

## Random indefinites

Haspelmath (1997) mentions *ljuboj* and *ugodno* as free-choice pronouns. *Ljuboj* is a stand alone pronoun unlike all others mentioned here; they all combine with *wh-*. Bronnikov (2006) identifies several “new pronouns”: *neizvestno*, *popalo* and *ugodno*. This list should be extended by *pridetsja*.

The goal of this paper is to establish the limits of such free-choice indefinites.

Bronnikov mentioned that (1) is correct, while (2) is not, claiming that “*ugodno* need[s] to be in the scope of some operator”:

- (1) Vasja otdal svoj passport komu popalo.
- (2) \*Vasja otdal svoj passport komu ugodno.

I believe that the difference lies in whether the statement is made before or after the random choice has been effectuated and in who is effectuating the choice. For example in (3) Vanja is making the choice as to what to say, which the speaker evaluates as random, while in (4) the choice may be Petja’s or someone else’s (for Petja to utter):

- (3) Vanja govorit čto popalo (\*čto ugodno). ‘He is saying whatever.’
- (4) Petja skažet čto ugodno, čtoby dobit’sja celi. ‘He would say anything/whatever to get to his goal.’

The other important distinction is the suitability of X that is designated as *popalo* or *pridetsja*:

- (5) On nočeval gde popalo. ‘He slept wherever’
- (6) On nočeval gde pridetsja. ‘He slept wherever’

In (5) it could mean that he slept in the streets and ditches, any kind of inappropriate place for spending the night, while in (6) the place was not inappropriate, just the only suitable random place that came along.

With respect to the self as well as in cases of empathy with the Subject, *popalo* exhibits negative polarity:

- (7) \*Ja poedu kuda popalo. ‘I will go wherever.’
- (8) Ja ne poedu kuda popalo. ‘I will not go just anywhere.’
- (9) \*My tebja vydadim zamuž za kogo popalo. ‘We will marry you off to just anyone.’
- (10) My tebja vydadim zamuž za kogo popalo. ‘We will marry you off to just anyone.’

Bronnikov, George. 2006. Meaning postulates and logical form: the case of Russian indefinite pronouns. (ms.)  
Haspelmath, Martin. 1997. *Indefinite Pronouns*. Oxford: Clarendon House.