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Some Russian Prepositional Constructions through Russian Learner Corpus

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Corpus RLC

(web-corpora.ru/RLC)

French sub-corpus (36.480 words, annotated)

Corpus total: 8106 documents, 131269 sentences, 1527553 words.

Search executed in a user-defined subcorpus of 495 documents, 6577 sentences, 69497 words.

RLC

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RLC

Russian Learner Corpus

Russian language in a r

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What is RLC?

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What is RLC?

The Russian Learner Corpus (RLC) is a collection of Russian language production from learners of Russian as a Foreign language and contains both oral and written production in Standard Russian ranging from mistakes in production to Standard Russian. The preliminary linguistic analysis and tagging of the corpus is by Ekaterina Rakhilina (Higher School of Economics).²

Plan



- Purpose: to identify weak points in the acquisition of Russian prepositions by French-speaking students
- Methodology:
 - to collect students' writing samples
 - to annotate errors with prepositions
 - to classify errors by type of construction
 - to conduct computer analysis
 - to systematize the data
 - to draw conclusions

Classification of errors by



- Types of constructions:
 - government
 - verbal
 - nominal
 - adjectival
 - independent circumstantial constructions
 - time
 - space
 - purpose
 - cause

Focus on



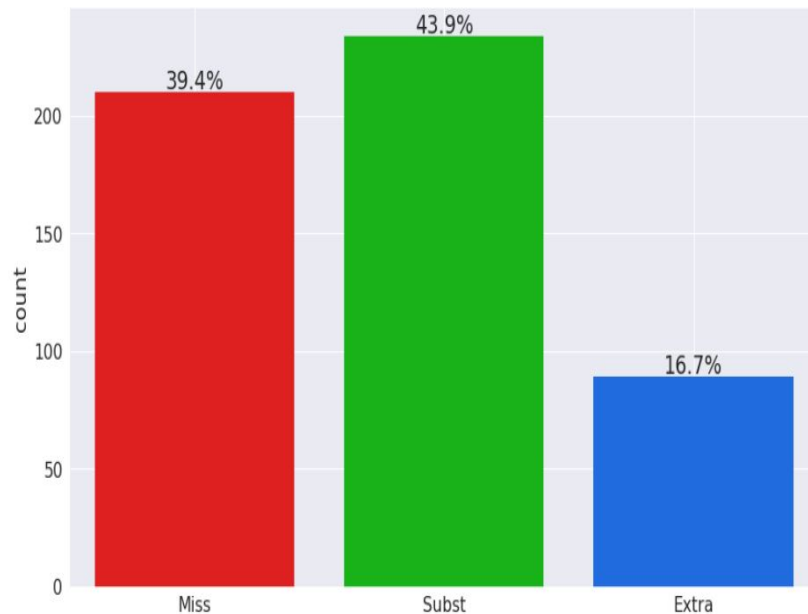
- Types of prepositional errors:
 - omission
the preposition is required but not included
 - insertion
the preposition is not required but used
 - substitution
wrong preposition is used
- Study based on nearly 700 constructions (691)

Total errors in the use of prepositions

General data



- **Substitution** **43,9%**
- **Missing** **39,4%**
- **Insertion** **16,7%**

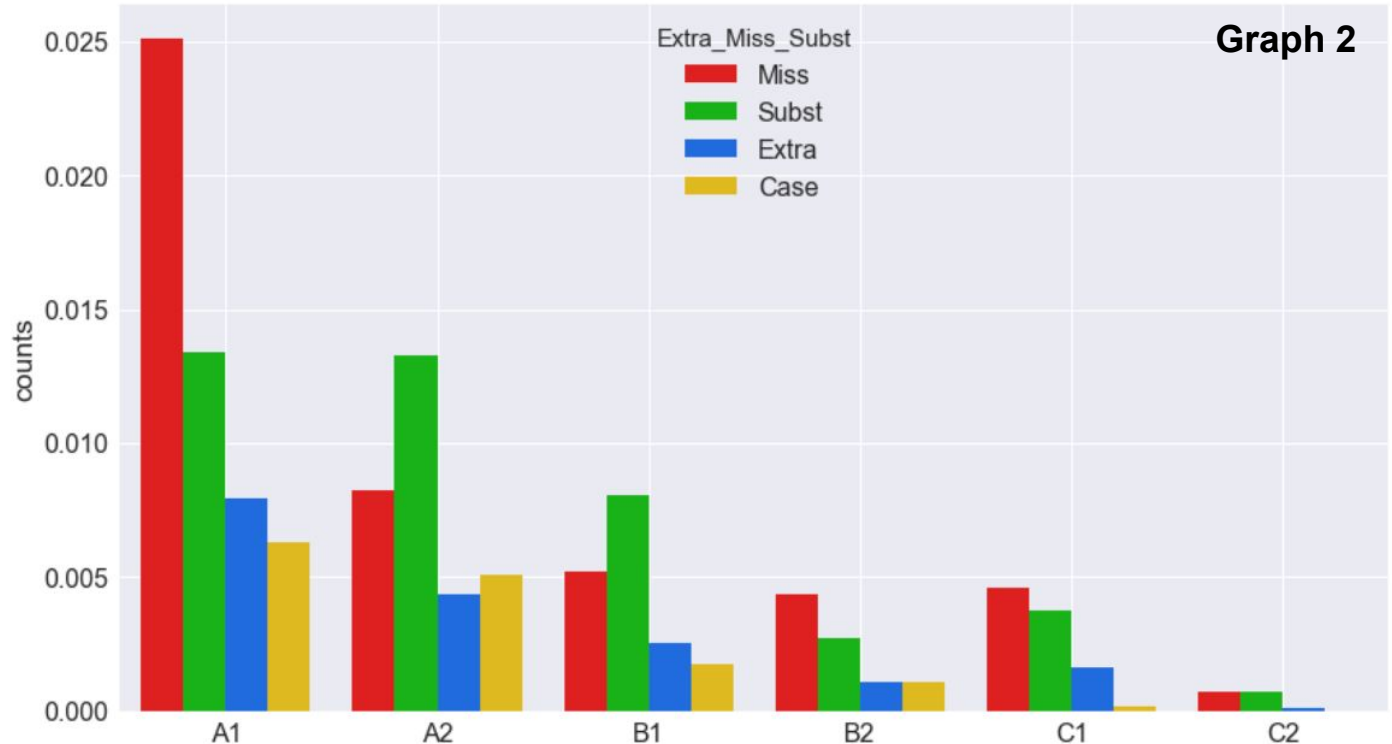


Graph 1

Prepositional constructions and proficiency level of students



decreasing
from A1 to C2



Prepositional constructions and proficiency level of students



- Graph 2 shows that we find a maximum number of errors at the beginning of level A1: mostly missing prepositions, but also misused prepositions (substitution), and insertion.
- Graph 2 shows that the number of errors grows considerably at the intermediate level of language acquisition, A2, B1 and B2.
- While errors at each level are quite specific, from the linguistic point of view it is interesting to identify which prepositions are particularly difficult to internalize.
- Let's start with the most common ones, omission and substitution.

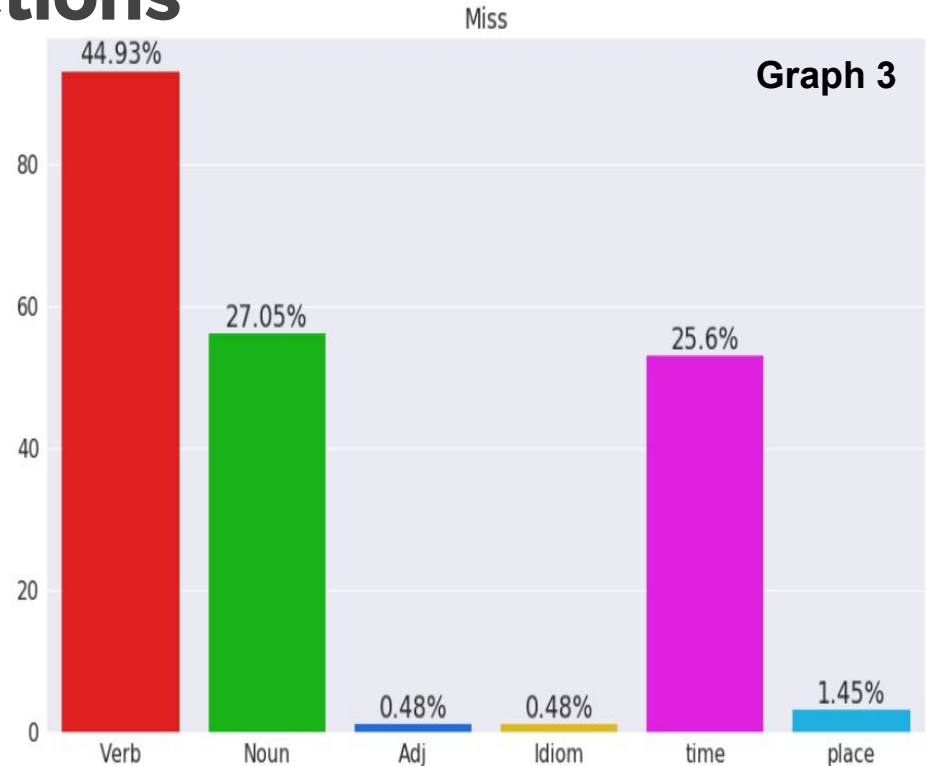
Analysis

Missing preposition

Missing preposition: Types of constructions



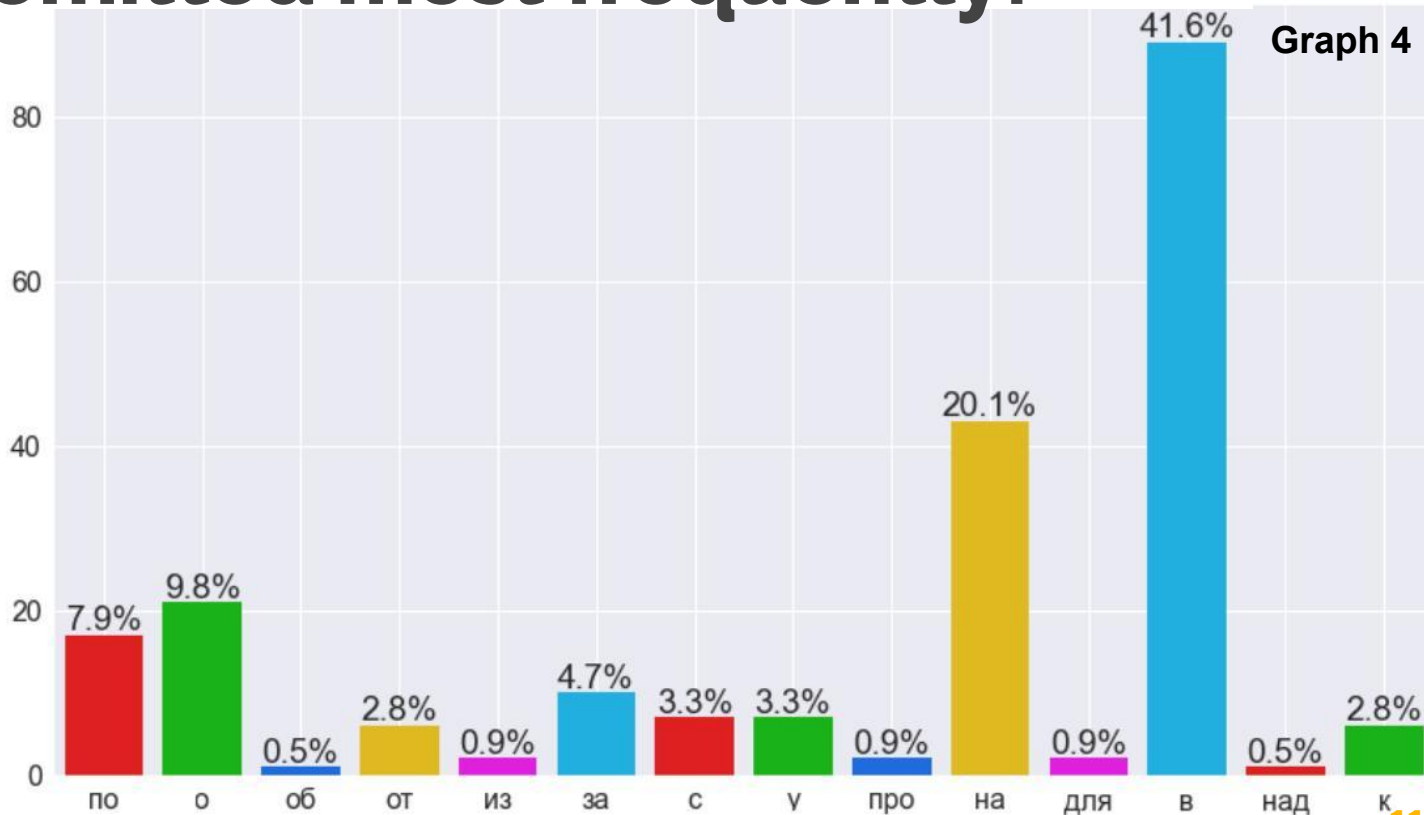
- **Verbal constructions 44,93%**
- Noun constructions 27,05%
- Time constructions 25,6%



Which prepositions are omitted most frequently?



- В (41,6%)
- НА (20,1%)
- О (10,3%)
- ПО (7,9%)



Which prepositions are omitted most frequently?



- **В (41,6%)**
- **HA (20,1%)**
- **О (10,3%)**
- **ПО (7,9%)**

- Prepositions which were less frequently omitted are not simple comparing to the ones omitted most often.
- The problem is that they are simply used less, and are introduced much later in the process of teaching/learning, starting at the intermediate level.
- On the other side, prepositions like *в*, *на*, *о* are frequent at all levels of language acquisition.

Missing prepositions in verbal constructions

НА:

Следующий день, девочка
посмотреть волки
они не могут говорят этот язык

В:

чтобы участвовать международную конференцию

ЗА:

они наблюдают медведь

ПО:

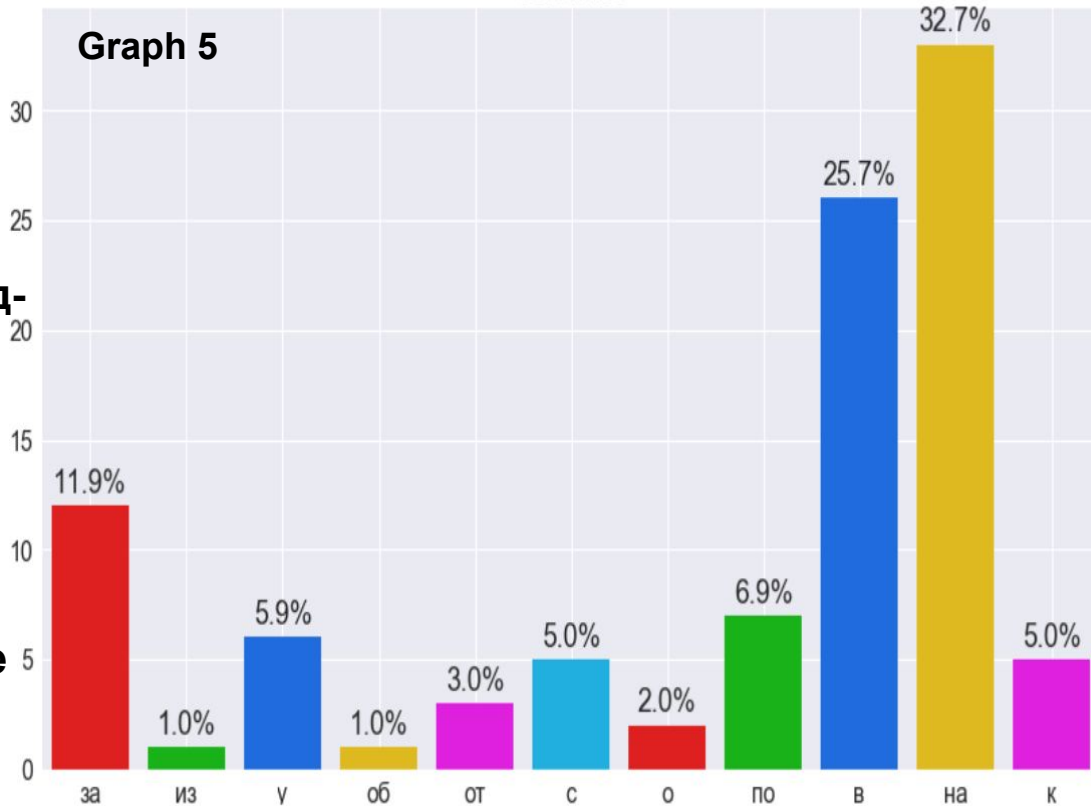
потом схожу лестницу

К:

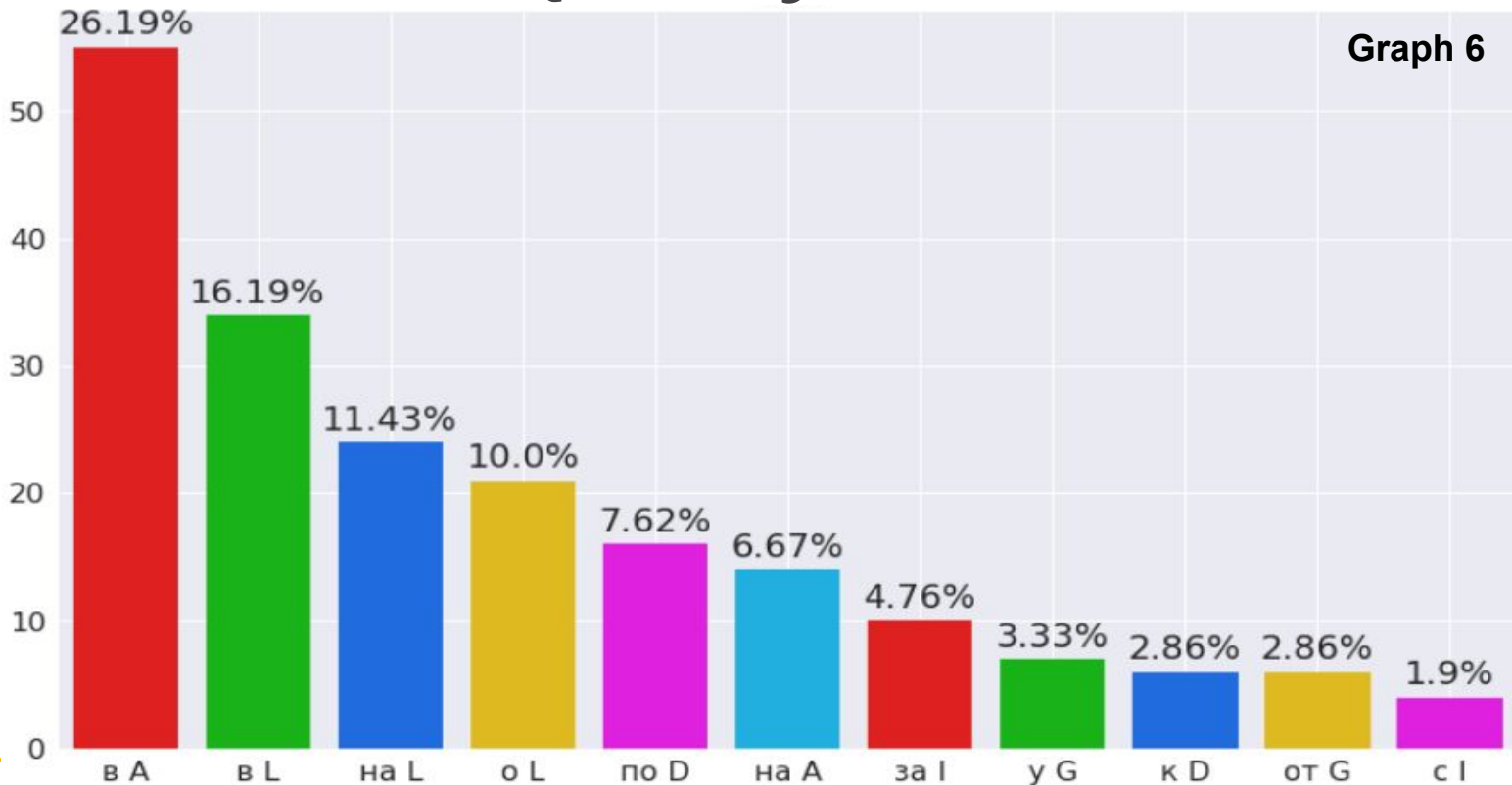
Надо привыкнуть русской зиме

С:

Он познакомился его жену в
горах.



In which constructions are prepositions missed most frequently?



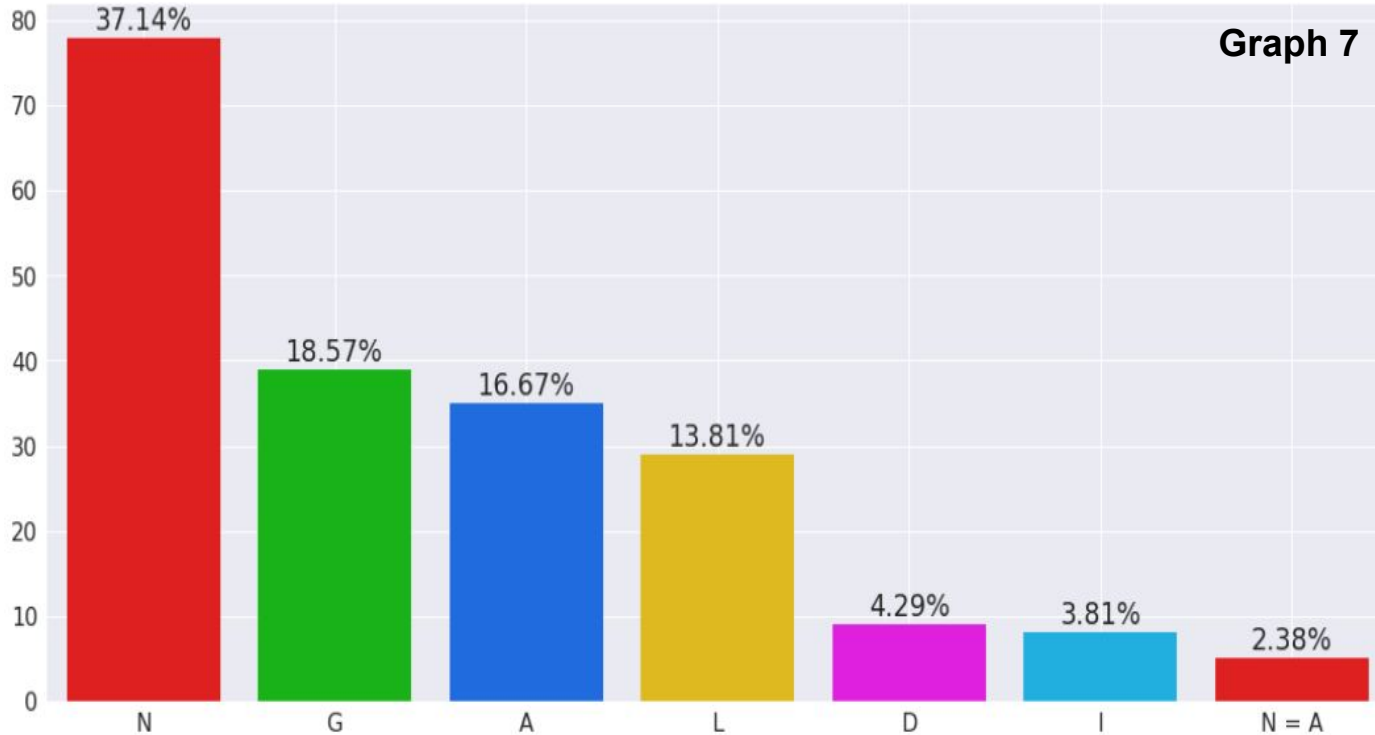
In which constructions are prepositions missed most frequently?



- в А** - Четверг я и мое подруги идем в кафе.
- в L** - Я люблю купаться **море** и загорать
- на L** - Я не ежу **автобусе**.
- о L** - Рассказать ему **моей поездке** в Санкт-Петербург.
- по D** - Я закончаю день с занятий **англиской граматики**.
- на А** - Министр культуры ответил **вопросы** журналистов.

- The maximum of errors is found with the use of Accusative and Locative cases.
- We should note a common error with the days of a week,
- then there are errors with localization with *в* or *на* prepositions,
- then other errors.

Which forms are used to replace the prepositional phrase?



Which forms are used to replace the prepositional phrase?



N - Лев сердится и гонится **волки**.

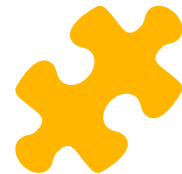
G - Речь **статьи** идёт о истории России.

A - Потом схожу **лестницу** и выхожу из дома.

L - **Палу** есть ковёр.

- With misused prepositional constructions students have used more often the Nominative as not differenced case.
- A significant part of errors is associated with the misuse of Genitive, Accusative and Locative cases.
- This fact could be explained by more frequent usage of these cases at all levels.

Which forms are used to replace the prepositional phrase?



A - Потом схожу
лестницу и
выхожу из
дома.

L - Палу есть
ковёр.

- It is difficult to find the general reason for the use of these cases. We have to pay attention to the linguistic context as well as to the background knowledge of students: each case must be considered separately.
- For instance, the example with the Accusative case here represents a pure calque from French (*je descends l'escalier*). However, French does not explain the example with Locative, the French construction implies a preposition (***Au*** *sol il y a un tapis*).

Which forms are used to replace the prepositional phrase?



G - Речь статьи
идёт о истории
России.

- Another case is observed with the Genitive use (*речь статьи идёт о...*) which represents a sort of fusion of two constructions: “речь идёт о” on the one side, and “речь статьи” on the other:
- the second one is used by analogy with other constructions with a complement of noun (for ex. *le sujet de l'article / тема статьи*).
- But it's necessary to emphasise that the Russian construction is idiomatic and cannot be modified.

The most missed prepositions

Graph 8



Analysis

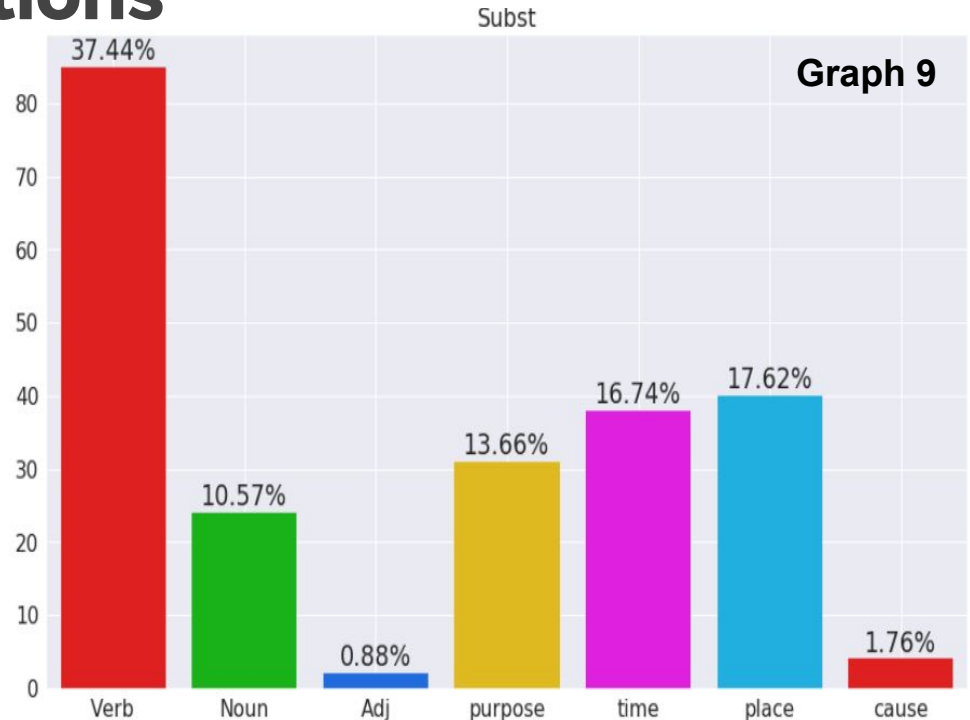
Substitution of prepositions



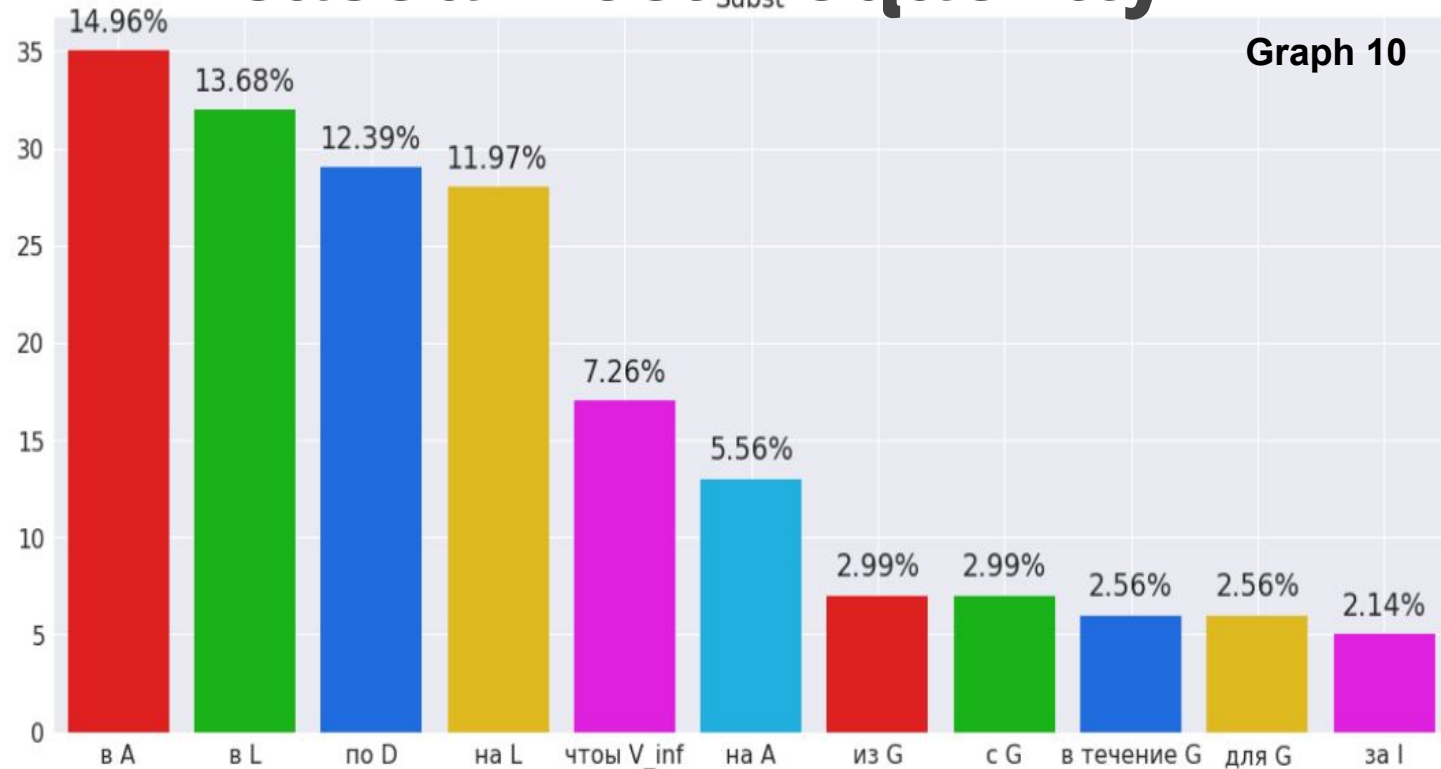
Substitution of preposition:

Types of constructions

- **Verbal constructions 37,44%**
- Space constructions 17,62%
- Time constructions 16,74%
- Purpose constructions 13,66%
- Noun constructions 10,57%



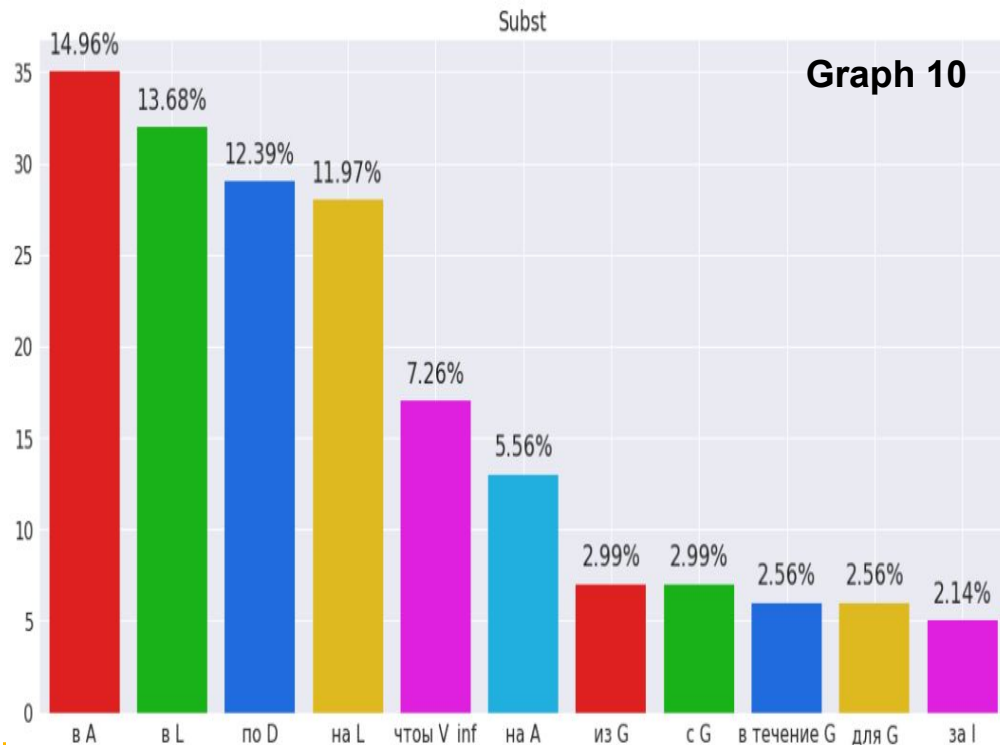
Which constructions are misused most frequently?



Which constructions are misused most frequently?



- в А - Я еду на магазине.
- в L - На горах идёт снег.
- по D - Мы смотрим на телевизору.
- на L - В юге обычно хорошая погода.
- чтобы V_{inf} - Завтра волки нацинают курсы для значать чтать.
- на А - Когда я не хожу в уроку, я занимаюсь в библиотеке.



Which constructions are used to substitute the prepositional phrase?

Graph 11



на L - На декабре очень холодно.

в L - Самая высокая точка России находится в Кавказе.

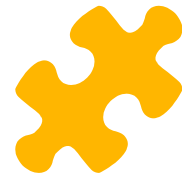
на A - Мы решили поехать на город.

для V_{inf} - Завтра волки начинают курсы для значать читать.

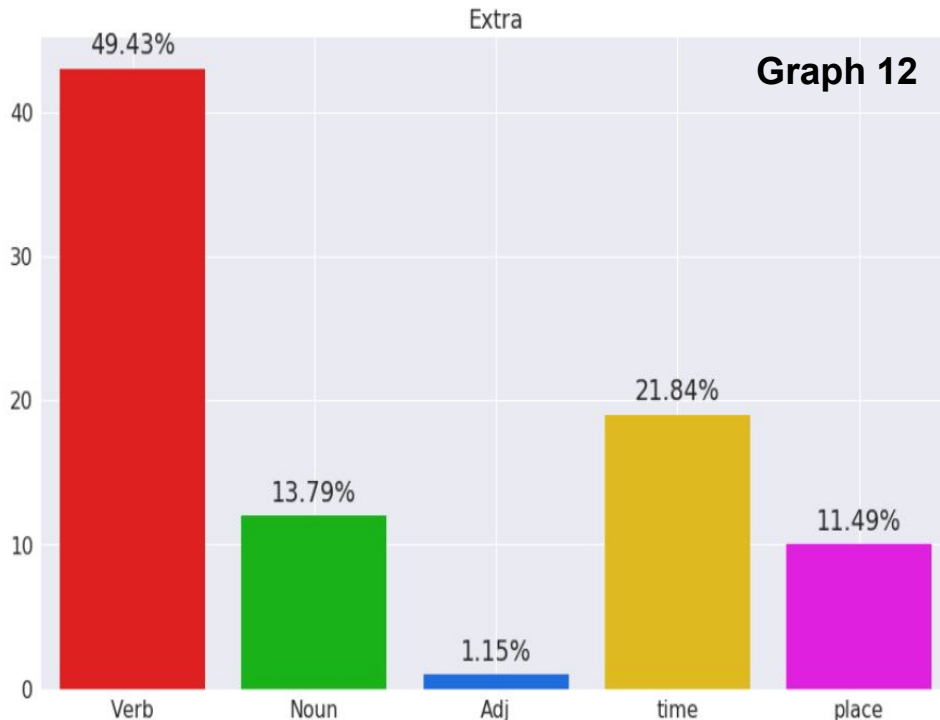
Analysis

Insertion of prepositions

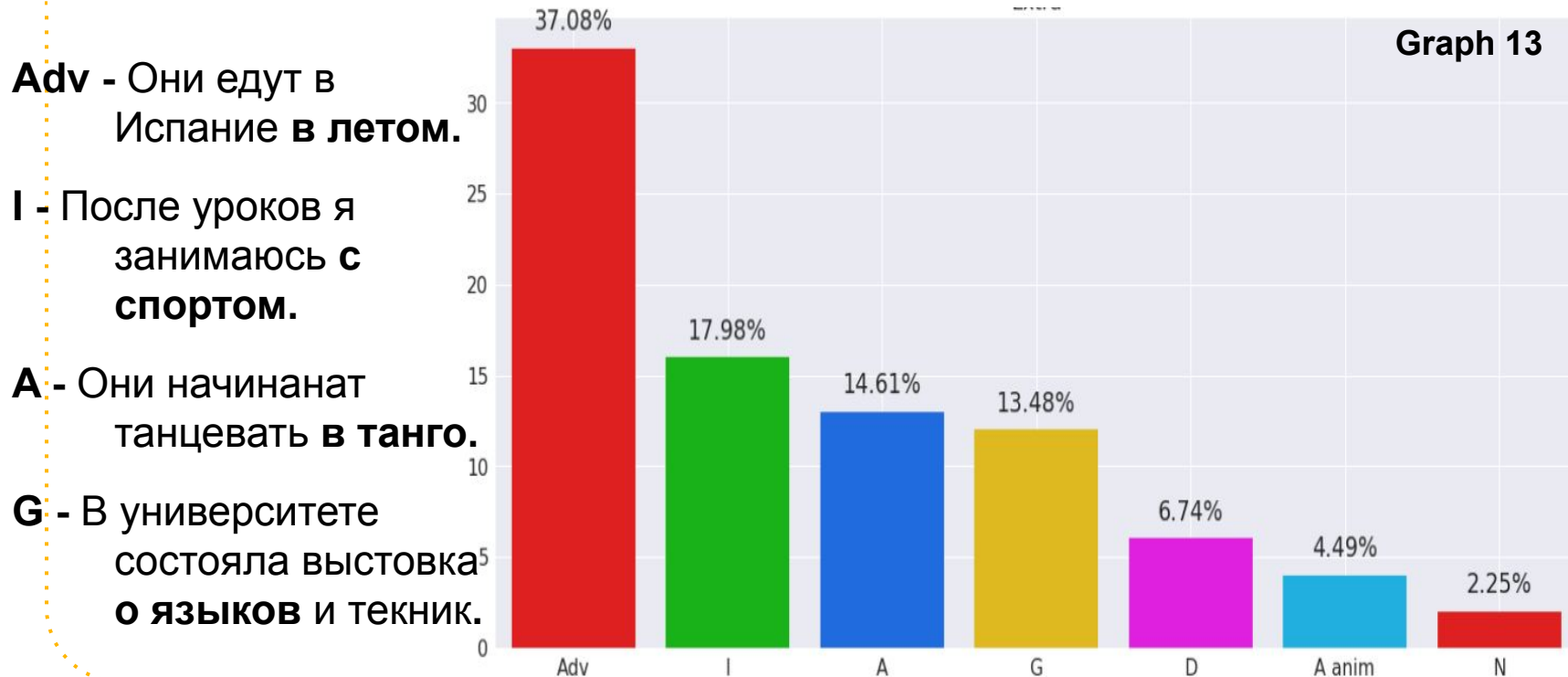
Insertion of prepositions: Types of constructions



- **Verbal constructions 49,43%**
- Time constructions 21,84%
- Noun constructions 13,79%
- Space constructions 11,49%



Which constructions are misused most frequently?



Which constructions are misused most frequently?



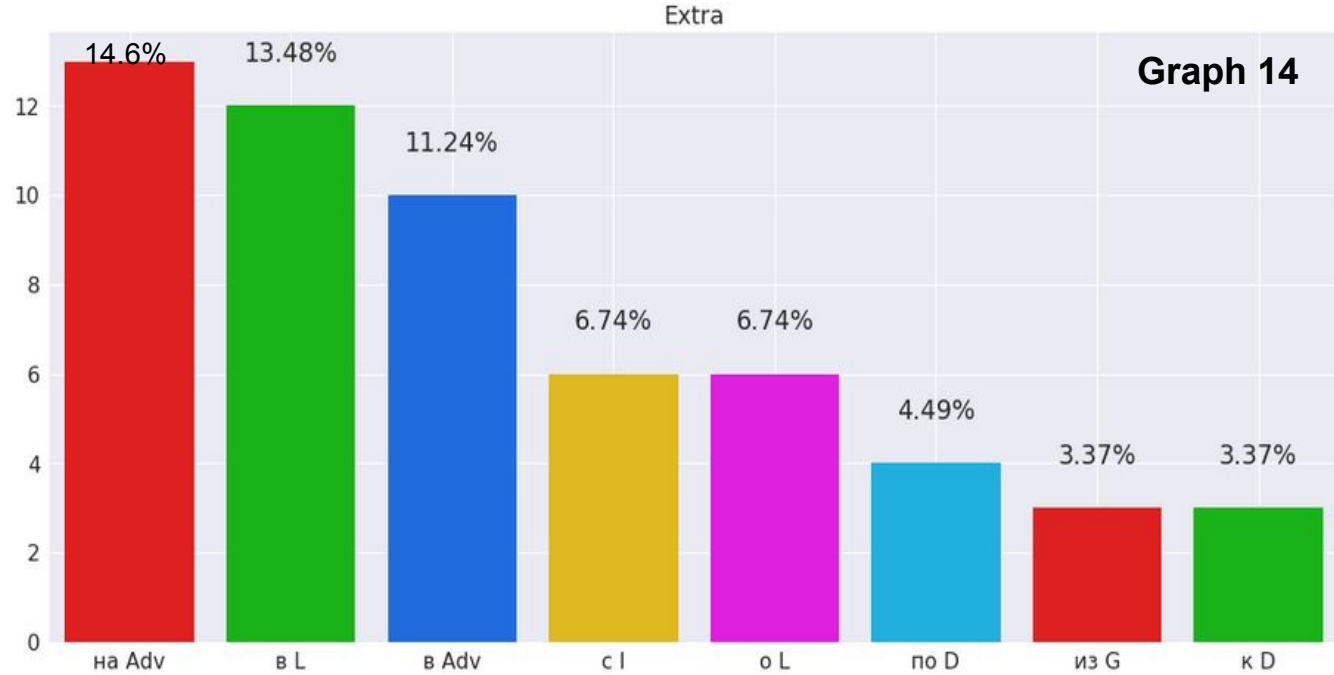
Adv - Они едут в Испание **в** летом.

- In more than one construction of three we found an **adverb** used with a preposition, especially in **time constructions**.
- This point is particularly difficult for student: even some prepositions may introduce a time adverb functioning like a noun (*до завтра, на потом/сегодня, о вчера...*), we should take into account that Russian prepositions cannot introduce other forms than nominal.
- But the analogy in using preposition with an adverb is not established here with these constructions, which are more specific and with restricted use, but with French constructions, which always contain a preposition (*jusqu'à demain, pour après /aujourd'hui, à propos d'hier...*).
- This is interesting to notice that students have however assimilated the right lexical equivalent with this adverb (*летом*), but at the same time they have not used the right construction (without preposition).

Construction error frequency



- на Adv (14,6%)
- в L (13,48%)
- в Adv (11,24%)
- с I / о L (6,74%)





Examples of misused constructions

Constructions like

- Он пишет **с ручкой / ручкой** - with an instrument
- Она дает руку **для папы / папе** - for a recipient

have not been found in our data.

Two reasons:

1. low proficiency level of students (mostly A2)
2. restricted corpus



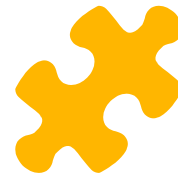
Data observations

- The most misused constructions in our corpus are **verbal ones**
- The most misused prepositions in our corpus are **в** and **на** not because these prepositions are especially complex, but because they are polysemic and overused in the process of teaching/ learning.

BUT

- Corpus data is necessary to show the percentage of usage of right/ wrong forms;
- Dynamics of prepositional usage must be considered as well.

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