

Kuznetsova Irina

Manshina Daria

Institute for linguistic studies Russian academy of sciences

Saint-Petersburg

**Language referral service affiliated with Institute for Linguistic Studies
Russian Academy of Sciences**

Institute for Linguistic Studies of Russian Academy of Sciences specializes in theoretical research of Russian language, different languages of ethnic groups living on the territory of Russian Federation, and Indo-European languages. Dictionaries of general purposes are also created there. Language referral service was opened in affiliation with this Institute in 2003 and has been working ever since. Its main purpose is to answer the phone calls of citizens and provide correct answers to their questions. Referral service is active 4 hours each workday, except for two summer months, when service workers are on a vacation. Language referral service doesn't have constant staff. Research officers and postgraduate students answer the calls on a voluntary basis.

About 30000 questions were answered in the 13 years of the service existence. There are usually 8 or 10 phone calls per day; the number has been unchanged for the last five years. The database is filled with the information about each question: linguistic unit referred to, the question, the answer, and the source that was used to provide the answer. To facilitate the data analysis, the question is recorded under one of the topics: pronunciation, word stress, grammar, word-building, syntax, sequence of tenses, word meaning, choice of lexical means, lexical compatibility, spelling, punctuation, and questions about whether the word exists in Russian language. In 2003-2005 people mainly asked questions concerning spelling and meaning of words. In 2015 26% of questions concerned grammar (rules of word-formations, rules of syntactic links).

The information about the caller's gender is also gathered. Women call more frequently, but the amount of male callers is growing: in 2009 men asked about 15% of all questions, in 2015 – about 30%.

Besides answering phone calls, Language referral service also answers written questions of citizens and organizations. Written queries often concern such topics as the variability of proper nouns. This problem is determined by form diversity, including the forms that are hardly used today. Among other reasons the relevance of this question is conditioned by the need to use foreign proper nouns in the Russian context.