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### **PRONOMINAL PLACEHOLDERS IN RUSSIAN SPONTANEOUS DISCOURSE**

#### *Abstract*

Unplanned speech is produced online and contains high numbers of fillers, repairs, repetitions, hesitation markers. The paper presents a study of Russian discourse markers that serve as signals for production difficulties in spontaneous discourse.

For example, if the speaker in face-to-face interaction fails to remember the appropriate word or to plan the current lexical unit, he/she employs hesitation markers called ‘placeholders’. In Russian most of these markers have a pronominal origin and are employed as preparatory substitutes for delayed syntactic components. In unplanned speech pronominal placeholders such as *eto, eti, eta, eto samoe, etot samyi* (‘this very’) can stand for the current nominal group. The remaining items have short duration and are usually regarded as semantically empty units.

The results of the analysis confirm the thesis that pronominal placeholders have the same grammatical features as the delayed unit.

Pronominal *eto samoe* can be employed as a placeholder for a verbal group. In this case some verbal prefixes can be aligned to the proximal pronominal marker *eto samoe* (*это ... за-это самое ... и заработало; при-это самое / шнурочком так придельивались друг к другу*).

Pronominal placeholders have complex pragmatic functions: they mark the problem area of local discourse, play an important syntactic role in an unfolding utterance, provide for the continuity in spontaneous discourse.

*Keywords:* unplanned discourse, hesitation, syntactic constituent, placeholders, Russian