

Russian Metalinguistic Comparatives: Towards the Typology¹

Natalia Zevakhina (National Research University Higher School of Economics, emailto:
natalia.zevakhina@gmail.com)

Svetlana Dzhakupova (National Research University Higher School of Economics, emailto:
svetlanads@yandex.ru)

1. Introduction

English so-called “standard” comparative constructions can be illustrated with the following example

(1) John is taller than Bill is.

However, there are English so-called “non-standard” comparative constructions (or metalinguistic comparatives² analogous to metalinguistic negation, cf. Horn 1989 and McCawley 1991). **Meta-comparatives** express the speaker’s attitude towards two propositions (in (2) these are ‘John is a syntactician’ and ‘John is a semanticist’): the speaker compares them, conveying the idea that the former proposition is more preferential than the latter one.

(2) John is more a syntactician than a semanticist. (McCawley 1998)

Metalinguistic negation rejects the content of the previous sentence by virtue of contrastive negation in English.

(3) It’s not stewed bunny honey, it’s civet de lapin. (Horn 1989)

Meta-comparatives are a relatively new area of linguistic research and have been touched upon in few papers so far (the most prominent are Giannakidou and Stavrou 2008, Morzycki 2010, Giannakidou and Yoon 2011). However, they have already been persuasively shown to be a well-spread phenomenon in genealogically related and unrelated languages, foremost in English, Greek, and Korean (ibid.).

Russian presents three sorts of meta-comparatives

- *mnogo* — *bol’she* ‘much — more’ (that is originally an adverb of quantity); cf. also English *more*, Greek *perissotero*

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² We will refer to them further as *meta-comparatives*.

- *skoro* — *skoree* ‘soon — sooner’ (originally an adverb of speed), cf. also English *rather* (goes back to *hrathor* ‘earlier, sooner’), French *plutôt*, Romanian *mai degrabă*, Greek *malon*
- *xorošo* — *lučše* ‘good — better’ (originally an adverb of quality), cf. also English *would rather*, Greek *kalitera*

Interestingly, Russian *men’še* ‘less’, *xuže* ‘worse’ and *medlennee* ‘slower’ are standard (adjectival or adverbial) comparatives. However, English *less* can be used as a meta-comparative: *George is less crazy than dumb* (Morzycki 2009, 2010).

We set the following goals

- Reveal morphosyntactic features of Russian meta-comparatives;
- Show that Russian meta-comparatives do not perfectly fit within the currently existing semantic theories of meta-comparatives developed by Giannakidou and Stavrou (2008), Giannakidou and Yoon (2011), Morzycki (2009, 2010) and Goncharov (2014);
- Since each of the three Russian meta-comparatives contributes its own semantics to the meaning of an utterance, we propose a semantic approach to Russian meta-comparatives in terms of semantic maps that might also be applied to the data of other languages.

We base our research on the data from the Russian National Corpus (further RNC).

2. Morphosyntactic Features of Standard Comparatives and Meta-comparatives

2.1. Types of Standard Comparatives and their Morphosyntactic Features

Russian standard comparatives split into four classes

Adjectival comparatives

- indeclinable synthetic (with the suffix *-e/-ee*³)
- declinable analytic (with the marker *bolee / menee*)
- declinable synthetic (*bol’šoj* — *bol’šij*, *malyj* — *men’šij*, *xorošij* — *lučšij*, *ploxoj* — *xudšij*)

+ NP in Genitive or *čem/neželi*-clause

(4) Па́ша выше {Ко́ли / чем Ко́ля}.

‘Paša is taller than Kolya.’

Adverbial comparatives

- synthetic (with the suffix *-e/-ee*)
- declinable analytic (with the marker *bolee / menee*)

+ NP in Genitive or *čem/neželi*-clause

(5) Па́ша прыгает выше {Ко́ли / чем Ко́ля}.

‘Paša jumps higher than Kolya.’

³ Another variety of indeclinable synthetic comparatives has not only suffix *-e/ee* but also prefix *po-*, e.g., *povyshe*. In Knyazev (2007) and Sitchinava (2013), it is coined as *attenuative comparative* since semantically it denotes a small degree of a given property.

Quantitative comparatives

- synthetic *bol'she* 'more' or *men'she* 'less' + NP in Genitive + *čem/neželi*-clause

(6) Он принёс {*больше/меньше*} яблок, чем груш.

'He has brought {*more/less*} apples than pears.'

Impersonal comparatives

- infinitives + predicatives⁴ in synthetic/analytic comparative form + *čem/neželi*-clause

(7) Проще оставить всё, как есть, чем прилагать усилия.

'It is easier to leave as it is than to make efforts.'

2.2. Morphosyntactic Features of Meta-comparatives

- 1) **Russian meta-comparatives only demonstrate synthetic forms, i.e. *skoree* 'sooner', *lučše* 'better' and *bol'she* 'more' (literal meanings)**

(8) Занимаясь только развитием сверхспособностей, Вы {*скорее/*более скоро*} станете экстрасенсом, чем бойцом. [«Боевое искусство планеты» 2004]

'Only developing superabilities, you would become an extrasensory individual rather than a fighter.'

(9) Но {*лучше/*более хорошо*} я умру, чем она узнает, кто отец этого ребенка. [Л. Улицкая 1996]

'I would die rather than she will learn who is the child's father.'

(10) Для меня даже художник {*больше/*более много*} хранитель, чем творец. [П. Мейлахс 2002]

'For me even an artist is more a keeper than a creator.'

- 2) **Russian meta-comparatives show cross-categorial compatibility; they can be combined with gradable and non-gradable APs, as well as with AdvPs, NPs, TPs, PPs, CPs.**

Here we only present examples with *skoree* and *bol'she*. *Lučše* shows restrictions of another sort and we discuss them in section 5.1.

(11) gradable APs

Девушку познакомили с тетушкиным сыном, который показался ей *скорее* [AP странным], чем [AP интересным]. [«Знамя» 2003]

'The girl was acquainted with the aunt's son who seemed strange rather than interesting.'

(12) Вот такая же, *больше* [AP чёрная], чем [AP красная], выплывала огромная луна над пустынным полем, где сражалась дружина Игоря. [Василий Гроссман 1960]

'The same enormous lune, which was more black than red, appeared above the field where Igor's retinue fought.'

(13) non-gradable APs

⁴ Predicatives are formally identical with adverbs but syntactically behave as a separate category (cf. Sitchinava 2011).

В общем и целом мнение о банке пока *скорее* [AP отрицательное], чем [AP положительное].
[Форум. Банк Русский Стандарт 2009-2011]

'All in all, the opinion about the bank is still negative rather than positive.'

(14) Ваша должность *больше* [AP творческая], чем [AP номенклатурная]. [Лейла Фаттахова 2004]

'Your position is more creative than nomenclative.'

(15) AdvPs

Как раз советская власть помогла его развитию, но оно было односторонним и неполным, поскольку шло *скорее* [AdvP сверху], [AdvP чем снизу]. [«Наука и жизнь», 2006]

'The Soviet authorities stimulated its development but it was insufficient since it was manipulated by the government rather than natural.'

(16) Мне он понравился *больше* [AdvP снаружи], чем [AdvP изнутри]. [Борис Левин 1965-1994]

'I like more his appearance than character.'

(17) NPs

Портреты английской королевы *скорее* [NP привычка], чем [NP любовь к монархии]. [Д. Гранин 1966]

'English Queen portraits are a habit rather than a love to monarchy.'

(18) Я по первому образованию юрист, но *больше* [NP психолог], чем [NP юрист]. [«Русский репортер» 2009]

'My first education is a law but I am more a psychologist than a lawyer.'

(19) TPs

Через несколько дней Василиса запросилась в отпуск — одна из её таинственных отлучек, о которых она *скорее* [TP уведомляла], чем [TP просила]. [Людмила Улицкая 2000]

'In a few days Vasilisa requested a vacation — she notified about her absence rather than asked permission.'

(20) Проще говоря, такие лампы гораздо *больше* [TP греют], чем [TP светят]. [«Наука и жизнь» 2008]

'In simpler terms, such lamps give more warm than light.'

(21) PPs

Толпа и им иногда подбрасывает деньги, *скорее* [PP за героизм], чем [PP за музыку]. [Фазиль Искандер 1999]

'The crowd sometimes give them money for their heroism rather than music.'

(22) Этот город и начинался как город показухи и строился *больше* [PP для приезжих], чем [PP для аборигенов]. [Владимир Соловьев (1975-1998)]

'This town was originally built for visitors rather than for local people.'

(23) CPs

Скорее [CP бизнесмен подарит его <вино> своей любовнице], чем [CP молодая пара разопьет у себя дома]. [«Бизнес-журнал» 2003]

'A businessman rather gives the wine to his lover than a young couple drinks it at home.'

CPs are ungrammatical with *bol'she*.

English *more* and Greek *perissotero* 'more' are parallel to Russian *bol'she* with respect to all the listed combinations, see Morzycki (2010) and Giannakidou and Stavrou (2009).

Moreover, Russian meta-comparatives allow constituents of different sorts, which, strictly speaking, sound ungrammatical (cf. Morzycki 2010 for a similar effect in English); we present here only some of them and believe that this is a separate valuable topic of research.

(24) Converbial and finite verbal forms

<...> писал он механически, *скорее* [демонстрируя, что пишет], чем [писал]. [Владимир Соловьев 1975-1998]

'He was writing automatically, demonstrating his writing rather than writing.'

(25) Finite and infinitive clauses

[Я *лучше* сам побегаю утром], чем [толпой в 10 человек нарезать круги по школьному стадиону дистанцию в 5 км]. [Форум «Физ-ра» 2005]

'I would rather jog in the morning than ten people would run around the stadium 5 km.'

3) Both complementizers *čem* and *neželi* are compatible with meta-comparatives

(26) Тем самым оно <нормальное экономическое неравенство>, *скорее* улучшает и стабилизирует социальную ситуацию, *нежели* повышает социальную напряженность. [«Вопросы статистики» 2004]

'By this normal economical inequality improves the social situation rather than increases social tension.'

(27) *Лучше* бы мне умереть с тобой, *нежели* одинокому и осиротевшему без тебя жить на этом свете. [«Народное творчество» 2004]

'I would rather die than live alone without you.'

(28) Мне вообще кажется, что женщина *больше* человек, *нежели* мужчина. [А. Иличевский 2009]

'I think that woman is more human than a man is.'

Interestingly, Korean, Japanese and Greek show different *thans* in meta-comparatives and in standard comparatives, e.g., Greek *para* vs. *apoti*.

4) Genitive NPs are absolutely impossible in meta-comparatives

(29) **Скорее* Паша придёт Коли.

(30) **Лучше* пусть Паша придёт Коли.

(31) *Паша *больше* лингвист философа.

Remarkably, Greek *apo* is prepositional and is only possible in standard comparatives.

3. Previous Approaches to Meta-comparatives

In terms of structuralism, Jespersen (1924) noted that meta-linguistic sort of comparison is stylistic rather than genuine.

From the perspective of generative grammar, see papers by Bresnan (1973), Embick (2007), various types of ordinary and metalinguistic comparatives reveal morphosyntactic divergence.

Giannakidou and Stavrou (2008), Giannakidou and Yoon (2009, 2011)

There is a bunch of works in formal semantics developed by Giannakidou and her colleagues. They claim that Greek and Korean exhibit three sorts of meta-comparatives (namely appropriateness assessment, preference and dispreference).

GREEK

Appropriateness assessment meta-comparative

- (32) O Pavlos ine **perissotero** philologhos {para/apoti} glossologhos.
 the Paul is.3SG More filologist than Linguist
 'Paul is **more** of a philologist **than** he is a linguist.'

Preferential meta-comparative

- (33) **Kalitera** na Pigheno ekdromes {para/#apoti}
 better SUBJ go.1SG excursions than
 na kathome brosta stin tileorasi!
 SUBJ sit.1SG in front to-the TV
 'I **would rather** go on trips **than** sit in front of the TV.'

Dispreferential meta-comparative

- (34) **Kalitera** na Pethano {para/#apoti} na ton pandrefto.
 better SUBJ die.1SG than SUBJ him marry.1SG
 'I **would rather** die **than** marry him.' ('I prefer to die than marry him.')

KOREAN

Appropriateness assessment meta-comparative

- (35) Lee-nun pwucirenha-ta-**kipota**⁵ ttokttokha-ta.
 Lee-TOP industrious-DECL-saying.than bright-DECL
 'Lee is more bright than industrious.'
 [In the present context I prefer the sentence 'Lee is bright' to the sentence 'Lee is industrious'.]

Preferential meta-comparative

- (36) onulpam ne-wa naka-**kipota** cip-ey iss-keyss-ta.
 tonight you-with go out-saying.than home-LOC stay-will-DECL
 'I prefer to stay home rather than go out with you tonight.' (because I am tired.)

Dispreferential meta-comparative

- (37) ku-wa kyelhonha-**nuni** (**charari**) nay-ka cwuk-keyss-ta.

⁵ Following Sawada (2007), Morzycki (2010) observes that Japanese also has a metalinguistic comparative *iuyori* that is glossed in a similar manner as Korean *kipota*:

- (38) Taroo-wa sensei-to **iu-yori** gakusya-da.
 Taroo-TOP teacher-as say-than scholar-PRED
 'Taroo is more a scholar than a teacher.'

him-DAT marry-rather than rather I-NOM die-will-DECL
'I would rather die than marry him.'

The main idea of the Giannakidou and her colleagues' theory is that preference is always present in the semantics of meta-comparatives and all the three semantic varieties are derived from preference in a wide sense, cf.:

"Preference brings in an individual's perspective towards the sentence, <...>; it is an ordering induced by the speaker in a given context and with respect to the specific communicative goal of the context. The communicative goal will determine if the preference will be preference of sentences as objects themselves, in which case we end up with the appropriateness judgments; or preference of the content of the sentence, in which case we can have the more emphatic statements" (Giannakidou and Yoon 2011: 624).

"Just like metalinguistic negations, the sentences seem to be corrective objections to aspects of the utterance" (ibid.: 625), cf. Potts' theory of quotation (Potts 2007).

Positive evaluation

We generally agree with Giannakidou and her colleagues on preference/expressive dispreference analysis and extend it to Russian *lučše*.

Criticism

- The analysis in terms of appropriateness seems to be wrong. In (38), the speaker compares propositions 'Он филолог' and 'Он лингвист' rather than corresponding sentences (see Morzycki (2009, 2010) for similar criticism)

(38) Он *больше* филолог, чем лингвист.
'He is more a philologist than a linguist.'

Such sentences need not be mentioned in the previous context but they may be, for instance, recovered from the speaker's memory, cf. (39).

(39) Этот медицинский случай таким образом отразился на характере нашего последнего государя, что он был гораздо больше отец, нежели государь. [Журнал «Знамя» 2002]
'This medical case affected our last emperor's character such that he was more a father than an emperor.'

- No semantic difference is provided between Greek lexical meta-comparative units *perissotero* and *kalitera* (a language might exhibit several lexical meta-comparatives and each of them has its own semantics).

Goncharov (2014)

According to Julia Goncharov, Russian (and also Romanian) meta-comparatives express epistemic probability, whereas French and English meta-comparatives convey preference. Although this point does not seem to be correct with respect to English that also has meta-comparative *more*,

- it seems to undermine the idea of Giannakidou and Yoon (2011) that meta-comparatives have uniform semantics across languages
- and suggests that the relation of comparison between two propositions can be lexicalized in different ways across languages.

Positive evaluation

We accept Goncharov's (2014) approach to Russian *skoree* that conveys probability but we also add Expressive Improbability by analogy to Giannakidou and Yoon's Preference/Expressive Dispreference.

Morzycki (2009, 2010)

- Meta-comparatives are predicates in the same way as standard comparatives (contra Giannakidou and Yoon);
- Unlike standard comparatives that involve comparison along scales lexically determined by vague gradable adjectives, meta-comparatives use a generally available scale of imprecision and this is illustrated in the next example (cf. Lasersohn 1999).

(40) He is *more* dumb than crazy.

Set of alternatives for *dumb* at the precision level 0.9 (*dumb, ignorant, dopey, foolish, slow-witted*) vs. a broader set of alternatives for the same item at the level 0.8 (*dumb, ignorant, dopey, foolish, slow-witted, confused, incurious, intellectually-lazy, criminally-reckless*).

Disagreement

- We disagree with this approach and believe that one of the two alternatives is true to a greater extent than the other;
- Syntactic condition
 - both alternatives need to be of the same syntactic type;
- Presupposition condition
 - unlike *skoree* alternatives, *bol'she* alternatives have to have evidence for in the communicated state of affairs. If presupposition condition fails, *bol'she* is overridden with *skoree* that does not have such a presupposition condition.

Compare

(41) Спиваков *больше* дирижёр, чем скрипач.

'Spivakov is more a conductor than a violinist.'

(42) Спиваков *скорее* дирижёр, чем скрипач.

'Spivakov is a conductor rather than a violinist.'

(41) presupposes that Spivakov is both a conductor and a violinist, whereas (42) does not such a presupposition.

Scalars also justify that

(43) # Здесь *больше* прохладно, чем холодно.

(44) Здесь *скорее* прохладно, чем холодно.
'It is cool rather than cold.'

Glass (2013)

- (45) He is *more* American than Welsh.

On the scale of Americanness the person has a greater extent than on the scale of Welshness

- Lexicon is dynamic and non-gradable adjectives can shift to gradable;
- Vagueness analysis, which is the same as for standard comparatives (contra Morzycki).

Criticism

- No explanation for why English meta-comparatives allow for distinctive syntax and distinctive lexical items, which might be an evidence for that meta-comparatives exhibit a separate domain of grammar, and that is exactly what Giannakidou and her colleagues suggest.

5. Russian Meta-comparatives

As for Russian, it has three varieties of meta-comparatives: Preference, Probability, and Precision, each of which is marked with a special lexicalized comparative form: *лучше ... чем*, *скорее ... чем*, and *больше ... чем* respectively. Each of the three meta-comparatives has their own semantic varieties as well as grammatical restrictions.

5.1. Preference (*лучше ... чем*)

Meta-comparative *лучше* expresses evaluative modality (unlike, its positive form *хорошо* 'good', also *плохо* 'bad' and *хуже* 'worse', see Arutjunova 2008). We conceptualize Preference as evaluation of alternatives made by the speaker. Preference is lexicalized in Russian with *лучше ... чем* 'better ... than' (cf. Greek *kalitera ... para*, English *would rather ... than* and Korean *kipota ... <zero>*). Following Giannakidou and her colleagues' papers, we distinguish between Preference in a narrow sense and Dispreference.

Preference in a narrow sense is expressed by virtue of *лучше ... чем* and one of the following forms that are used in both clauses of a sentence: 1) indicative mood in the future form; 2) subjunctive mood (also with *чтобы*-clause); 3) infinitive form; 4) protasis of conditional; 5) Nominative NPs; 6) 2nd person imperative; 7) *пуст'*-imperative. They are exemplified in the next examples.

(46) *Лучше* я перестрахуюсь, чем недосмотрю. [Гатьяна Устинова 2002]
'I would rather be overcautious than overlook.'

(47) — Может, ты *лучше* поинтересуешься у него, Пабло, чем загружать меня своими глупыми вопросами? [А. Ростовский 2000]
'Perhaps you would rather ask him than you would ask me a lot of silly questions?'

(48) *Лучше* он < Сергей Шойгу > сейчас решит ситуацию с разгрузкой угля, чем будет восстанавливать замороженные зимой стужей дома. [«Известия» 2001]
'He would rather solve the problem of coal unloading than rebuild houses.'

(49) Конечно, *лучше* бы «копил», чем «накапливал». [Евгений Попов 1997]

'Certainly, he would rather save up than accumulate.'

(50) И почему *лучше*, чтобы рыба погибла, чем пошла в пищу населению? [«Рыболов» 1990]

'Why is died fish worth a food?'

(51) Он считал, что *лучше* самому испытать несправедливость, чем причинить её другим

[«Вестник США» 2003]

'He thought that he would rather experience injustice than cause it to others?'

(52) С точки зрения безопасности будет *лучше*, если это уменьшение будет минимально.

[«Информационные технологии» 2004]

'In terms of safety it would be better if the decrease is minimal.'

(53) *Лучше* синица в руках, чем журавль в небе. [В. Голяховский 1984-2001]

'A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.'

(54) *Лучше* вызывай зависть, чем жалость! [«Знамя» 2010]

'Evoking envy is worth evoking compassion.'

(55) *Лучше* пусть он выживет после плохой операции, чем умрет после хорошей. [В. Токарева

(1964-1994)]

'He would rather survive after a bad operation than die after a good one.'

Expressive Dispreference is a negative emotion variety of Preference (see also section 5.3). It shows the same grammatical restrictions as Preference.

(56) Я *лучше* отрублю себе правую руку, чем напишу нелепое древнечиновичье «дана в том». [К. И. Чуковский 1962]

'I would rather cut off my right hand than write an absurd letter.'

(57) *Лучше* пусть совсем без отца растут, чем с таким. [С. Борисова 1979]

'They would rather live without father than with this.'

(58) Дедушка Иван стал жаловаться, что не может жить в такой грязи и *лучше* быть слепым, чем видеть все это. [Л. Петрушевская «Октябрь» 1996]

'The old man complained that he could not live in the mud and he would rather be blind than see all this.'

(59) *Лучше* пуля, чем пережитый мой... Нет, наш позор. [А. Приставкин 2005]

'The bullet is worth experiencing shame.'

(60) *Лучше* наступи себе на язык, чем на веревку! [К. Серафимов 1994]

'Stopping talking is worth stepping a rope.'

(61) Не знаю, как ты, а по мне — так *лучше*, если тебя отшивают сразу и посылают подальше, чем вот такие вшивые угрызения. [Г. Владимов 1969]

'I would rather be rebuffed than feel pangs of conscience.'

(62) *Лучше бы*, говорит, умерла в тот вечер, чем пережить все, что произошло. [А. Приставкин 2005]

'As she says, she would rather die that evening than experience all that happened.'

5.2. Probability (*skoree ... čem*)

Probability comes in two varieties: Probability (in a narrow sense) and Expressive Improbability.

Probability in a narrow sense: The speaker regards one situation more probable than the other (see morphosyntactic features of *skoree ... čem* in section 2).

(63) *Скорее* [СР бизнесмен подарит его <вино> своей любовнице], чем [СР молодая пара разопьет у себя дома]. [«Бизнес-журнал» 2003]

'A businessman rather gives the wine to his lover as a present than a young couple drinks it at home.'

(64) Ты *скорее* принесешь страдания себе, чем ближнему. [Протоиерей Димитрий Смирнов 1984-1989]

'You would rather bring suffer to yourself than to your neighbour.'

Expressive Improbability

is a negative emotion variety of Probability (see also section 5.3).

(65) Да я *скорее* умру, чем ей признаюсь! [И. Г. Эренбург 1953-1955]

'I would rather die than confess her.'

(66) Поклянись, что ты *скорее* откусишь себе язык, чем скажешь хоть слово о своем преступном ротозействе. [Еремей Парнов 1985]

'Swear that you would rather bite off your tongue than say a word about your extreme absent-mindedness.'

(67) *Скорее* Тито воскреснет и воссоединится Югославия, чем это случится. [«Известия» 2002]

'Tito resuscitates and Yugoslavia reunites rather than this happens.'

5.3. Expressive Dispreference and Expressive Improbability

Expressive Dispreference

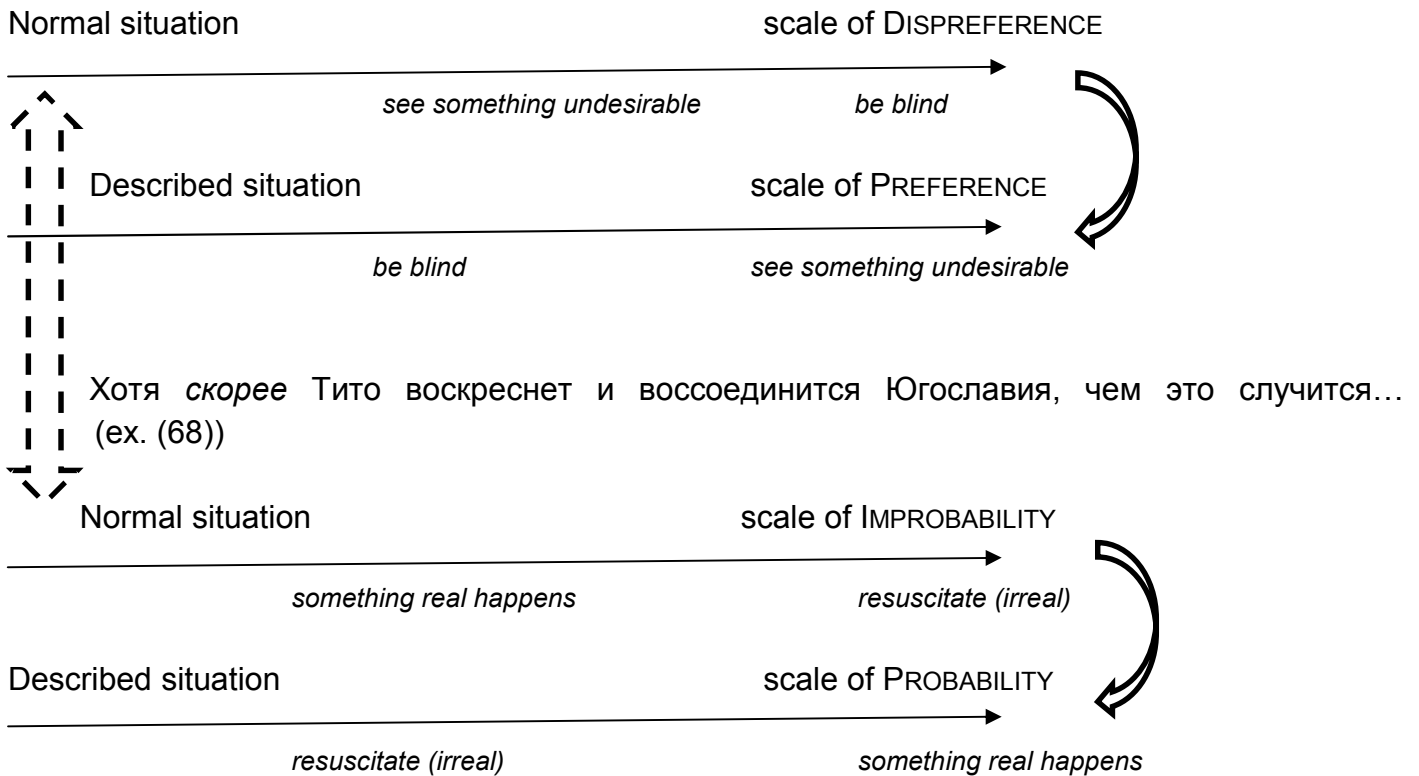
Consider example (58)

Лучше быть слепым, чем видеть все это... (ex. (58))

In normal circumstances, being blind is viewed as more dispreferential than seeing something undesirable. However, Russian uses meta-comparative *lučše* rather than *xuže* that might be a marker of Dispreference. So, we see a switch from the scale of Dispreference to the scale of Preference.

A similar observation can be made with respect to example (67) where normally, resuscitating is viewed as more improbable than something real that might happen. However, again, Russian

uses meta-comparative *skoree* rather than *medlennee* that might be a marker of Improbability. So, again, we see a switch from the scale of Improbability to the scale of Probability.



Skoree and *lučše* are interchangeable with little semantic difference in the contexts of the future forms, cf. ex. (65) and its 3rd person modification

Да я *лучше* умру, чем ей признаюсь!

Да я *skoree* умру, чем ей признаюсь!

'I would rather die than confess her.'

Да он *лучше* умрёт, чем ей признается!

Да он *skoree* умрёт, чем ей признается!

'He would rather die than confess her.'

On the one hand, normally dying is not improbable (unlike resuscitating) but dispreferential — therefore, a metaphorical change from Improbability to Dispreference takes place. On the other hand, dying is dispreferential and there is a strong wish of the speaker to imagine it far from reality — therefore, a metaphorical change from Dispreference to Improbability takes place. This results in very close semantics of the above mentioned contexts. Perhaps, a diachronic study is needed here to establish the correct change (if there is one).

5.4. Precision (*bolše ... čem*)

Morzycki's term Precision but not his analysis

(see morphosyntactic features in section 2)

We believe that the idea of quantity is preserved in meta-comparatives (which is the literal meaning of *mnogo* 'much'): if an entity is more x than y, it is supposed to exhibit more features of x than of y.

Ambiguity of *bol'she ... čem*

- meta-comparative (see examples in section 2)
- standard adverbial

(68) Она *больше* любила Лермонтова, чем Пушкина. [Василий Катанян 1999]
'She loved more the poetry by Pushkin than by Lermontov.'

- standard quantitative

(69) Я *больше* потерял, чем приобрел. [Андрей Троицкий 2000]
'I lost more <things> than gained.'

(70) Я *больше* запоминал, чем понимал. [Александр Иличевский 2009]
'I was memorizing more <things> than understanding.'

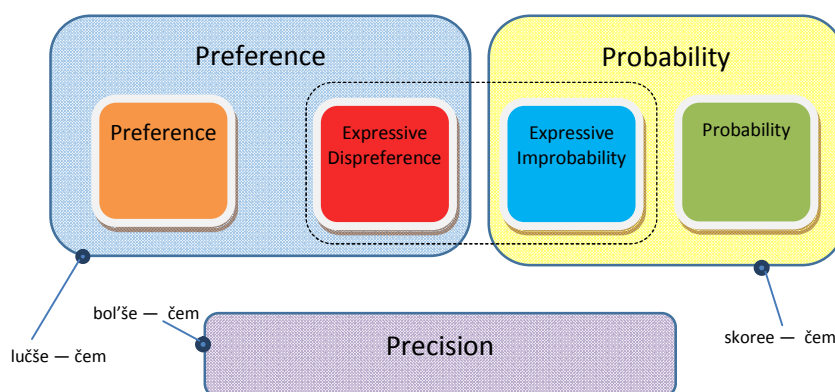
Common properties of all the three semantic varieties are as follows

- *čem*-clause can be omitted;
- *Skoree*, *bol'she*, and *lučše* can be used with a *ne* 'but not' instead of *čem*.

(71) *Скорее* он придёт пешком, а не приедет на автобусе.
'He rather comes on foot than with a bus.'

6. Summary of the data: Semantic map of Russian Meta-comparatives

The results of our investigation of the three meta-comparatives can be summarized in the following semantic map.



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