with a *wh*-word, and in (3), with a non-interrogative constituent. So in principle, one may venture to go for an single lexical entry analysis.

> **Our main claim:**
> - Creation of both (3) and (4) involved insubordination;
> - However, the uses exemplified in (3) and (4) have arisen via distinct historical events;
> - The historical data shows that there clearly was divergence between (3) and (4). Perhaps there have been later convergence, and now (3) and (4) do constitute a single lexical entry. But this is clearly not a null hypothesis.

2. The common source

The main bulk of the earliest examples with *imenno* comes from the bureaucratic stylistic register of Early Modern Russian (it may have to do with the composition of Early Modern Russian subcorpus of RNC rather than any specific stylistic features of *imenno*). In such documents, *imenno* typically modifies speech act verbs: -*pisat'* 'write', *obyavit'* 'announce', *skazat'* 'say', etc.

(5) Tak i vo vsyu Livonskuju zemlyu v našu otčinu ne vstupatisya i ne voevati, oprič ego gorodov i dvorov i zemel' i ropaty Livonskoj zemli, chto esmja prijatelyu svoemu Frederiku korolyu v sej gramote **imyanno opisali.** [1576]

'...not to enter Livonia, not to wage war here, except for his towns, houses, lands and churches of Livonia, **which we have listed by names** in this letter to our friend, King Frederick'

Already in the second half of the 16th century, along with the literal interpretation 'by names', *imenno* has a vaguer meaning 'literally, precisely'. This meaning is especially frequent in two types of contexts:

- a speech act verb attaching an **indirect question** (Stage B):

(6) Frederik korol' **prikazal** by **imenno** s svoimi posly, v kotorom meste nashi lyudi porubezhnye pozadralis' [1576]

'King Frederick should indicate precisely through his ambassadors, in which place there have been fights between our frontier guards.'

- a speech act verb attaching a **complement clause** indicating the content of the speech act (Stage C):

(7) ...kolskoj prikaznoj čelovek poslom tvoim o našix poslex imyanno skazyval, čto oni ot našego carskogo veličestva otpuščeny i budut v Kolu chasa togo' [1596]

'An official from Kola has announced your ambassadors about our ambassadors **precisely the following**: they were allowed to leave His Majesty and will arrive to Kola about that same hour'

Note that in (7), there are no names to be mentioned: *imenno* just indicates that the embedded clause contains a detailed content of the speech act.

We claim that:

- examples like (6) with **complement clauses** eventually gave rise to **exhaustive *imenno***;
- examples like (7) with **indirect question** clauses eventually gave rise to **interrogative *imenno***.
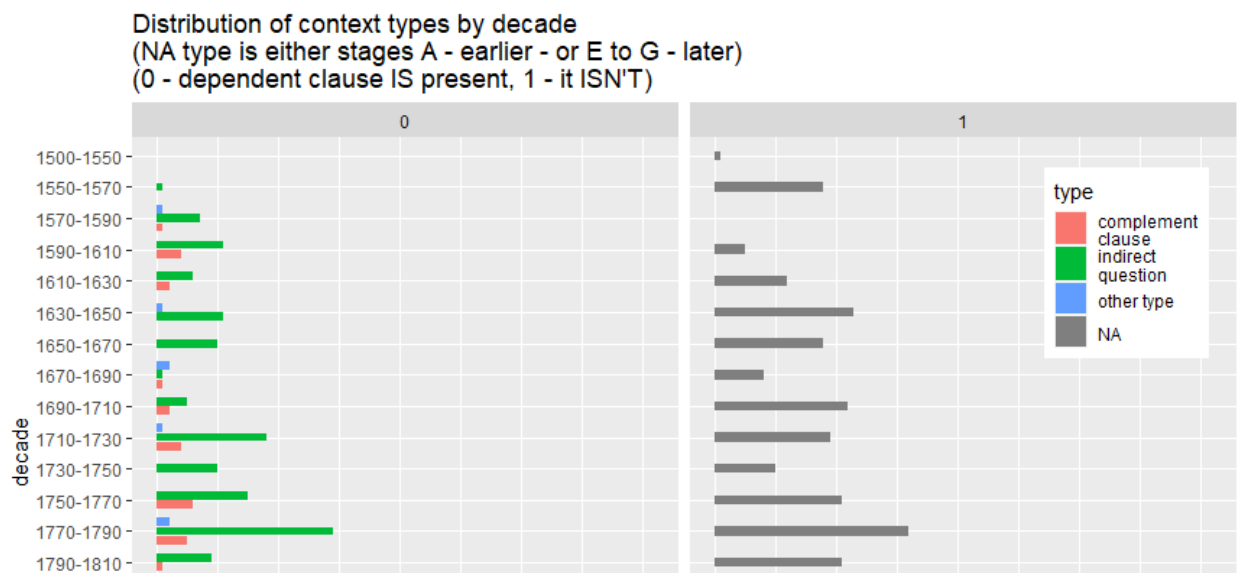
Sporadic examples of *imenno* without a dependent clause are attested as late as the 18th century:

(8) **Povelevaet imyanno**; tol'ko povelevaet, skol'ko vozmozhno sdelati. [Fénelon, Les Aventures des Télémaque, fils d'Ulysse, transl. by M. Lomonosov) (1747)]

Elle **donne des ordres précis**, elle n'ordonne que ce qu'on peut exécuter

'She gives precise orders; she only orders what can be done.'

However, many examples from the 17th-18th centuries have either interrogative or dependent clauses.

Distribution of context types by decade
(NA type is either stages A - earlier - or E to G - later)
(0 - dependent clause IS present, 1 - it ISN'T)

3. Exhaustive *imenno*

3.1 The diachronic data

Examples with *imenno* modifying a speech act verb that attaches a declarative complement clause begin to appear in the end of the 16th century and are still frequent in the middle of the 18th century:

(9) {As for archpriest Burhard's relations, not only does Lambert von Aschaffenburg call him a brother of the Queen of Russia, }no i Albert Štadenskiy obstoyatel'no obyavlyaya o materi Ide i o dočeri Ode, **imyanno pišet**, čto Burhard Idin syn byl [1755]

'but also Albert von Stade, reporting at length about Ida, the mother, and Oda, the daughter, **writes explicitly** that Burhard was Ida's son'

(10) {It's no sin to smoke tobacco.} Vo Psaltire **imenno napečatano**: " I zlak na službu čelovekom". [1782]

'The Book of Psalms **explicitly** says: 'herb for the service of the man'

Starting from 1782, we find contexts, intermediate between Stage B and the present use (we call them Stage D). In these contexts, *imenno* modifies not speech act verbs *sensu stricto*, but rather causative verbs *velet'* 'order, tell', *poslat'* 'send', *naznačit'* 'appoint', even *dat'* 'give'. The denotation of such verbs has two subevents: one causing, and another caused. For the lack of a more precise term, we can call clauses with such verbs semantically bipredicative (although they do not necessarily contain an embedded clause). the causing subevent typically includes a speech act whose content represents the subevent to be caused:

(11)   a. Nel'zya po men'šej mere bylo emu skazat', čto Korol' Portugal'skiy ne znal Samorina; ne znaet, i dlya togo ne posylaet darov, **imenno k nemu posylaya svoyu gramotu**, trebuya onoyu s nim soyuza? [1782]

'At least, he could not have told that the King of Portugal did not know Samorin. He does not know him, and because of that does not send him presents — but at the same time he **sends his letter specifically to him**, demanding an alliance?'

      b. imenno [CAUSE [the letter goes to SAMORIN]]

(12)   a. A kak perevodil ya xorošo, to pokoynyi togdašnii kancler važnejšie bumagi otdaval imenno dlya perevoda mne. [1798]

'As I was a good translator, the late Kanzler gave the most imporant papers **specifically to me** for translation.'

      b. imenno [CAUSE [the papers go to ME]]

For a Modern Russian speaker, *imenno* in (11) seems to work in more or less modern way. (In fact, this is also the case for (12), modulo its linear position.) Note, however, that in the end of the 18th and in the beginning of the 19th century, only causative verbs allowed this usage of *imenno*.

A smaller group of contexts that also only appears at the turn of the century, is attitude predicates with infinitives:

(13) V odin večer, dovol'no pasmurnyi, vse semeystvo i oba knyazya sobralis' vmeste i ožidali Prostakova, ibo on **imenno xotel byt' v tot den'**, okolo večera. [1814]

'One evening, quite a gloomy one, all the family and both princes were together, waiting for Prostakov, as he **specifically wanted to arrive** on that very day, around the evening.

Finally, *imenno* appears in clauses that lack causative semantics (Stage E; the first person to have used it in the corpus is historian Michael Kachenovsky (1775—1842):

(14) {Ancient manuscripts that have something to do with foreign affairs were not known at all until the present day}. Moi prinadležat **imenno k semu klassu**. [1811]

'My manuscripts fall **precisely into this category**.' / 'It is into this category that my manuscripts fall'.

Until the boundary between the 19th and 20th centuries, *imenno* sporadically was non-adjacent to its focus:

(15) {It's the first time I am in this castle, and still I feel that I have lived here for ages. — It's small wonder: all our old castles look similar to each other. — }

Da, no   ya **imenno** žil   **v** **ètom zamke**... [1892]
yes but   I   **imenno** lived **in** **this** **castle**
'Yes, but {I feel as if} **it was in this castle** that I lived'

3.2. Exhaustive *imenno:* discussion

So, we propose the following development for exhaustive *imenno*: B > D > E

(i) Stage B:

On imenno skazal, [_DC što syuda pridet Foma]   a finite embedded clause
he imenno told   [_DC that here comes Foma]
'He explicitly said that Foma will come here'

(ii) Stage D:

On imenno velel   [_DC Fome syuda priiti]   no finite embedded clause
he imenno ordered   [_DC to.Foma here come.INF]   semantic bi-predicativity
'He explicitly ordered Foma to come here'

(iii) Stage E:

Syuda prišël imenno Foma   no semantic bi-predicativity
here came imenno Foma
'It is (precisely) Foma who came here'

It seems that over time, the construction that *imenno* modifies shrinks:
    from a polypredicative construction with a finite embedded clause
        through the intermediate stage of a semantically (but not necessarily syntactically) bi-predicative construction
            to a simple clause.

How does association with focus came about? We don't have a decisive answer yet.

However, the main semantic mechanism at work seems to be conventionalization of the Maxim of Quantity. If the speech act is said to be *explicit*, then among other rules the speaker is expected to abide by the submaxim of the Maxim of Quantity, known as Q-principle (Horn 1989): *Tell as much as you can.*

Now, if the speaker has told as much as s/he could, i. e. was maximally informative, then all the relevant alternatives are false (hence the exhaustivity component of *imenno*). And what are the relevant alternatives, is defined by focus, because it is focus that resolves the question under discussion (Rooth 1992; Roberts 1996)

Imenno has one more semantic component: it seems that its associate (the focus of the clause) should be given, or discource-linked (Kozlov 2020). Look at a contrast with the English *it*-cleft construction:

(16)   a. {Nobody could prove this theorem for years.}
        Eventually, it was some bachelor STUDENT who did that

        b. # Èto sdelal imenno kakoy-to STUDENT
        Int. meaning: 'Idem'

        c.{I was sure that in any event, a student will not be able to prove this theorem }
        ^ok No èto sdelal imenno kakoy-to STUDENT
        'But it was some bachelor student who did that'

We have no idea of how the givenness requirement has arisen.

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	first example	last example (tentative)
Stage B	1588	1813
Stage D	1782	reanalyzed as Stage E
Stage E	1811	2021

4. Interrogative *imenno*

4.1 The diachronic data

We start from speech act verbs with embedded indirect question clauses (Stage C):

(17) A čto prežniya vaši žili po gorodom i po gosudar'skim" mestom, a ne po mužitckim derevnyam, i xto budet rodu vašego byl, oprič' otca tvoego, i ty **skaži imyanno**, i kotorye koroli byli ot kotorogo rodu.

Whether your predecessors used to live in cities and in places where sovereigns live, and not in vulgar people's villages, and what is your lineage, besides your father, **tell us** [all that] **explicitly** / **by names**, as well as what kings were of what lineage. [1573]

Imenno started out as a modifier of verb, so its linear position in the oldest examples is where we expect an adverb to be, typically adjacent to the verb. On the next stage (Stage F), frequently attested since 1760's, *imenno* moves to the dependent clause:

(18) **Kakiya imenno** togda v Moskve byli **fabriki**, niže sego pod № 114 prilagaetsya vedomost'. [1775]

'Below under № 114 we enclose the record {that says}' **what factories exactly** there were in Moscow in those times.'

First examples of Stage F, however, are found in the Military Articulum (Artikul Voinsky) of Petr I, which is a translation from German (Roman Schlyakhtin, p. c.; we have not consulted the original yet).

(19) Togo radi sudye v takom dele ves'ma krepko doprašivat' nadležit, **kto imenno** začinščikom ssory byl [1715]

'That's why the judge should really try to investigate **who exactly** started the quarrel.'

The data from the beginning of the 18th century in the RNC are scarce, so we are for now unable to establish whether Stage F was an influence of some foreign language (a hypothesis theoretically plausible for this period) or was a language-internal development (and what were the bridging contexts).[2]

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[2] The data from 1720s and 1730s in our database mostly come from Vasily Tatishchev, historian and bureaucrat, who definitely preferred a more archaic pattern with *imenno* in the matrix clause.

The next stage is Stage G, at which *imenno* starts to be used in independent questions. A first clear example is attested in 1833:

(20) **Po kakomu imenno slučayu** vsegda v odno vremya? — sprosila gosudarynya, vsluavsšis' v razgovory monaxov. [1833]

'For **what reason exactly** it is always the same time' — asked the Empress, having heard the words of the monks.

Previous candidates for Stage F are dubious; although they often look like independent sentences from the point of view of punctuation, we are inclined to analyze them as syntactically embedded

(21) Stanem **učitsya** teper', otkudu čelovek začalsya byt', kakov byl, i kakoy nyne est', ili prostee skazat', skol'ko čelovek imel na svete sostoyanij? I kogda mnogo, to **imenno kakiya**, i v kakom teper'? [1757]

'Let us **investigate**_{MATRIX VERB} [how the man has come to be, what he used to be, and what he is now, or, to put it in a simpler way, how many states the man has ever had? And when the states were multiple, what were those states, and in what state he is now?]'

(22) {So, they started the siege on June 5th. } No **kak imenno** osada siya proizvodilas'? Kakiya byli pri onoj proizšestviya i pričiny, ponudivšiya ostavit' na sej raz osadu? Vse to opisano_{MATRIX VERB} uže mnoyu v Istorii Lefortovoj, to izlišno by uše bylo opisyvat' to že samoe i zdes'.

'[But how exactly the siege went[3]? What happened during the siege, what the reasons to stop it were?] I have already described in The History of Lefort, so I find redundant to describe it here.'

	first example	last example (tentative)
Stage C	1570	1815
Stage F	1715, but frequent since 1760	2021
Stage G	1833	2021

4.2 Discussion

For interrogative *imenno*, we propose the following path: C > F > G

(i) Stage C:

On **imenno** napisal, [_{DC} kuda pridet Foma]   embedded indirect question clause

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[3] As our main point is that those sentences are grammatically embedded, we don't use interrogative inversion in the English translation

he **imenno** wrote   [ᴅᴄ where   goes Foma]   *imenno* inside the matrix clause
'He explicitly wrote where Foma is to come.'

(ii) Stage F:

On napisal   [ᴅᴄ **kuda imenno** pridet Foma]   embedded indirect question clause
he wrote   [ᴅᴄ **where imenno** goes Foma]   *imenno* inside the embedded clause
'He explicitly ordered Foma to come here'

(iii) Stage G:

Kuda   **imenno** pridët Foma?   independent clause
where   **imenno** goes   Foma
'Where exactly will Foma go?'

F > G constitutes a classical case of insubordination (Evans 2007, Cristofaro : G arises via ellipisis of the main clause (cf. bridging contexts like (21—22)).

5. Conclusion

Let us call the construction that *imenno* modifies its *prejacent*. Then the evolution of

Imenno started out as an adverb meaning 'explicitly; literally; precisely', and it used to have speech act verbs as prejacents. These verbs, in their turn, were able to attach complements: more often, interrogative complement clauses; less often, declarative ones.

So, at the boundary between the 17th and the 18th centuries, the prejacent of *imenno* was more often than not a polypredicative construction. Then things changed.

A step from embedded to independent interrogative clauses to independent ones was rather abrupt, with a possible intermediate stage of main clause ellipsis or parcellation.

A step from embedded to independent declarative clauses was more gradual, with an intermediate stage of semantically bi-predicative, but syntactically mono-predicative constructions.

That is why we claim that the creation of the two uses we looked at consituted separate historical events. Futhermore, this probably means that now these two uses constitute separate lexical entries.

B ⟶ D ⟶ E

A

C   G   F
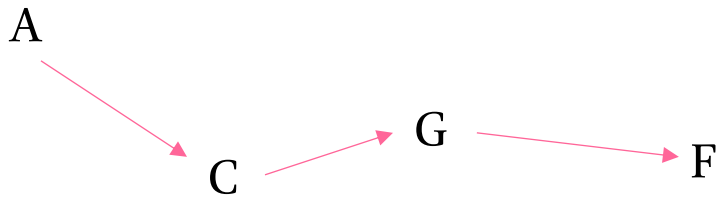
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