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## Nouns or verbs? A case study of the Russian words *bain'ki*, *kušan'ki*, *spaten'ki* and *gulen'ki*<sup>1</sup>

### Summary

In this article I investigate part of speech distinctions in Russian based on an in-depth analysis of an understudied group of words, namely *bain'ki* 'sleep', *spaten'ki* 'sleep', *kušan'ki* 'eat' and *gulen'ki* 'walk', which are mainly used in speech with or about children, but which regardless of their high frequency and productivity remain ignored in Russian linguistics. The main question is: what part of speech do these words belong to? Are they verbs or nouns? Based on careful investigation of these words' morphological, syntactic and semantic properties, it is argued that they are both verbs and nouns. However, they are not prototypical members of either category in the sense of cognitive linguistics. Although this paper considers a small number of words, the proposed analysis has implications for word-class distinctions in Russian as a whole, and I suggest that parts of speech are radial categories organized around prototypes.

Keywords: *bain'ki*, parts of speech in Russian, noun-verb distinction, cognitive linguistics

### 1. The problem

This study addresses one of the "black holes" of Russian grammar: to what part of speech do we attribute a homogenous group of words, namely *bain'ki* 'sleep', *spaten'ki* 'sleep', *kušan'ki* 'eat' and *gulen'ki* 'walk' (further referred to as "*bain'ki*-type words")<sup>2</sup>? Although these words are frequent in communication with or about children, the *bain'ki*-type words have not received much attention in the major dictionaries and grammars of modern Russian (more about the traditional views in section 1.1). The large variety of contexts these words are used in is intriguing and the number of attestations in Internet resources exceeds hundreds of thousands examples<sup>3</sup>, so this data is not marginal and deserves attention. This paper makes a first step towards a grammatical description of the *bain'ki*-type words and aims at establishing their word-class attribution. Though the word *bain'ki* occurs often as an interjection and in lullabies, it also occurs (as other *bain'ki*-type words) in other syntactic contexts as well and I focus on the latter in this article.

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<sup>2</sup> The spelling of these words can vary due to their oral nature and absence in major dictionaries.

<sup>3</sup> *Bain'ki* yields over 500000 examples in google, *spaten'ki* – almost 100000, *kušan'ki* – 20000. There are other examples of words of the same type, e.g. *pitin'ki* 'drink', *žitn'ki* 'live'. However, in this study I limit myself to analyzing four *bain'ki*-type words that are most frequent and well-established in the Russian language.

Which part of speech do the *bain'ki*-type words belong to? Four possible interpretations are considered in turn: the words under study are verbs, they are nouns, they are neither verbs nor nouns, or they are both verbs and nouns. The morphological, syntactic and semantic properties of these words are explored in detail. Building my analysis on non-elicited data, I propose that although the verbal nature of the *bain'ki*-type words can be more easily accounted for, these words belong to verbs and nouns at the same time. I show how this generalization can be captured within the framework of cognitive linguistics, which allows for categories without clear-cut boundaries where members display different degrees of similarity to a prototype<sup>4</sup>.

### 1.1 Conventional wisdom

Before we proceed to the analysis, it is important to summarize the scarce data from grammars and dictionaries of Russian.

The Russian Academy Grammar (hereafter RG)<sup>5</sup> refers to the *bain'ki*-type words as interjections (*meždometija*). It is true for the word *bain'ki* that it can be used as an interjection (see examples in section 1.2), and we will further refer such cases as “lullaby contexts”. In the RG *bain'ki* is placed in one group with *baj-baj*, *baju-baj*, *bajuški-baju*, interjections used with babies when lulling<sup>6</sup>, which have the same root as *bain'ki*, along with other words used with children like *čur*, *agu*, *agunuški*, and *agušen'ki*. In the RG it is argued that these words are close to forms of address, especially when calling animals, like *цп-цп* for hens. The Russian National Corpus (hereafter RNC, [www.ruscorpora.ru](http://www.ruscorpora.ru)) tags these words as predicative adverbs (ADV PRAEDIC), thus grouping the *bain'ki*-type words with e.g. *žal'* ‘regretfully’ or *pora* ‘it’s time to’.

Only one of the words under scrutiny appears in the major dictionaries: *bain'ki*. From dictionaries we receive the following scarce information: Evgen'eva<sup>7</sup> has a separate entry for *bain'ki*, “when addressing children: sleep.”<sup>8</sup>, *baj-baj* and *baju-baj*, both marked as interjections, are listed as synonyms. Černyšev<sup>9</sup> includes *bain'ki* in the entry of the verb *bajukat'* ‘to lull’, and places it after the interjections *baj-baj*, explicitly stating that it is “used in a verbal meaning. Sleep.”<sup>10</sup> Only Ušakov's dictionary<sup>11</sup> marks *bain'ki* as a non-inflected verb with a tag “children's”. These dictionaries only describe linguistic data gathered exclusively from literary works, mostly Russian classics like Tolstoy and Chekhov. Since these dictionaries rarely represent spoken data, the descriptions provided cannot be considered exhaustive. A more usage-based approach is characteristic for the dictionary compiled by Efremova<sup>12</sup> who tags *bain'ki* both as a predicative referring to the state of sleeping and as an interjection, which is a component of a lullaby; both are also

<sup>4</sup> ROSCH 1978, TAYLOR 2003, JANDA 2006.

<sup>5</sup> ŠVEDOVA et al. 1980, §1703.

<sup>6</sup> There seem to be some common features in the Russian *baj* and English *lullaby*: both contain the syllable [baj] and can probably be analyzed as onomatopoeia.

<sup>7</sup> EVGEN'EVA 1999.

<sup>8</sup> “При обращении к детям: спать.” (Translation ours – A.M.)

<sup>9</sup> ČERNYŠEV 1950.

<sup>10</sup> “Употребляется в значении глагола. Спать.” (Translation ours – A.M.)

<sup>11</sup> UŠAKOV 1935-1940.

<sup>12</sup> EFREMOVA 2000.

tagged as colloquial. If we turn to dictionaries of dialects and Dal', we find the following information. *Slovar' russkix narodnyx govorov*<sup>13</sup> mentions *baički* which means 'to sleep' and is not inflected. There are no further indications of possible part of speech attribution. Dal'<sup>14</sup> mentions contexts where the word is used, but does not provide any commentary on the grammatical properties of the lexeme.

Thus the conventional wisdom found in dictionaries is limited to descriptions of the word *bain'ki* and these descriptions are neither thorough nor consistent. It seems necessary to analyze the data more closely in order to establish the status of the *bain'ki*-type words in the Russian language.

## 1.2 The data

In order to answer the main question of this study, a data set was collected from the following sources: the RNC, [www.google.ru](http://www.google.ru) and [www.yandex.ru](http://www.yandex.ru). The two latter sources were brought in due to the limited number of attestations in the RNC (RNC yields only 78 attestations of *bain'ki*, 11 for *spaten'ki* and *spatin'ki*, and 0 for *kušan'ki* and *gulen'ki*). In order to balance the amount of data analyzed, random samples of uses of the three words under scrutiny were culled from the two search engines so that 200 random examples of each would be represented. All searches were performed in April-May 2011. The dataset contains examples from a variety of sources ranging from fiction to informal blogs. In this section I will provide examples of the data and show how the *bain'ki*-type words are used. First, consider the "lullaby context" in (1). *Bain'ki* is not involved in any syntactic relations in this sentence:

- (1) **Байньки, байньки**, спи, покуда маленький.  
 [luchiksveta.ru/pesni\_stihi/kolibel.html]  
 'Bain'ki, bain'ki, sleep while you are small.'

The next example is from Dostoyevsky, and we see how carefully he uses the word *spatin'ki*, putting it in quotation marks, thus showing that the word stands out and does not quite fit into the context. This is also a possible reason why the apology "as they say to children" is added:

- (2) Простите старого подагрика, я ложусь рано, да и вам бы советовал ехать «спатиньки», как говорят aux enfants. [Ф. М. Достоевский. Бесы (1871-1872)]  
 'Excuse the old gouty person, I go to bed early, and I would advise you to go "spatin'ki", as people say aux enfants.'<sup>15</sup>

The word *bain'ki* seems less marked, probably due to its higher frequency in speech; in their childhood, most speakers of Russian were exposed to the word *baj* and its derivatives as *baj-baj*, *bajuški-baju*, and also *bain'ki*. Another example from the XIX century literature is (3), where *bain'ki* is used without quotation marks:

<sup>13</sup> SOROKOLETOV 2002, 52.

<sup>14</sup> DAL' 1955.

<sup>15</sup> In all examples the original spelling is kept as in the source. Long examples were shortened in some cases by cutting relative clauses and similar elements in order to make examples easier to read.

- (3) А теперь пойдём да богу помолимся, а потом и **баиньки**. [М. Е. Салтыков-Щедрин. Господа Головлевы (1875-1880)]  
 ‘And now let's go and pray to god, and then **bain'ki**’

This word, however, should not be regarded as obsolete, since we find examples from modern authors, like (4):

- (4) «Холодно что-то. Давай **баиньки**». Стало тихо. [Аркадий Стругацкий, Борис Стругацкий. Понедельник начинается в субботу (1964)]  
 ‘It is somewhat cold. Let's **bain'ki**. It got quiet.’

Still, in many cases a certain degree of irony or language play can be discerned. This is most likely due to the conventional spheres of usage of this word with children, so it feels marked in all other contexts. The jocular function is explicit in the following example, where the author's comment “and he repeated again, but this time without any irony” implies that in the first case the wording was ironic:

- (5) – Орлова, тебе завтра рано на работу – пора нах хаузе. **Баиньки**. Ляля по-прежнему молчала, Иона Овсеич подождал несколько секунд и повторил, но в этот раз уже безо всякой шутливости. [Аркадий Львов. Двор (1981)]  
 ‘Orlova, you have to be at work early tomorrow, it's time nach Hause. **Bain'ki**. Lyalya remained silent, Iona Ovseič waited several seconds and repeated the message, but this time without any irony.’

In some cases it is possible to argue that the use of the *bain'ki*-type word was triggered by extensive use of diminutives. It is well known that diminutives are mostly used with children; thus, the use of diminutives targets the domain of children thereby paving the way for the *bain'ki*-type words. In the following example from [yandex.ru](http://yandex.ru) *supčiki* and *v krovatках* are substantival diminutives, *teplen'kix* – an adjectival diminutive, and these may have triggered the use of both *kušan'ki* and *spaten'ki*<sup>16</sup>:

- (6) Могли вкусно **кушаньки** горячие супчики и сладко **спатеньки** в тепленьких кроватках. [[forum.ixbt.com](http://forum.ixbt.com) › [topic.cgi?id=54:53655-106](http://topic.cgi?id=54:53655-106)]  
 ‘They could **kušan'ki** hot little soups and **spaten'ki** well in warm little beds.’

The fact that speakers realize that these words are marked and refer to child language is made explicit in a notable example of a reflection on communication with children. The speaker in (7) urges against the use of baby-talk to children, and suggests talking to a child “as with an adult”:

- (7) Самое главное изначально говорить с ним как с взрослым, называть ласковыми словами, конечно, но без «а куда это масеночек побегунькал» или «будем **кушаньки**». [[Girls-Only.org](http://Girls-Only.org) › [8495934.html](http://8495934.html)]  
 ‘Most important is to talk to him as an adult from the very beginning, use tender words, of course, but without saying “and where did the little boy run” or “let's **kušan'ki**”’

<sup>16</sup> Further examples, if not stated otherwise, are from either [yandex.ru](http://yandex.ru) or [google.com](http://google.com).

This short sample of the examples shows that the *bain'ki*-type words are not marginal and can be found both in fiction and informal blogs, and furthermore that they are not obsolete but are extensively used, at least in communication with or about children. This conclusion indicated that the *bain'ki*-type words merit detailed analysis.

### 1.3 *The parts of speech problem*

Before advancing to the analysis, it is necessary to consider the main criteria for parts of speech distinctions that can be used to classify the *bain'ki*-type words. In this section I discuss the major approaches to the problem, and argue that attribution of a certain item to a word class can be best achieved by a combination of morphosyntactic and semantic analyses. The main question that needs to be answered at this stage is how to define verbs and nouns? Should semantic or formal, syntactic, properties be taken into account?

The presence of two major word classes, namely verbs and nouns, is considered to be a linguistic universal<sup>17</sup>. However, the basis for this distinction varies across different linguistic paradigms. Generative grammar generally relies on formal criteria, insofar as an item's syntactic behavior is decisive for its attribution to a certain part of speech. Generative grammarians posit the existence of innately given binary features [ $\pm N, \pm V$ ], which were first introduced by Chomsky and elaborated by Jackendoff and have been used ever since in order to capture the differences between major word classes<sup>18</sup>.

The semantic approach, advocated as early as the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. by Aristotle, postulates major differences in semantics as the basis for word-class distinctions. In modern times, this approach has been advocated by Anna Wierzbicka, who argues that the distinctions between word classes can be captured in semantic terms<sup>19</sup>. Langacker also takes the semantic approach as the point of departure for his theory of Cognitive Grammar<sup>20</sup>. He offers abstract schemas for nouns and verbs, and argues that "ALL members of the noun class (not just certain members) instantiate an abstract noun schema, while all verbs elaborate an abstract verb schema"<sup>21</sup>. The central role of semantics is crucial not only for Langacker, but for cognitive linguistics in general. In cognitive linguistics categories have radial structure and are organized around prototypes (most salient members); all members of the category are related to the prototype. The boundaries between categories are not clear-cut, thus, categories can leak and overlap.

In language typology it is customary to rely on both semantic and morphosyntactic criteria. Dixon<sup>22</sup> underlines the difficulty of providing universal definitions for parts of speech across languages, but he finds it possible to characterize the typical cases, or «central members» of a given class. Typical nouns occur as predicate arguments and necessarily include words referring to concrete objects, they can take different types of modifiers, and have categories of gender, number, and case. Typical verbs occur as heads of predicates, refer to actions, and are marked for tense, aspect and modality. Croft also argues for the

<sup>17</sup> DIXON 1977, LANGACKER 1987, COMRIE 1989, CROFT 2001.

<sup>18</sup> CHOMSKY 1970, JACKENDOFF 1977, RADFORD 1988, BAKER 2003.

<sup>19</sup> WIERZBICKA 1988, 491.

<sup>20</sup> LANGACKER 1987, 2008.

<sup>21</sup> LANGACKER 1987, 54.

<sup>22</sup> DIXON 2010, 40ff.

combination of a morphosyntactic analysis (which he calls “behavioral potential”) with a semantic one<sup>23</sup>.

In the Western as well as the Russian tradition, the conventional view is that each word in a language has to belong to one of the word classes, moreover, one word cannot belong to several classes at the same time<sup>24</sup>. The classifications proposed for Russian have always combined semantic and morphosyntactic features, but have always aimed at maximally strict and formal definitions<sup>25</sup>. An interesting “outlier” is Lev Ščerba who emphasized the crucial role of the meaning in defining parts of speech. Ščerba actually introduced a cognitive-linguistics-like approach, but not all his ideas received equal attention in later years. For instance, he suggested that a linguistic unit can be interpreted as belonging to more than one category<sup>26</sup> – this idea was partly supported by Vinogradov who analyzed participles and gerunds as hybrid words<sup>27</sup>.

The canonical view on nouns and verbs in Russian can be summarized on the basis of the Russian Academy Grammar as follows. According to the RG a noun is “a part of speech, denoting an object (substance) and expressing this meaning in the inflectional categories of number, case and the non-inflectional category of gender”<sup>28</sup>. Verbs are defined as “a part of speech, denoting a process and expressing this meaning in categories of aspect, mood, tense and person; a verb has the categories of number, and in past tense forms and subjunctive, also gender”<sup>29</sup>.

As we have seen, a number of approaches have been proposed for the definition of parts of speech. For the purposes of the present study I adopt an agnostic view as to whether semantic or morphosyntactic criteria are primary. In other words, I will apply a combination of morphological, syntactic and semantic diagnostic criteria for the attribution of *bain'ki*-type words to parts of speech.

## 2. Analysis

For the purposes of the present study I will apply the following diagnostic criteria for parts of speech attribution: 1) morphological characteristics – are there morphemes in the *bain'ki*-type words that can be recognized as clearly verbal or nominal? 2) syntactic characteristics – do the *bain'ki*-type words function syntactically as nouns (e.g. occupying argument positions) or as verbs (e.g. serving as predicates)? 3) semantics – is it possible to substitute the *bain'ki*-type words with words that are unambiguously nouns or verbs without changing the overall meaning of the utterance?

<sup>23</sup> CROFT 2001, 2003.

<sup>24</sup> ALPATOV 1990, MEL'ČUK/PERCOV 1987, 471-483.

<sup>25</sup> BULANIN 1976, FORTUNATOV 1956, VINOGRADOV 1947.

<sup>26</sup> ŠČERBA 1974, 81.

<sup>27</sup> VINOGRADOV 1947.

<sup>28</sup> ŠVEDOVA et al. 1980, §1121: «это часть речи, обозначающая предмет (субстанцию) и выражающая это значение в словоизменительных категориях числа и падежа и в несловоизменительной категории рода» (Translation ours – A.M.).

<sup>29</sup> ŠVEDOVA et al. 1980, §1384: «это часть речи, обозначающая процесс и выражающая это значение в категориях вида, залога, наклонения, времени и лица; глагол обладает также категориями числа и - в формах прош. вр. и сослагательного наклонения - категорией рода» (Translation ours – A.M.).

The following four logically possible options will be evaluated: the *bain'ki*-type words are verbs; they are nouns; they are neither verbs, nor nouns; or they are both. Let us now consider each of the four interpretations in turn.

### 2.1 Are they verbs?

The first interpretation that comes to mind is verbal, and I will now examine the morphological, syntactic and semantic properties in turn, and compare the *bain'ki*-type words with prototypical examples of verbs. The Russian Academy Grammar<sup>30</sup> defines verbs as denoting a process, described in categories of aspect, mood tense, person, number, and gender in some forms.

It is not possible to identify any verbal inflectional endings in the *bain'ki*-type words. In conventional verbs there are imperative (*govori* 'speak', *peki* 'bake'), gerund (*skazavši* 'having said') and infinitive (*idti* 'walk', *nesti* 'carry') forms ending in *-i*. However, in gerunds and infinitives *-i* is never preceded by a soft *k*, infinitives in *-i* have a different stress pattern, and analyzing the *bain'ki*-type words as imperatives would be farfetched, since these words do not occur in contexts where an imperative would be appropriate. However, these considerations do not preclude a verbal interpretation. For instance, there are elements like *na/nate* 'here you are', which despite their minimal morphology may be analyzed as "some sort of deponent verbs" since they "show typically verbal properties",<sup>31</sup> such as governing a direct object.

The grammatical categories of tense, aspect and mood are characteristic for verbs. It is hard to discover direct morphological evidence of any of the grammatical categories among the *bain'ki*-type words: they have no morphological markers for these categories<sup>32</sup>. However, there are some examples that suggest that these words can express these categories. An embryonal system of analytical tenses can be exemplified by (8) and (9). For instance, in example (8) *bain'ki* is arguably an imperfective infinitive, which in combination with a finite form of *byt'* 'be' forms the periphrastic future tense, and example (9) can be interpreted as periphrastic past:

- (8) Давай пообедаем и **будем баньки**.  
[magazines.russ.ru/din/2011/1/re46.html]  
'Let's have dinner and then we will **bain'ki**.'
- (9) ты в это время **был баньки** уже  
[http://forum.movienations.com/lofiversion/index.php/t1113-4650.html]  
'You were already **bain'ki** at that time'

Let us now consider the relevant derivational aspects of verbal morphology. One could argue for the presence of the suffix *-k-* in the *bain'ki*-type words. One of the most prominent functions of the *-k-* suffix (and its variants, plus other suffixes containing *-k-*) is dimi-

<sup>30</sup> ŠVEDOVA et al. 1980, §1384.

<sup>31</sup> NESSET 1998, 265.

<sup>32</sup> This is the case for example *я кушаньки мамину грудь* [http://foto.rambler.ru/photos/49a6cfa2-6e49-011b-44a9-f6e72a168534/] 'I **kušan'ki** mummy's breast', where the word *kušan'ki* is not inflected, no morphological categories are expressed, however, the only possible interpretation of it in this context is verbal, 1<sup>st</sup> person singular.

nutivization<sup>33</sup>. This suffix is used on nouns as in *kukla-kukol-k-a* ‘doll’, on adjectives *sinij-sin'-en'kij* ‘blue’, and adverbs *xorošo-xoroš-en'ko* ‘properly’, and one could argue that verbs would use the same suffix to form diminutives. The sphere of usage of the *bain'ki*-type words, namely communication with and about children, favors diminutives, as shown in section 1.2. The Russian grammatical tradition does not recognize verbal diminutives (though they exist in many other languages). But some researchers, for instance Bratus, believe that “[t]he possibility of forming a limited number of verbal diminutives is not excluded”<sup>34</sup> even for Russian. Moreover, Panocová mentions the *bain'ki*-type words as diminutive verbs taking their verbal status for granted<sup>35</sup>. However attractive and realistic this claim may seem, it is necessary to analyze the *bainki*-type words more closely and first motivate that they are verbs, before one can classify them as diminutive verbs. Native speakers seem to recognize the verbal nature of the *bain'ki*-type words because they derive more familiar-looking verbs, such as *bain'kat'*, *spaten'kat'*, *kušan'kat'*, and *gulen'kat'*. These resemble unambiguous verbs such as *dumat'* ‘think’ or *zven'kat'* ‘ring’<sup>36</sup>. It is, however, hard to tell apart derivations from *bain'ki*-type words from possible derivations from existing verbs like *spat'* ‘sleep’, *kušat'* and *guljat'* ‘walk’. Only *bain'kat'* does not have a corresponding unambiguous verb. This is at least the case for the synchronic level. One could argue that the verb *bajat'*, surviving only in dialects nowadays<sup>37</sup>, meaning ‘talk’ could give rise to *bain'kat'*. These secondary verbs ending in *-at'* (default verbal *-aj-* conjugation class) behave as regular verbs and are conjugated. See examples below for more evidence:

- (10) А вот так наша киса Лиза **баинькает** в Тимошиной коляске:))  
[<http://www.forum.littleone.ru/archive/index.php/t-3526048.html>]  
‘And our cat Lisa **sleeps** in Timoša's pram’
- (11) **Баинькай**, моя королева, пусть тебе приснюсь я, обниму тебя, прижму к себе крепко, покачаю на ручках, развею все переживания, накрою теплым пледом и уложу спать ...  
[<http://www.bibo.kz/kipa/384880-on-что-zh-mne-teper-tebja-nazyvat-prosto-moja.html>]  
‘**Sleep**, my queen, let me come to you in your dream, hold you close, rock you in my arms, dispel all your worries, cover you with a warm blanket and put you to sleep’

There is a possible objection to this argument. The fact that native speakers of Russian derive verbs from the *bain'ki*-type words does not necessarily imply that the *bain'ki*-type words are verbs themselves. Verbs can be derived from nouns or adjectives in Russian as

<sup>33</sup> MEL'ČUK 1997, 145.

<sup>34</sup> BRATUS 1969, 56.

<sup>35</sup> PANOCOVÁ 2011.

<sup>36</sup> *Zven'kat* actually looks as a possible derivation from *zvenet'* ‘ring’, and there is a slight difference in meaning, *zven'kat'* is marked for lower level of the produced sound. *Zven'kat'* arguably is a diminutive variant of *zvenet'*. However, the number of such diminutive verbs is very low. The total number of attestations of *-n'kat'* verbs in the RNC is 261.

<sup>37</sup> In modern Czech, another Slavic language, there is a verb *bajit* which means ‘to tell fairy tales’, and again this is something done with children.



well as other verbs. These are well exemplified by factitive verbs<sup>38</sup> derived from nouns, as we see in *smola* ‘tar’ – *smolit* ‘cover with tar’, *xuligan* ‘hooligan’ – *xuliganit* ‘behave like a hooligan’. However, factitives are mostly formed by adding the *-it* suffix, whereas *bain’ki*-type words end in *-at*. Moreover, the semantics of factitives (‘make X be Y or Y-er where X is the direct object of “make”’<sup>39</sup>) is not compatible with that of the *bain’ki*-type words.

Further derivation of verbs as an argument for verbhood should be considered with a certain degree of scepticism. Firstly, we do not know the way the derivation went, and whether *kušan’kat* was derived from *kušan’ki* by analogy with *bain’kat* which with more certainty was derived from *bain’ki*, or whether *kušan’ki* had purely verbal origin, and was derived from *kušat*. Secondly, even if the verbs in *-at* were derived from *bain’ki*-type words, this does not exclude a substantival interpretation of the latter, because deriving verbs from nouns is a normal practice in Russian. However, what is probably most important, is that the verbs obtained as a result of such derivation seem to fill the slot of diminutive verbs in Russian. Their sphere of usage supports such an interpretation. All other major word classes allow such formation, and they are all extensively used with children. Thus, it is quite natural that speakers seek possible strategies to fill this gap by forming diminutive verbs, and the use of the *-en’k-* suffix is a natural choice, because it is one of the most widely used diminutive suffixes in Russian, cf. *noga-nožka-nožen’ka* ‘leg’, and even with proper names: *Maria-Maša-Mašen’ka*. One could argue that this phenomenon is not limited to the context of child communication, and refer to verbs as the mentioned above *zven’kat* ‘ring’, or *tren’kat* ‘ding’, but these are closer to onomatopoeia, deserve further analysis that goes beyond the scope of the present paper.

We now have seen that morphologically the words under scrutiny share some properties with verbs. However, they are not prototypical verbs because they are not inflected and neither tense, nor aspect or mood are expressed in most examples. No positive conclusions can be drawn so far based on the morphological properties of the words under study.

In order to prove or disprove the verbal interpretation of the *bain’ki*-type words, it is essential to analyze syntactic contexts where these words can be used, and compare these to contexts where conventional verbs are used, that is look into their syntactic properties. If the *bain’ki*-type words are used in verbal constructions, this supports their interpretation as verbs. Probably the strongest argument for a verbal interpretation is that contexts where *bain’ki*-type words take direct objects in the accusative case (something that nouns can never have) are attested. In examples (12-13) we see the *bain’ki*-type words used with direct objects. It is interesting that these examples do not refer to child language. This testifies to the expansion of the *bain’ki*-type words in adult speech, which probably has to do with irony, as mentioned in section 1.2. The sentence in (12) would sound absolutely neutral if instead of *kušan’ki* the author used a conventional verb denoting eating.

- (12) На ресторане **кушаньки бэфстроганов** из свинины с макаронами с маслом и сыром, салат из шампиньонов и болгарского перца и кофе американо.  
[twitter.com › kutovova]

<sup>38</sup> For more detail on factitives see BAYDIMIROVA 2011.

<sup>39</sup> TOWNSEND 1975, 143; MEL’ČUK 1998, 383.

'In the restaurant **kušan'ki** pork **beef stroganoff** with pasta, butter and cheese, champignon and paprika salad, and coffee Americano.'

- (13) Ммм, в Париже мы будем **кушаньки круасанчики** и говорить по французски. [maximsbedenko.livejournal.com > 46305.html]  
'Mmm, in Paris we will **kušan'ki croissants** and speak French.'

It happens to be the case that the words under scrutiny tend to occur preceded by specific items such as verbs of motion, as in (14). Example (15) with a conventional verb is provided for comparison:

- (14) Да и сил уже нет. Пошел **баиньки**  
[http://1001.ru/forum/lofiversion/index.php/t5443-100.html]  
'No more energy. Let's go **bain'ki**'
- (15) Приятно. Пошел **читать** дальше! [vitalykozak.blogspot.com]  
'Nice. Let's go **read** more!'

Another frequent context is the predicative *pora* 'it is time to', as in (16), with example (17) for comparison:

- (16) Это любимое блюдо всех пельменеловов-ПЕЛЬМЕЕЕЕНИ)) – Пора **кушаньки**))) [vkontakte.ru > notes.php?id=2030005]  
'This is a favorite dish of all the pel'meni-lovers-pelmeeeeni )) – It's time to **kušan'ki**'
- (17) Когда пора **идти** к психологу?  
[http://www.inter-pedagogika.ru/shapka.php?sect\_type=11&menu\_id=76&section\_id=1027]  
'When is it time **to go** to a psychologist?'

Note that *pora* can also be used in an elliptic construction where a verb of motion can easily be reconstructed, as in (18):

- (18) Мы ходим-бродим, мне давно пора **домой**. [soboleva1977.narod.ru > 90-9.html]  
'We go here and there, it is time for me [to go] **home**.'

In another typical context the *bain'ki*-type words are preceded by *davaj(te)* 'let's', as in (19). Example (20) is included for comparison:

- (19) Ладно, давай **баиньки**, а то ты там, наверное, сквозь сон отвечаешь!  
[http://www.spbstudent.ru/forum/viewtopic.php?pid=22408]  
'Well, let's **bain'ki**, you are probably answering from your dream!'
- (20) Давай **смотреть** на часы до тех пор пока не взойдет утреннее солнце.  
[masteroff.org > 50967.html]  
'Let's **look** at the clock until the morning sun rises.'

It has to be pointed out that contexts (14-20) are impossible with nouns, i.e. the *bain'ki*-type words cannot be substituted by nouns without drastic changes to the overall meaning of the sentences. The use of verbs is very typical after motion verbs, see (14) and (15), and the infinitive following a finite form of the motion verb refers to an action that is the goal of the motion. Nouns are impossible in the same goal constructions, as the slot is reserved

for infinitives. Constructions with *pora* (16-18) also require an infinitive, and are in a sense similar to the ones with motion verbs, insofar as the infinitive can be omitted, but cannot be replaced by a noun. *Davaj* constructions with verbs signal appeal for an action, whereas if *davaj* is followed by a noun, it means ‘give’ (imperative). In other words, all the most typical and frequent constructions are verbal, more precisely infinitival.

There are a number of more problematic examples like (21) where the interpretation of the *bain’ki*-type words is ambiguous:

- (21) чистота! посуда вымыта, в ванне тоже порядок, все пропылесосено, шторы повесила, **кушаньки** приготовила(хотя и не так вкусно, как я ожидала) ...сiju, жру. ну и ладно. мне можно, я умница. [firexia.blog.ru > 97495651.html]  
 ‘cleanliness! the dishes washed, the bathroom is clean, everything is vacuumed, I hung the curtains, prepared **kušan’ki** (not as tasty as I expected, though)... am sitting, gorging myself. That’s alright, I am a good girl.’

Actually, the verb *prigotovit’* ‘prepare, cook’ requires a direct object, and the word *kušan’ki* occupies this position. It has to be noted, though, that the use of the word *kušan’ki* as a direct object in a sentence does not necessarily imply the interpretation of it as a noun. Infinitives are also reported to function the same way, as noted by Zemskaja<sup>40</sup>, and this is especially typical for informal register and spoken language, see example (22):

- (22) Мы вам подскажем, как приготовить **поесть** быстро и просто.  
 [http://www.allwomens.ru/6311-prigotovit-poest-bystro-i-prosto.html]  
 ‘We will advise you how to prepare (something) to **eat** fast and simply.’

The infinitive *poest’* ‘eat’ in (22) can easily be substituted by *edu* ‘food’, *obed* ‘dinner’ or other nouns in the Accusative referring to food. Such contexts are less frequent (28% of all the examples from the sample) and are not central examples of usage of *bain’ki*-type words. In sum, the syntactic analysis has revealed many verbal features of the *bain’ki*-type words, although there also are ambiguous cases where syntactically the use of nouns is allowed.

Semantically, most of the contexts are uncontroversial and allow the *bain’ki*-type words to be substituted by conventional verbs. As mentioned in the previous section, all the words in question refer to processes and thus their interpretation as verbs is logical. Apart from contexts like (21) the words under scrutiny in all cases can be substituted by existing verbs, *bain’ki* and *spaten’ki* by *spat’*, and *kušan’ki* by *est’*. In example (23) we see that such substitution does not alter the semantics of the utterance at all:

- (23) Скоро пойду **спатеньки!**  
 [www.liveinternet.ru/users/648366/post842253/comments]  
 Скоро пойду **спать.**  
 [sostoyanie.beon.ru/14619-482-skoro-poidu-spat.zhtml]  
 ‘Soon I will go to bed.’

This section has provided support for the verbal interpretation of the *bain’ki*-type words. I have shown that most of the contexts are verbal (with *pora*, *davaj* and motion verbs). They take direct objects and semantically they are virtually equivalent to verbs. However,

<sup>40</sup> ZEMSKAJA et al. 1973.

verbal interpretation is challenged by the morphological defectiveness of the words in question; moreover, there are contexts that facilitate a substantival interpretation. Hence, analyzing the *bain'ki*-type words as verbs cannot fully account for the variety of usages.

## 2.2 Are they nouns?

Section 2.1. has shown that another possible solution is to analyze *bain'ki*-type words as nouns. We will stick to the order of analysis used in the previous section and look for similarities of words like *bain'ki* to nouns. According to The Russian Academy Grammar<sup>41</sup>, nouns denote objects and are characterized by having certain grammatical categories such as number, case and gender. Let us see how this correlates with possible analysis of the words of this study.

First, let us analyze the morphological characteristics of these words. On the face of it, all the instances under scrutiny look like possible nouns, cf. *stup-én'-k-i*, Nom/Acc Plur/Gen Sg 'steps', inflected form of *stup-én'-k-a* (feminine noun), or *paren'-k-i*, Nom Plur 'guys', of *paren'-ëk* (masculine noun). Thus, theoretically, the *bain'ki*-type words could be interpreted as either of the forms mentioned above. This would also imply that they have other cells of their paradigms filled, and more importantly that they can be characterized in terms of gender, number and case. Most Russian nouns are inflected, and have different endings in different forms, thus making it possible to identify the form of a noun almost unambiguously: most of the endings bear information on grammatical case, number, and gender. The *bain'ki*-type words are almost never inflected, and this makes them look marginal to a certain extent. However, not all words in Russian are inflected, and indeclinable nouns are attested in Russian. Many of them are borrowings, for example *koфе* 'coffee', *pal'to* 'coat', *cunami* 'tsunami'. There are also nouns in Russian, such as *brjuki* 'pants', *šči* 'cabbage soup' or *nožnicy* 'scissors', which have defective paradigms (Pluralia tantum). Thus, the *bain'ki*-type words are not unique in their virtual lack of morphology and might represent another marginal class of nouns with defective paradigms along with Pluralia tantum and indeclinable nouns.

One could assume that *kušan'ki* is an oblique form of *kušan'ka*, a lexeme with over a hundred attestations in yandex.ru. The word *kušan'ka* does not exist in the dictionaries, neither do any of its possible derivational bases. Native speakers of Russian use the noun *kušan'ka* in blogs, where it appears with different endings, with all kinds of determiners, with a variety of syntactic properties, and with the meaning 'food'. This could be a reinterpretation of the non-declinable *kušan'ki* as a Nom/Acc Plur or Gen Sg of a feminine noun with all paradigm cells. This illustrates that native speakers of Russian tend to avoid lexical items with unclear properties and regularize them so that they have certain morphosyntactic features characteristic of nouns. In the following example the author deals with *kušan'ki/kušan'ka* as if it were a regular noun and declines it: the word receives the Instrumental Singular ending, is governed by a preposition, and can only be interpreted as inflected form of a feminine noun:

- (24) Ирина "Сим": Олеся, с **кушанькой** пока осторожно. После наркоза не перекормите малышонка. Успеет еще наестся.

<sup>41</sup> ŠVEDOVA et al. 1980.

[<http://wap.frenchbulldog.borda.ru/?1-15-20-00001217-000-10001-0>]  
 ‘Irina “SiM”, Olesya, be careful with the **kušan’ka**. Do not overfeed the baby after the anaesthesia. It will have time to eat its fill later.’

Since *kušan’ki* is regularized to *kušan’ka*, which is unquestionably a noun, this suggests that speakers categorize *kušan’ki* as a noun too. However compelling, the analysis of *kušan’ki* as Nom Pl of *kušan’ka* does not explain most of the contexts like:

- (25) Если станет **ничего кушаньки**, пропадет вода в кране и еще какая беда – можно будет начать думать. [ivanov-petrov.livejournal.com › 887941.html]  
 ‘If there is **nothing kušan’ki**, the water in the tap stops running, or some other disaster happens, we will be able to start thinking.’

Moreover, among the words under scrutiny only *kušan’ki* easily<sup>42</sup> allows for such usages. This might be due to its semantics (for more details see below). Thus, since the interpretation of *kušan’ki* as Nom Plur of *kušan’ka* does not account for most of the usages, and other words do not allow similar readings, one cannot consider this interpretation conclusive. When it comes to derivational aspects of noun morphology, one could argue that all words under scrutiny have the same *-(e)n’ki* formant. Thus, as mentioned in section 2.1, they can be associated with diminutives. Furthermore, diminutives have the same stress patterns as the *bain’ki*-type words, e.g. *nogá* ‘foot’ – *nóžen’ka* ‘little foot’, and *nóžen’ki* will then be either Gen Sg or Nom/Acc Plural. Diminutives and the *bain’ki*-type words have a lot in common. Apart from formal similarities they are both typical for motherese, the variety of language used by mothers or other caretakers of small children. Thus, the similarity with diminutive nouns lends support to the interpretation of the words in question as nouns<sup>43</sup>. The analysis of the morphological features of the words under scrutiny shows that in certain contexts they can be interpreted as nouns (57 examples from the 200 sample of *kušan’ki* allow such interpretation), more precisely as diminutive nouns, but they are not prototypical, because they are not inflected in most uses. When it comes to syntax of the *bain’ki*-type words, the following factors are diagnostic: whether they are used with determiners, and whether they can serve as arguments of verbs or prepositions. We have seen in example (24) that the *bain’ki*-type words can occasionally be used with prepositions, and this makes them look like nouns. However, the *bain’ki*-type words are only occasionally used in substantival constructions with determiners of various kinds, adjectival attributes, possessive and demonstrative pronouns as most typical examples. Searches were performed for collocations with all possessive pronouns. No use of pronouns as determiners was attested<sup>44</sup>. A random sample of 200 examples from yandex.ru and google.com

<sup>42</sup> There are attested examples of substantival usage of other *bain’ki*-type words (less than 4 % of examples from the analyzed sample), e.g. Какие **также баньки**? Никаких баинек ... [forum.skunks-works.net/forum1/html/000215-8.html] ‘which **bain’ki**? No **bain’ki**...’, where not only is *bain’ki* used with a modifier *takoj* in Nom Plur which indicates that *bain’ki* is associated with Nom Plur, but also is it inflected in the second sentence where it is used as a Genitive Plural. It is true that only in case of *kušan’ki* the substantival interpretation is most natural.

<sup>43</sup> *Zven’kat’* is an example of an arguably diminutive verb, since it has a diminutive-like formant *-en’k* (see footnote 36).

<sup>44</sup> In contexts like *moj spaten’ki* ‘my *spaten’ki*’ the possessives are used not as determiners of the *bain’ki*-type words, but as determiners for omitted subjects. In the next example *moj* refers to ‘my

includes the following very rare examples (under 5 percent): *različnye kušan'ki*, *appetitnye kušan'ki*, *vkusnye kušan'ki*. In example (26), we see an adjective in: *klassnye kušan'ki* 'cool food', and the adjective is marked with a Plural marker and can be interpreted as Nom/Acc Plural from *kušan'ka*, the former seems more realistic in the context:

- (26) Норм еда и питье поможет дотянуть, особенно классные **кушаньки** сейчас на 449+ кулинарке. [aionline.ru>Форум>viewtopic.php...]  
'Norm food and drink will help one survive, especially cool **kušan'ki** are now at 449+ cookery.'

In examples (27-28) we see the use of *kušan'ki* in the syntactic position of a Direct Object, and in a way substitute regular nouns, e.g. *eda* 'food':

- (27) я тоже пришла, приготовила **кушаньки**.  
[http://eva.ru/static/forums/49/2004\_9/195288.htm]  
'I also came, prepared **kušan'ki**.'

The interpretation of *kušan'ki* in example (27) is not completely uncontroversial. A more detailed analysis follows in section 2.4. It is true that verbs like: *prigotovit'* 'prepare, cook', *vozit'* 'bring, deliver', *podnesti* 'bring, serve' do require a direct object, and the word *kušan'ki* occupies this position. It has to be noted, though, that the use of the word *kušan'ki* as a direct object in a sentence does not necessarily imply that it must be interpreted as a noun. Russian infinitives also function the same way, as pointed out by Zemskaja<sup>45</sup>. This is especially typical for the informal register and spoken language:

- (28) Я всегда прошу их только об одном – сделай только то, что просят – подать **попить**. [http://www.miloserdie.ru/index.php?ss=2&s=15&id=8108]  
'I only ask for just one thing, just do what you are asked, serve (something) to **drink**.'

Thus, syntactically, the *bain'ki*-type words rarely behave like prototypical nouns: there are only sporadic attestations of the *bain'ki*-type words with attributes and in the direct object position.

Let us now look at the semantic component of the analyzed words. As a diagnostic criterion I will use the ability of a given word to be substituted by a conventional noun. All the words under study refer to processes of sleeping, eating and walking and thus could be either verbs (including participles and infinitives) or nouns. If we accept the substantival analysis, we have to be able to track substantival semantics in all the examples, but this can only be done in very few cases. Only examples (24) and (26-27) allow for substitution

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child', which is syntactic subject in the sentence, and not to *spaten'ki* 'sleep': мой **баньки** сразу идет, мне бы на дискотеку или продолжение банкета, а он, нет-нет, мы домой-спать! [http://www.galya.ru/clubs/show.php?id=323592] 'My goes **bain'ki** right away, I would fancy a disco or other continuation, but he no-no, we go home – sleep!' In the next example *moja* ('mine', feminine) stands for 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun, and this is the case of a word play, similar to the traditional imitation of foreign speech: моя твоя не понимаю 'I don't understand you', which is an example of an ungrammatical sentence. Всем бодрого утречка под эту замечательную тему, а моя **спатеньки** ... [mr-kiwi-bs.livejournal.com > 83940.html] 'Wish you a good morning everyone with this lovely theme, and I/my **spaten'ki**'.

by nouns; in these examples *kušan'ki* can be substituted by *eda* 'food'. In other examples the substantival semantics seems strained. Moreover, only *kušan'ki* has been attested in such contexts, and this may be due to its semantics. *Kušān'ki* refers to the eating process, and thus metonymically can also refer to food itself, whereas *bain'ki* and *spaten'ki* refer to sleeping, *gulen'ki* to walking, and there are no obvious objects involved in these processes. An interesting parallel may be drawn with Dutch here. Dutch is reported to use diminutive suffixes on verbs, and in Dutch this diminutivization implies a change of word class. All verbs nominalize when a diminutive suffix is added. For instance, Bakema et al. mention *wee-tje* ('know-DIM'), formed from *weten* 'to know' is something one knows, that is the object of knowledge<sup>46</sup>. Something similar happens in example (27) where *kušan'ki* becomes the food, i.e. what is being prepared/eaten. These cases can be analyzed as a metonymical extension where the action directed towards an object stands for the object itself, a type of the action-participant metonymy, identified by Peirsman and Geeraerts and Janda<sup>47</sup>.

The semantic analysis has shown that only in very few examples the *bain'ki*-type words can be substituted by conventional nouns.

We have seen that, although the substantival interpretation cannot account for many uses of the *bain'ki*-type words, there seem to be some examples where one has to assume an interpretation as nouns. There are arguments supporting this (formal similarities, occasional use with determiners and syntactic position, ability to be substituted by nouns), so it would be premature to abandon this interpretation as completely untenable. Before drawing conclusions, however, it is important to weigh the arguments for other possible solutions.

### 2.3. Are they neither nouns nor verbs?

The analyses in the preceding two sections have shown that attribution of the *bain'ki*-type words to nouns is not unproblematic, and the same holds for the verbal interpretation. This suggests another treatment of these instances, namely as neither nouns nor verbs. The remaining options are scarce, because the semantics of the analyzed words is incompatible with an analysis as, for instance, adjectives or adverbs. However, one could still compare the *bain'ki*-type words to interjections, such as *nu* 'well', as suggested in the RG.

Morphologically, the fact that interjections are not inflected facilitates such an interpretation, because *bain'ki*-type words are virtually never inflected. Moreover, if one limits oneself to analyzing the "lullaby contexts", the *bain'ki*-type words are syntactically close to interjections, insofar as they do not participate in syntactic relations within the sentence. According to traditional descriptions, interjections in Russian constitute a heterogeneous class of words, including a large variety of very different entities, such as *xa-xa* 'ha-ha', *ura* 'hurray', *požalujsta* 'please', which according to the RG<sup>48</sup> express feelings and emotions, and differ from both function and content words. While an interpretation of the *bain'ki*-type words accommodates the use of such words in "lullaby contexts", it does not account for the cases where the *bain'ki*-type words are involved in syntactic constructions like the ones with a direct object in the accusative or preceded by an adjectival modifier.

<sup>46</sup> BAKEMA et al. 1993.

<sup>47</sup> PEIRSMAN/GEERAERTS 2006, JANDA 2010, 2011.

<sup>48</sup> ŠVEDOVA et al. 1980, §1700-1705.

And actually, in our sample, contexts where the *bain'ki*-type words have syntactic properties prevail over the “lullaby contexts”. “Lullaby contexts” represent only 10% of the sample.

Even if we assume that interjections form a separate part of speech and that the *bain'ki*-type words belong to this class, this does not solve all our problems. No interjections fulfill so many functions in discourse and can be used in the typical verbal or nominal contexts analyzed in sections 2.1 and 2.2. Nor can interjections be substituted by prototypical verbs or nouns leaving the meaning of the utterance the same. On top of that only *bain'ki* is used in “lullaby contexts” and can be interpreted as an interjection. Interpretation of all other *bain'ki*-type words as interjections is unjustified.

In short, analyzing the *bain'ki*-type words as interjections does not capture the noun- and verb-like properties of the lexemes under scrutiny. Hence, treating these words as neither verbs nor nouns is unfounded. Such an analysis fails to capture linguistically significant generalizations about the verbal and nominal properties of the *bain'ki*-type words.

#### 2.4. Are they both nouns and verbs?

We have seen that there is support for the verbal and substantival interpretation of the *bain'ki*-type words, but that neither interpretation is straightforward or unambiguous. We have furthermore explored the use of *bain'ki* in “lullaby contexts” where it resembles interjections more than verbs or nouns. However, since “lullaby contexts” are not relevant for the other *bain'ki*-type words, these contexts are somewhat marginal from the perspective of the present study. The purpose of this last section of the analysis is to unite the two first interpretations, suggesting a non-canonical decision, namely that the words under study are both nouns and verbs.

Is this possible from a morphological perspective? There are languages like English where superficially nouns and verbs do not differ at all, cf. *It was a nice stroll* and *We want to stroll along the shore*, where *stroll* in the first case is a noun and in the second a verb. This is unambiguous due to the contexts *stroll* is used in, e.g. an indefinite article in the first example, and the infinitival marker *to* in the second. Words can change their part of speech membership without any formal changes (e.g. without any additional affixes), through conversion<sup>49</sup>. Although this phenomenon exists in Russian, e.g. *stolovaja ložka* ‘tablespoon’ vs. *stolovaja* ‘dining room’, examples of conversion are not attested for nouns and verbs. Deverbal nouns are always easy to recognize by their suffixes, e.g. *-enie*, as in *čtenie* ‘reading’ from *čitat* ‘read’. Conversely, transitions from nouns to verbs are also easily tracked: *gvozď* ‘nail’ – *prigvozdít* ‘to nail’. Thus, it seems that the data described in the present study leaves us with two options. Either we have to acknowledge an otherwise unattested morphological process in Russian, viz. noun-verb conversion, or we are forced to conclude that one word can simultaneously belong to more than one part of speech. In the following we shall see that the *bain'ki*-type words present evidence in favor of the latter option<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>49</sup> DIXON 2010, 40ff.

<sup>50</sup> As in the case of some words that depending on the context are either adverbs or prepositions, as *krugom*. Cf. also biaspectual verbs, e.g. *translirovat'*, which can be characterized for aspect only in a particular context, otherwise they are not marked for aspect.



Syntactically, the *bain'ki*-type words resemble infinitives, as pointed out in section 2.1. The conventional way of describing the Russian infinitive<sup>51</sup> is to say that it represents a class of forms distinct from finite forms, participles, and gerunds. The infinitive is not marked for person, number, or tense, and its verbal features are limited to aspect and mood. Although infinitives display a number of verbal properties, they also share some properties with nouns: infinitives can act as a syntactic objects, attributes and subjects. Interpreting *bain'ki*-type words as infinitives would solve many problems, because infinitives occur in the syntactic positions usually occupied by the words under scrutiny. Since infinitives combine verbal and nominal properties, one would expect *bain'ki*-type words to appear in both verbal and nominal syntactic positions. However, there are challenges for this interpretation as well. Even though the infinitive is close to nouns, unlike *bain'ki*-type words, the Russian infinitive is never declined and is not used with prepositions. Thus, analyzing the *bain'ki*-type words as infinitives does not accommodate all attested uses of the *bain'ki*-type words.

We have seen that the *bain'ki*-type words more naturally occur in verbal contexts and more easily are substituted by meaningful verbs (see section 2.1). However, we nevertheless need to account for the usages of these words where they behave like nouns (see section 2.2). Recall from section 1.3 that Ščerba argued that one and the same word can fit into several categories at the same time. As an example for such a twofold interpretation he proposed adverbs and prepositions like *krugom*<sup>52</sup>. Crucially, however, this does not imply that words like *krugom* are adverbs and prepositions simultaneously since they are disambiguated in context.

One could argue that the *bain'ki*-type words can be classified as either nouns or verbs, and that their attribution varies from context to context, where contexts disambiguate the uses (as in the case of the biaspectual verbs). The attribution would be based on the substitutability by unambiguous verbs and nouns. However, there are a number of problematic examples like (29-30) which need to be accommodated in a full-fledged description of the *bain'ki*-type words.

- (29) а ошейник я заказывала на сайте, который нам **кушаньки** возит, но он почему то у меня щас не открывается [www.zootovary.com](http://www.zootovary.com), раздел ошейники. [forum.klopsiki.ru › lofiversion/index.php/t7627.html]  
 ‘I ordered the collar on the website which delivers **kušan'ki** to us, but it won't load now, [www.zootovary.com](http://www.zootovary.com), section collars.’
- (30) Завтрак ему по утрам! Постельку за ним заправь! И **кушаньки** вечером поднеси ... [russiantampa.com › fun/scandal.php]  
 ‘Breakfast for him in the mornings! Make the bed after him! And serve **kušan'ki** in the evening ...’

These cases do not allow for a univocal interpretation: in the examples above *kušan'ki* can be substituted by either a noun in the accusative case (*edu*, *obed*, *užin*), or by an infinitive (*poest'*, *perekusit'*). In other words, in contexts like (29-30) the *bain'ki*-type words can be associated with both nouns and infinitives at the same time.

<sup>51</sup> ZEMSKAJA et al. 1980, §1594, § 2745.

<sup>52</sup> ŠČERBA 1974.

We thus need a theory that allows us to capture the generalization that one unit can belong to two word classes at the same time. A framework that would allow for such an interpretation is cognitive linguistics, which represents linguistic categories as networks of schemas connected by categorization relations. In this analysis I adopt the model of Cognitive Grammar proposed by Langacker<sup>53</sup>, and propose an analysis based on the principles of cognitive linguistics.

Figure 1 includes seven schemas (boxes). There is an overall general schema for the *bain'ki*-type words on top of the network, and this general schema has interrelated extensions and instantiations. The two schemas in the middle represent two instantiations (subtypes) of the general schema. Instantiation is the categorizing relation between a type and a subtype, which is fully compatible with the type. In the figure instantiations are visualized by solid arrows. We see that *bain'ki* can be instantiated as both verbs and nouns. Dashed arrows refer to extensions. Extension relations hold between schemas that are partly compatible, but where neither is a subtype of the other. We see that the substantival interpretation of the *bain'ki*-type words is related to the verbal one. Moreover, the figure captures the fact that verbal uses prevail by including them in a box with thicker lines and assuming an extension relation from verbs to nouns. Thick lines correspond to the higher level of salience. In other words the figure visualizes the generalization that the verbal properties of the *bain'ki*-type words are more salient, prototypical.

The four boxes at the bottom represent the use of *bain'ki*-type words in specific contexts, which are instantiations of the schemas on higher levels. *Bain'ki-verb* schematizes over the examples of verbal usage, as in *idi spaten'ki* 'go to sleep'. *Bain'ki-noun* stands for the substantival usage, as in *sladkie bain'ki* 'sweet dreams'. *Bain'ki-verb/noun* represents the intermediate cases, which can be associated with both verbs and nouns, as *prinesla kušan'ki* 'brought food/to eat'. The figure visualizes the connections between the concrete examples and the categories of verb and noun. The "lullaby contexts" are placed in a dashed box on the side, because they do not quite resemble the uses in syntactic contexts; moreover, such uses are only attested for the word *bain'ki*, and not for the other members of the *bain'ki*-type words group.

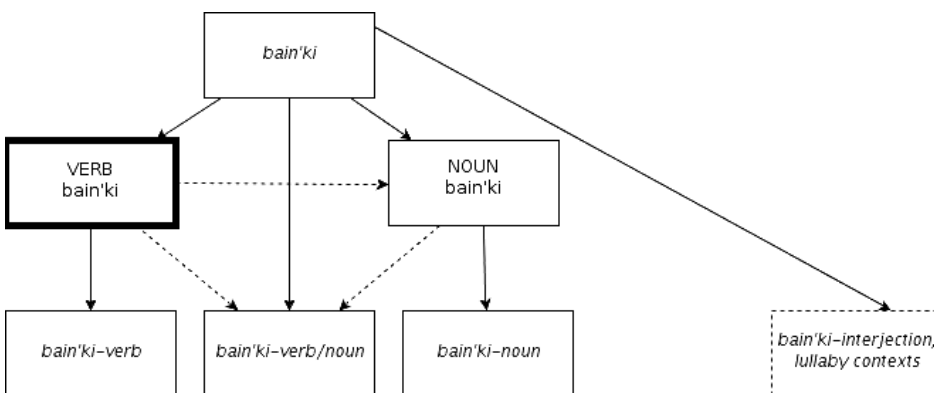


Figure 1. *Bain'ki*-type words functions

In sum, Figure 1 captures the generalizations that the *bain'ki*-type words (a) normally function as verbs, (b) sometimes are used as nouns, (c) that there are some intermediate cases where the *bain'ki*-type words can be associated with both parts of speech, and (d) that there are some uses of *bain'ki* as interjections in “lullaby-contexts”. In other words, a cognitive linguistic analysis in terms of a radial category network adequately accommodates the properties of the *bain'ki*-type words.

### 3. Conclusions and implications for further research.

This paper has addressed the assignment of *bain'ki*-type words to parts of speech. Four interpretations were analyzed: they are verbs, they are nouns, they are neither verbs nor nouns, they are both verbs and nouns. From the point of view of their form, the *bain'ki*-type words could be either nouns or verbs, but their syntactic functioning reveals more similarity with verbs, and so do their semantic properties. However, if one accepts the verbal interpretation, they are not prototypical members of the category of verbs, but rather represent a marginal group of uninflected verbs with infinitive-like properties. On the basis of their morphology and discourse functions (as markers of speech directed to children, as markers of familiarity and jocularity) I have argued that we are dealing with diminutive verbs – a category that is well attested typologically, but which has not been recognized in Russian before.

Although in the majority of examples analyzed in this study the *bain'ki*-type words behave like uninflected diminutive verbs, there are contexts where they display noun-like behavior. However, once again, we are dealing with non-prototypical nouns: they are not inflected and are not used with determiners.

An alternative analysis of the *bain'ki*-type words as interjections is not fully adequate, since it cannot account for these words' verbal and nominal properties. It was therefore concluded that we are dealing with a non-canonical case where one and the same word can in different contexts be described as a non-prototypical verb or a non-prototypical noun. I have proposed to capture this generalization within the framework of cognitive linguistics. In cognitive linguistics, parts of speech can be analyzed as radial category networks organized around prototypes. I have shown that this framework offers a straightforward account of the *bain'ki*-type words as non-prototypical verbs and nouns, and even accommodates the use of *bain'ki* as an interjection. At the same time, we have seen that cognitive linguistics enables us to capture the generalization that *bain'ki*-type words are most commonly used as verbs. Finally, an abstract schema accommodates the properties that are constant in all uses.

Although this paper has investigated a small group of words in Russian, the proposed analysis has ramifications for the understanding of parts of speech in general. Rather than understanding verbs and nouns as categories with clear-cut boundaries and no internal structure, it seems fruitful to analyze parts of speech as radial categories with prototypical and peripheral members. The present paper even suggests that parts of speech may overlap insofar as the *bain'ki*-type words display both verbal and nominal behavior.

As a possible way of further refining the understanding of parts of speech in Russian, I propose analyzing other groups of words that cannot straightforwardly be assigned to one part of speech. Such examples include onomatopoeia-related words like *xixan'ki* and *xaxan'ki*, both meaning ‘to giggle’, as well as words like *laduški* (either referring to pat-a-

cake game or a version of *ladno* 'fine') from child language, *potjaguški* 'stretchings' and *figuški* 'like hell' (derived from *figa* 'fig'). Another interesting group of words with unclear status includes predicative words like *bax*, *pryg* studied by Kor Chahine<sup>54</sup>. Analysis of these items may shed further light on parts of speech assignment, and possibly lead to reconsidering and broadening the understanding of word-class groupings in Russian in general and the diminutive category in Russian in particular. However, analyses of these groups of words are beyond the scope of the present study and must be left for further research.

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