

## Abstract

The modern historical linguistics is dominated by the view that short and long forms of adjectives in Old Russian conveyed the meanings of uncertainty/certainty, respectively: the short (unmarked) forms designated the feature (property) of an object or a person mentioned for the first time, or unknown to the speaker, while the long (marked) forms designated the feature of an already known object or person. In the course of time, the long and short forms of adjectives lost their meanings of certainty/uncertainty, which affected their functions: the long forms were used as an attribute in sentences, and the short forms – as a predicate. In general, the same functions are observed in Modern Russian, where, on the contrary, the short forms are a marked member of the morphological category of adjectives that either traditionally designate temporary, occasional features of an object or a person, or give the generalized indication of the existence of the feature, while the long forms are used primarily to designate a classifying, i.e. constant feature. If the functions of adjectives have hardly changed diachronically, the natural question arises whether it is right to refer to Old Russian long and short adjectives as designating certainty and uncertainty or certainty/uncertainty is rather a contextual effect, and not their linguistic meaning. If the latter is true, then it is necessary to find out what were the meanings of long and short forms of adjectives in Old Russian and how these meanings developed. The purpose of this analysis, carried out in the framework of the theory of the linguistic sign, is to answer these and other questions related to trends in the use of long and short forms of adjectives in Modern Russian.

## Keywords:

long and short adjectives; invariant; Old Russian; Modern Russian; use of long and short forms of adjectives.