



# Discourse properties and semantics of mental verbs in subordinative constructions in Spoken Russian <sup>1</sup>

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# Object of the study

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Subordinative constructions with mental verbs “to know” in Modern Russian:

- with the conjunction **что**

(1) *Ja dumal, что ты pridesh.*

I thought that you would come.

(2) *Ja znal, что ты pridesh.*

I knew that you would come.

- without the conjunction

(3) **A ты znajesh**, nas vysel'ajut! [RNC]

**Do you know** we are being evacuated?

(4) *Sejchas, po vashim oschuschenijam, krivyje opatj smykajutsa? —  
**Ja dumaju**, naoborot, rasxodjatsja. Ili, po krajnej mere, idut  
paralleljno. [RNC]*

What is your intuition, are the curves joining together? **I think**, on the contrary, they are branching off. Or at least go in a parallel way.



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Cf. English:

parenthetical with a mental verb:

*She uh= has had enough **I guess**.*

(Thompson 2002: 134)

complement clause:

***I really think but Mary doubts** Clinton would be elected*

(Doherty 2000: 25)

# Parataxis or parenthetical clause?

(Russkaja grammatika 1980):

Conjunction vs. non-conjunction subordination vs. parenthetical constructions

(Paducheva 1996: 322):

- *čto*-clauses;

parentheticals proper (“sobstvenno-vvodnyje konstrukcii”):

*On, ja dumaju, soglasitsja.* (lit. He, **I think**, will agree)

- conjunctival parentheticals with the conjunction *kak* “as”:

*On, kak izvestno, so vsemi soglashajetsja.* (He, **as it is well-known**, agrees with everyone)

- subordinates without conjunction:

*On dumajet, ja jego ispugalsja.* (**He thinks**, I’m afraid of him)



# References on parenthetical use of complement-taking verbs

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# Aims of the study

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- ? morphosyntactic, semantic and prosodic criteria for differentiating between complement constructions with mental verbs vs. paratactic constructions vs. parenthetical constructions;
- ? the question whether the paratactic constructions with different prosodic patterns form a homogeneous class



# Data

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## National Russian Corpus:

- ❖ main corpus
- ❖ spoken corpus
- ❖ multimedia corpus

NB: The verb *dumatj* "to think" only is considered.



# Restrictions on the data

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- Linear position of the clause with the mental verb: only prepositional

As argued in (Paducheva 1996), medial position clauses and final position clauses are parentheticals. Initial position clauses can be either parentheticals, or paratactic. (Cf. similar conclusions for English in Urmson 1963, Thompson, Mulac 1991)


NB: “direct speech” constructions with S and V inversion, cf.:

*Vse sredstva xoroshi, **dumajet vedjma**, a zritjelju ostajetsa toljko oxatj i axatj ot gadostjej ni v chem ne povinnym ljudjam.*

Any means to an end, **thinks the witch**, while the audience signs and moans seeing the evil caused to innocent people.

- Conjunction parentheticals (*kak ty znajesh* “as you know”) are not considered



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- NB The lexicalized, “formulaic” expressions that are subject to pragmaticization and are used as discourse markers are not considered
  - Criteria: unacceptability of pronouns, adverbs, particles with the lexicalized form of the mental verb, phonetic reduction etc.
  - *dumaju (I think), znajesh (you know), g(ovo)rit (he says):*

*Daj, **dumaju**, posplju chasok.*

*\* Daj, **ja dumaju**, posplju chasok.*

*\* Daj, **vot dumaju**, posplju chasok.*

lit. Let me, **I think**, sleep an hour

[Kobozeva 1999: 540]



# Morphosyntactic properties

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Morphological markers:

- tense
- indirect mood

Syntax:

- possibility of pronouns of different persons (/number)
- arguments in the clause with mental verb
- circumstantials
- emphatic and other particles that modify the mental verb
- negation
- mental verb is part of a complex predicate



# Morphological properties

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- tense

Initial position:

*Ruka u Klavdii byla tjazhelaja. **Dumal**, oboj djetsja; ne oboshlosj.*

Claudia had a heavy hand. **I thought**, everything will turn out all right; but it didn't.

Medial/final position: ? \* (no examples found in RNC)

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- subjunctive mood: initial position

*Poka sam ne proveril, chto dazhe etot kod [program code] mozhet ne srabotatj iz-za nedocheta v jadre, to **dumal** by eto nadezhnaja proverka.*

(<http://forum.qip.ru/archive/index.php/t-18123.html>)

Unless I checked myself and found out that even this code can fail because of a deficit in the core, **I would think** it was a secure checkup.

Medial/final position: \* (no examples found in RNC)



# Syntactic properties

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- different person/number patterns:

***Ja dumal / ty dumal / on dumal, oboj djotsa.***

**I / you / he thought** everything will turn out all right.

- temporal adverbs

***Ja vseгда dumal, on durak, a okazyvajetsja, eto ne tak.***

**I always thought** he is a fool, but it turned out to be wrong.

***Ja i ranjshe dumal, on durak, i okazalosj, chto ja byl prav.***

**Even earlier I thought** he is a fool, and it turned out to be true.

*\*On ne takoj chelovek, **vseгда dumal ja/ dumal ja vseгда***

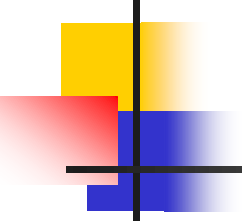
He's not such a person, **I always thought.**

- particles

***A ja vedj dumal, drug, ty ko mne nexorosheje imejesh.***

And **why I thought**, my friend, you don't like me.

*\* Ty ko mne nexorosheje imeesh, **ja vedj dumal.***

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- arguments in the clause with the mental verb
  - mental verb as part of a complex predicate

***Lilija Ivanovna stala dumatj: byvshaja pridet na devjatj dnejj. Pervaja zhena i sejchas ne prishla.***

**Lilia Ivanovna started thinking:** his ex-wife will come to the funeral repast. His first wife didn't come even now.

Medial/final position: \* (no examples found in RNC)

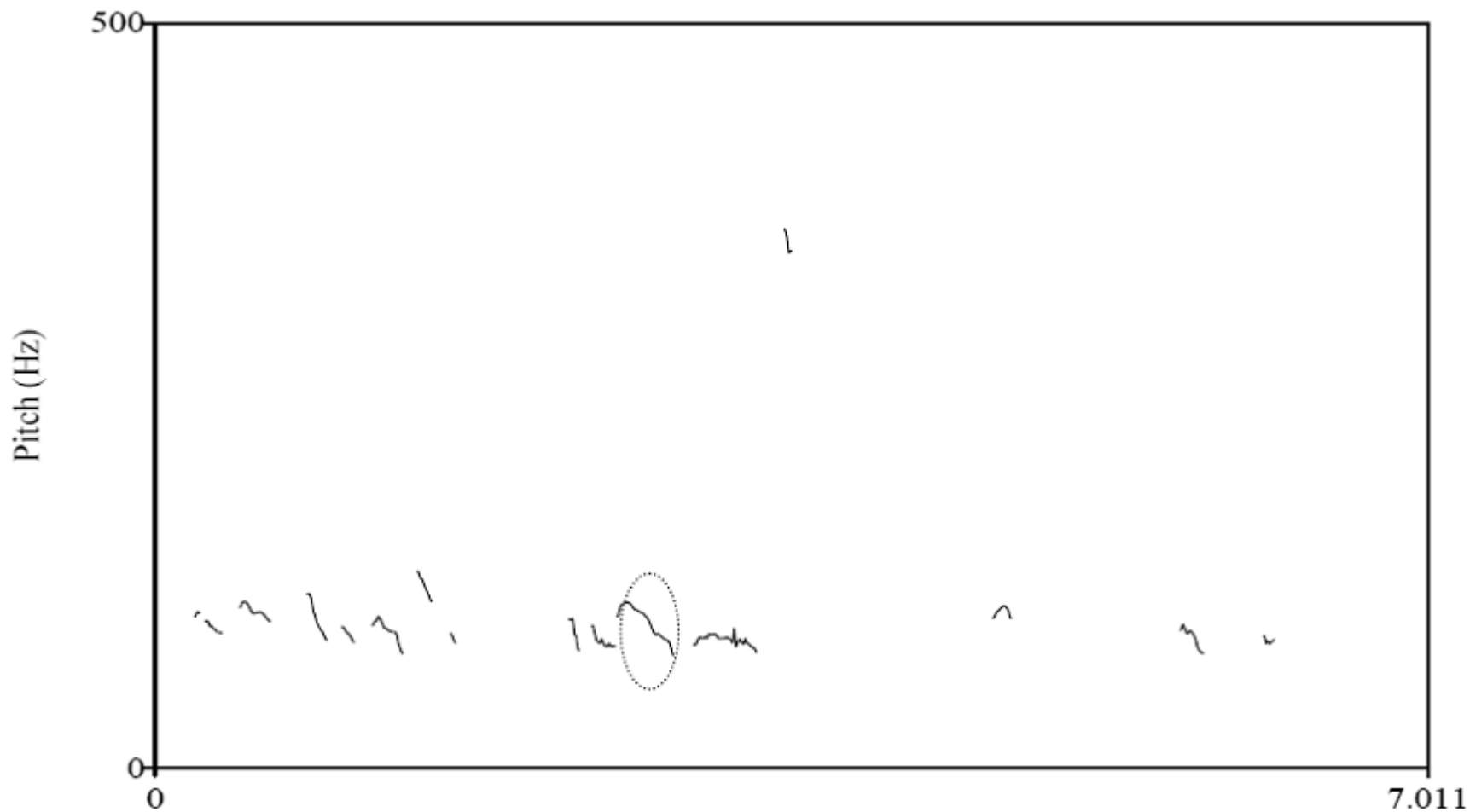
# Prosody of parataxis vs. parentheticals

- Parentheticals are characterized by lower intensity (loudness), even prosodic pattern, no accent (Gavrilenko 2005)
- The clause headed by the mental verb is not pronounced in a more quiet way, it can have its own accent and non-even prosodic pattern:

*Jesli nas vsej zdesj ne utopit / **ja tak dumaju** /  
Ivan Alekseich / desjatj boljshe / chem dva.*

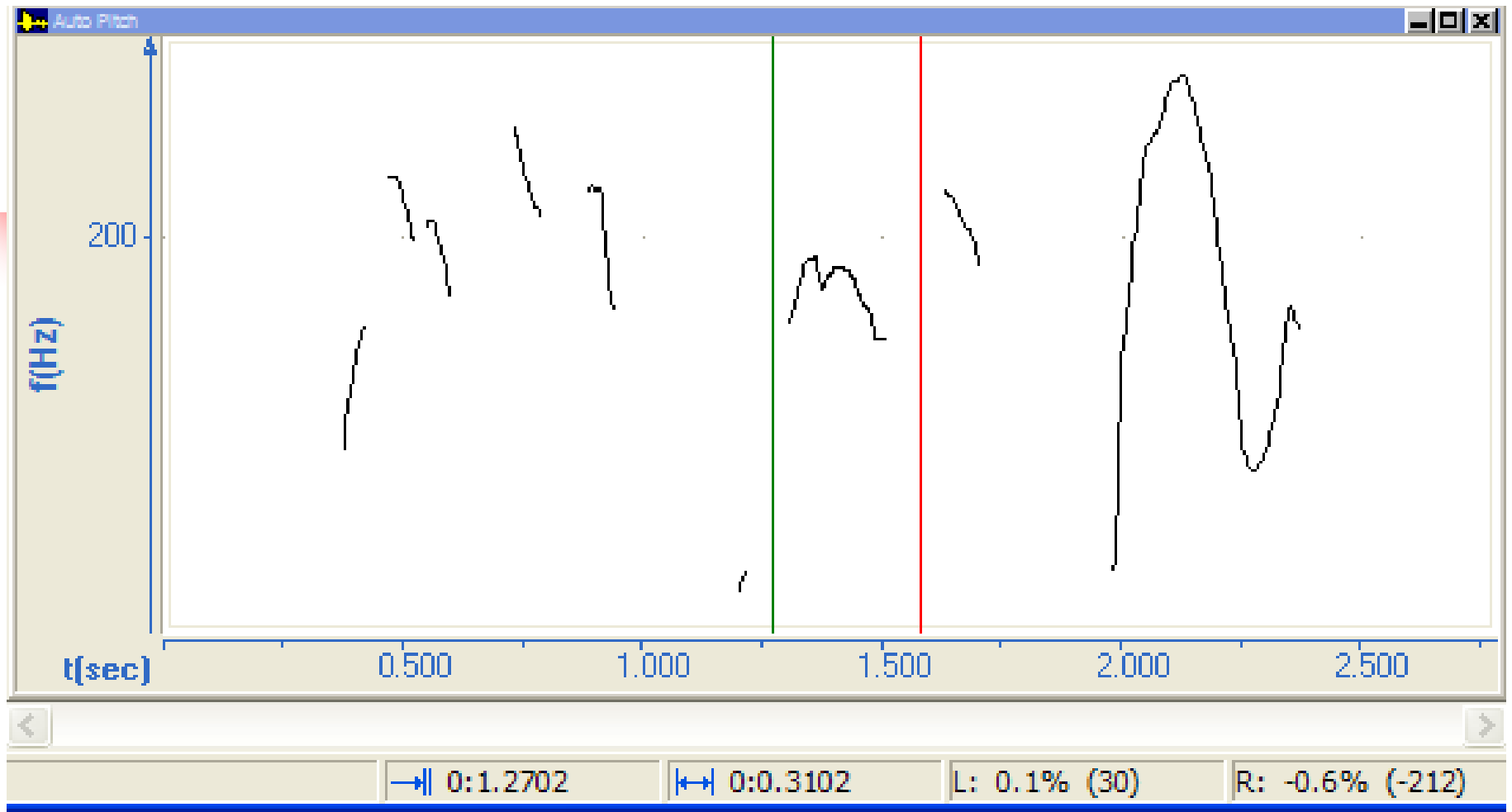
If we are not sunk here / **I think so** / Ivan Alekseich  
/ ten is more / than two.

- fall intonation in the example



Ja tak dumaju \ Ivan Alekseich





*Vot eta vsja texnika **dumajesh** na kom? Na mne.*

Who **do you think** is responsible for all this equipment? I am.



# Semantic and pragmatic functions: Definition of parentheticals

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[Paducheva 1996: 325]: parentheticals are outside the part of a sentence that is communication significant

The communication significant part:

1. enters the scope of affirmation/question in an affirmative/interrogative sentence
2. carries new information
3. can host logical accent

(Dehé, Kavalova 2007: 1): "Parentheticals are expressions that are linearly represented in a given string of utterance (a host sentence)", but

- seem structurally independent...
- interrupt the prosodic flow of an utterance...
- are outside the focus-background structure of their host utterance"



# Semantic / pragmatic properties

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- the “mental” clause enters the focus-background structure of its host utterance, see previous examples with emphatic particles;
- the “mental” clause enters the narrative chain: it is possible to coordinate the mental verb with a non-mental verb belonging to the narrative chain

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- coordination with another verb in the narrative chain:

***Ja dumal, eto nevozmozhno, i chuvstvoval sebja sovershenno bespomoschnym.***

**I thought** it is impossible, and felt myself absolutely helpless.  
ellipsis of the subject pronoun

Ja govorju "Kuda zh ty smotrel?" ... a on mne "Da ja smotrju ty pokatilsja, nu **ja dumal** ty ujexal **i tozhe pojexal**".

<http://www.drive2.ru/users/max-88/blog/>

I say "What were you looking at?" ... and he answers "Why, I see you began sliding downhill, and **I thought** you were leaving, and also started driving.

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- the “mental” clause enters the scope of question in an interrogative sentence:

- ***Dumajesh*** / *lyzhi zamochil?*

- *Ne dumaju* / *a vizhu.*

**You think** / he wetted his ski? I don't think so / I see it.



# Functions of parataxis

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- Two assertions in one and the same sentence  
: question to both the “mental” clause and the associated clause are possible

***Ja stala dumatj, sorok tysjach chego? Dollarov.***

I started thinking, forty thousand of what? Dollars.



# Problems: negation

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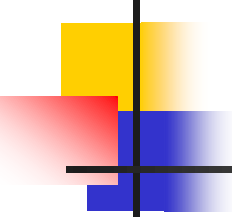
- Parentheticals with mental verbs can not host negation [Апресян 1995: 614]:

*\*Osetrovyje ryby, (vovse) ne govorjat znatoki, utratili svoj byloj vkus.*

lit. Sturgeons, **the experts don' t say**, lost their taste.

*\*Vozhdj povstancev, otricajut nekotoryje, uzhe pribyl v stranu.*

lit. The leader of the rebels, **as some people deny**, is already in the country.



Paratactic constructions can not host negation,  
as well:

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*Vy svojego syna znajete luchshe, **i ja tak dumaju**, vam legche pridumatj, kak postroitj s nim razgovor naschet zavtrakov i obedov.*

You know your son better, and **I think so**, you will find out easier how to discuss his breakfasts and lunches with him.

\* ***Ja ne dumaju**, vam legche pridumatj, kak postroitj s nim razgovor.*



## 2. Paratactic constructions with “colon” and “comma” intonation

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***Ja dumaju,** istorija izobretena dlja uspokojenija  
chelovechestva.*

**I think,** history is invented to soothe the humanity.

*Na scene tak mnogo vystradano i perezhito, chto **poroj  
ja dazhe dumaju** – mne boljshe let, chem zapisano  
v pasporte.*

I have so much suffered and survived, that **I even  
think sometimes** – I’m older than it’s written in the  
passport.

*A ja vizhu jego na ulice i **dumaju:** sejchas razrevusj.*

And I see him in the street and **think:** I’ ll burst into  
tears.



# Two constructions or one?

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- ? Do paratactic constructions with different prosodic patterns form a homogeneous class from the point of view of morphosyntax and semantics?



# Prosody

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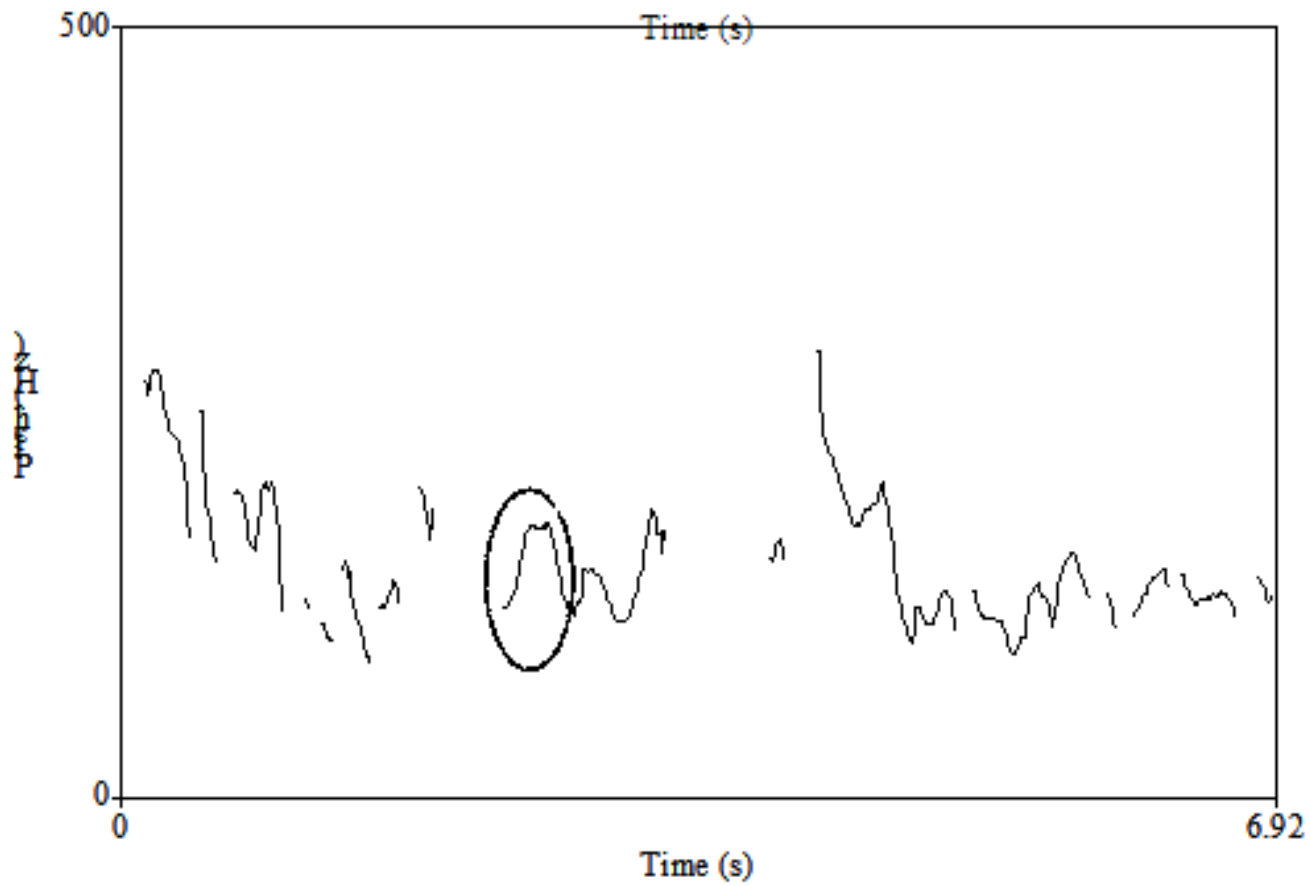
- *Ja voobsche inoj raz **dumaju** / vot / nu chto jemu nado / vot bogaatyj / prijexal na "Mersedese"*

Why, sometimes **I think** / why / what does he need / he's rich / has driven here on a Mercedes  
→ colon?

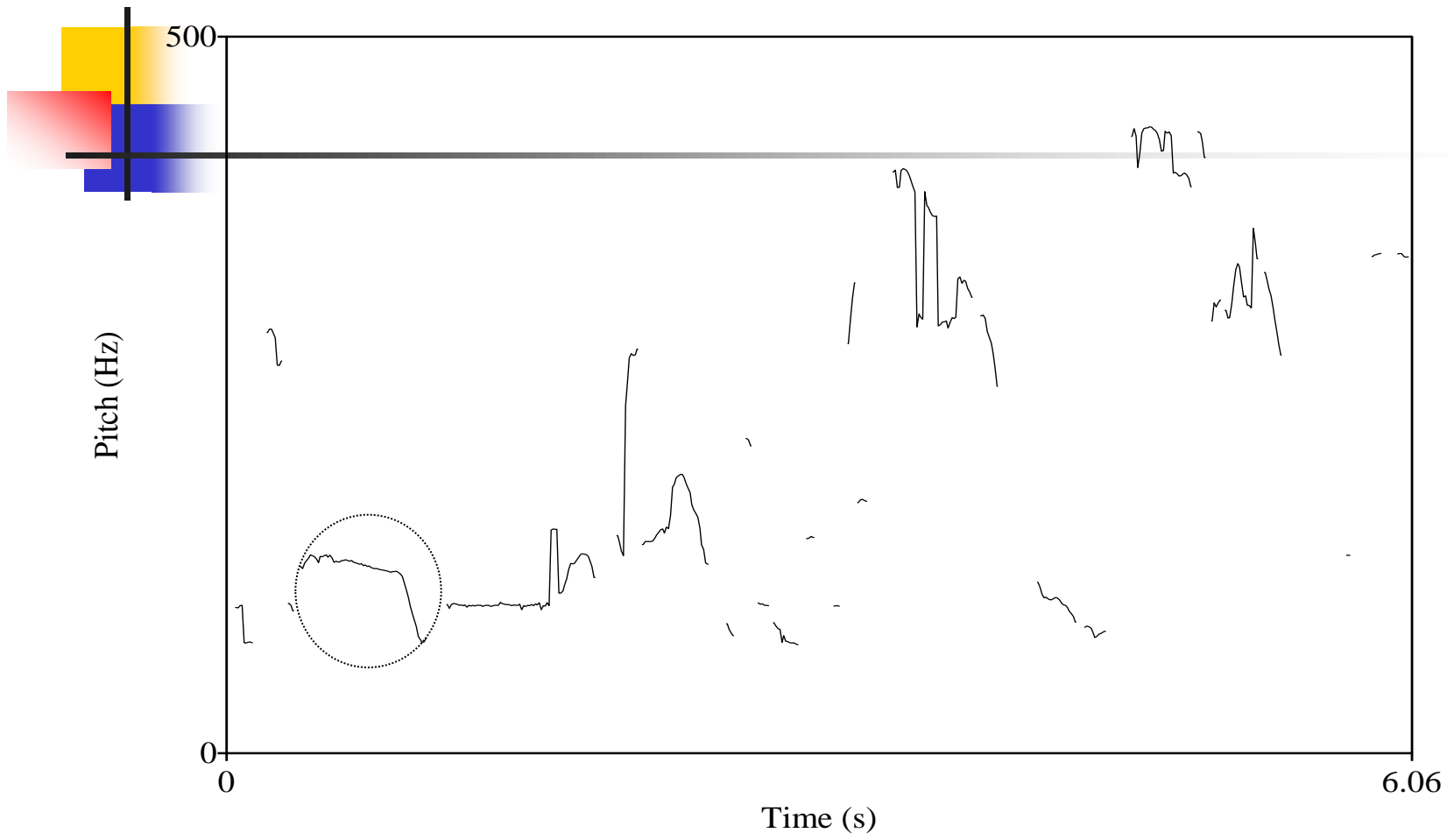
- ***Dumaju...** my jesche povidajemsja / gospoda / i pogovorim.*

I think... we'll see each other / gentlemen / and talk.

→ comma?



Ja voobsche inoj raz **dumaju**  $\wedge$  vot nu chto jemu nado



**Dumaju\**      my    jesche povidajemsja



# Interim conclusions

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- «colon constructions» - rise and fall intonation /\
- «comma constructions» - fall intonation \

Cf. classification of prosodic types [Kibrik, Podlesskaja 2009]



# Morphological criteria

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- indirect mood

*Togda **ja dumal by**: moi deti – eto ja, no u menja teperj neskoljko lic i neskoljko zhiznej.*

Then **I would think**: I am my children, but I have several faces and lives.

*Dobro by on ne znal, kto takaja I. Uvarova – **dumal by**, mozhet, eto kakaja-nibudj staraja grymza...*

Why, if he didn't know who is I. Uvarova – **he could think**, maybe it's some old bag.



# Morphological criteria

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- tense: present, past

*Ruka u Klavdii byla tjazhelaja. **Dumal**, oboj djetsja; ne oboshlosj.*

Claudia had a heavy hand. **I thought**, everything will turn out all right; but it didn't.

*S drugoj storony, **ja dumala**: a dejstviteljno, malo li detej, kotoryje boltajutsa po ulicam, po podjezdam, zanimajutsja chert znajet chem...*

On the other hand, **I thought**: actually, so many children gad about streets, building entrances, doing nonsense.





# Syntactic criteria

- subject of the mental verb, particles

*Vy svojego syna znajete luchshe, i **ja tak dumaju**, vam legche pridumatj, kak postroitj s nim razgovor naschet zavtrakov i obedov.*

You know your son better, and **I think in such a way**, you will find out easier how to discuss his breakfasts and lunches with him.

***Ja, kstati, i sejchas tak poroj dumaju**: sochiniteljstvo – delo pustoje, vse vedj uzhe skazano do nas.*

By the way, **I think sometimes in such a way**: the writing is a lost cause, everything has already been said before.

- negation

\* **Ja ne dumaju**, vam legche pridumatj, kak postroitj s nim razgovor.

\* **Ja ne dumaju**: sochiniteljstvo – delo pustoje.



# Syntactic criteria

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- epistemic adverbs in the mental clause

***On, navernoje, dumajet*** – *ja millioner, von skoljko u menja bumazhek...*

**He probably thinks** – I am a millionaire, look how many bonds I have.

***Navernoje, dumajut:*** *raz Zverev etim zanimajetsja, znachit, eto jemu zachem-to nuzhno.*

**They probably think:** if Zverev is occupied with that, it means that he needs it for some reason.

- complex predicates and circumstantials are possible in both types



# Conclusion

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- Both types have the same morphosyntactic properties. However, they demonstrate different semantics and prosody



# Semantics of the paratactic constructions

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- «colon constructions»: *dumatj* as  
`reflect, ponder`, rarely - `guess,  
believe`
- «comma constructions»: *dumatj* as  
`guess, believe`



# Difference in illocutionary force in the two parts of the sentence

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***Stali dumatj:*** *mozhno li jemu pomoch cherez Levkinogo otca, Shulepnikova?*  
**We started thinking:** can we help him through Lew' s father, Shulepnikov?

A ***ja, Mart, vse lezhala i dumala:*** *sokratjsja by s duxom – i kuda-nibudj, na jug, chto li...*

Mart, **I was lying and thinking:** I'd like to brace myself and travel some place, to the south or whatever

***Slozhno predstavitj sebe cheloveka, kotoryj darit podarok i dumajet:*** *kakaja gadostj, kak protivno!*

It is difficult to imagine a person that gives a present and **thinks:** so nasty, it' s disgusting!

***Japoncy dumajut:*** *chto by nam jesche takoje izobresti, chtoby zhitj jeshe luchshe?*

**The Japanese think:** let' s invent something to live better

# Сочетания с глаголами положения в пространстве

- double verb constructions «sit and think», «look and think»

*Vot, ponimajete, lezhu **i dumaju**: kak zhe eto my ochutilisj v etoj zhutkoj mestnosti.*

So you know, I'm lying down **and thinking**: how come we came to this awful place.

*Smotrish na eto **i dumajesh**: kazhdyj iz nas xotel by gorditjsja svojej stranoj.*

You look at that **and think**: everyone of us would like to be proud of his/her country.

*Ushla, teperj tjazhelo. Sizhu **i dumaju**, chto tjazheleje.*  
She left, now it is hard to bear it. And I'm sitting **and thinking**, what's harder.



I think that is all vs.

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That is all, I guess

Thank you!