

SYNCRETIC PHENOMENA IN THE SYSTEM OF PARTS OF SPEECH**Suyunova Bejona Ulugbek kizi**

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Annotation: This article examines the nature and functions of syncretic phenomena within the system of parts of speech in the Russian language. Syncretism is defined as the coexistence of morphological, syntactic, and semantic properties traditionally associated with different grammatical categories. The study focuses on hybrid forms such as participles, gerunds, infinitives, and substantivized adjectives, illustrating their dual characteristics through Russian-language examples. Special attention is given to the mechanisms of morphological, syntactic, and semantic syncretism and their role in the evolution of the grammatical system. The analysis demonstrates that syncretism is not an irregular deviation but a productive and necessary component of linguistic development, contributing to the economy of expression, functional flexibility, and grammaticalization. The findings highlight the significance of syncretic structures for understanding the dynamics of grammatical categories and transitional forms in contemporary Russian.

Keywords: syncretism, parts of speech, morphological syncretism, syntactic syncretism, semantic syncretism, transitional forms, participles, gerunds, infinitive, substantivization, Russian grammar, hybrid grammatical categories.

Syncretism in the system of parts of speech represents one of the most complex and dynamic features of grammatical structure in natural languages. It emerges when a linguistic unit simultaneously combines the morphological, syntactic, or semantic properties of two or more parts of speech. As a result, syncretic forms occupy transitional or hybrid positions, reflecting the continuous evolution of language, its tendency toward economy, and the functional reorganization of grammatical categories. In the Russian language, syncretic phenomena are especially pronounced due to the historical development of its morphology and the high degree of interaction between verbal and nominal categories.

Morphological syncretism occurs when a single word form carries the morphological features of different parts of speech. In Russian, the clearest examples are participles and gerunds (депричастия), which combine verbal categories with adjectival or adverbial traits.

Participles possess verbal characteristics such as aspect, voice, and transitivity, while at the same time demonstrating adjectival features, including agreement in gender, number, and case.

читающий студент — “a student who is reading” (verbal: denotes an action; adjectival: agrees with the noun)

прочитанная книга — “the book that has been read” (verbal: expresses result of action; adjectival: functions as attribute)

Gerunds express an additional action and do not inflect for gender, number, or person, resembling adverbs in their syntactic behavior.

Он шёл, улыбаясь. — “He was walking, smiling.” (verbal: denotes simultaneous action; adverbial: modifies the verb *шёл*)

Не подумав, он ответил. — “Without thinking, he replied.”

These forms hold a fundamentally syncretic position, representing a fusion of two distinct grammatical domains.

Syntactic syncretism arises when a word belonging to a particular part of speech performs a function that is typical of another part of speech.

Adjectives can act as nouns when used without an accompanying substantive.
Examples:

дежурный вошёл — “the on-duty person entered”

больные ждут врача — “the patients are waiting for the doctor”

In these contexts, the adjectives take on all the properties of nouns: they become referential and occupy the syntactic position of subject or object.

In Russian, nouns in certain forms function as adverbs, which demonstrates a syntactic shift:

Он придёт вечером. — “He will come in the evening.”

Работа началась утром. — “The work began in the morning.”

Although these words are morphologically nouns, their syntactic role corresponds to that of an adverb.

Semantic syncretism appears when a lexical unit conveys meanings associated with more than one part of speech. This ambiguity is especially visible in words that fluctuate between qualitative and relative semantic domains.

Examples:

встречный ветер — can mean “oncoming” (relative)

прошлый год — “last year” (temporal meaning overrides qualitative meaning)

Additionally, words such as *северный*, *завтрашний*, *летний* demonstrate overlapping semantic fields, oscillating between qualitative description and relational meaning.

Several grammatical forms in Russian naturally belong to transitional categories, maintaining features of multiple parts of speech.

Infinitive

The infinitive is a hybrid of verb and noun. It retains verbal categories such as aspect and valency but functions in the syntax like a noun:

Читать — это полезно. — “Reading is useful.”

Ему нужно поехать. — “He needs to go.”

Short Adjectives and Short Participles

Short adjectives lean toward predicative usage, while short participles combine the semantics of state with features of verbal origin.

Examples:

Он рад. — predicative, state

Книга прочитана. — resultative meaning with verbal semantics

The Functional Significance of Syncretism

Syncretic structures play an essential role in the dynamics of the grammatical system. They serve several linguistic purposes:

Economy of expression: fewer distinct forms are needed to express complex meanings.

Flexibility of syntax: syncretic units expand the range of grammatical constructions.

Pathways of grammaticalization: many historical changes begin as syncretic patterns.

Semantic enrichment: syncretism allows the coexistence of multiple shades of meaning.

Thus, syncretism acts not merely as an anomaly but as an important mechanism responsible for the development and renewal of grammatical categories.

Syncretic phenomena in the system of parts of speech form a vital component of the grammatical structure of the Russian language. Morphological, syntactic, and semantic syncretism reflect the deep interaction between different grammatical categories and contribute to the formation of transitional forms. Russian provides numerous examples of hybrid structures that combine the properties of verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs. These phenomena illustrate the dynamic and evolving nature of grammar and highlight the language’s ability to adapt to new communicative and functional needs.



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