



# Some "cases of doubt" in the Russian grammar from different methodical perspectives

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# Outline

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# Introduction

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- ❖ Modern linguists employ a large number of experimental designs
- ❖ But: most linguistic investigation areas are associated with some so-called classical methods.
  - The investigation of first language acquisition: longitudinal studies
  - Analyses of the periphery of the linguistic norm: grammaticality judgements (cf. Bornkessel-Schlesewsky and Schlewsky 2007: “a new judgement-driven imperialism”).

# Introduction

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- ❖ These methods are most efficient for the investigation of the respective object (cf. Köpke / Schmid 2004)
- ❖ They also have their limits:
  - The collection of numerical grammaticality judgements does not always lead to unambiguously interpretable results (Kaufmann 2008; Hundt 2008).
  - The reasons : the often-discussed unnatural test situation, the performance of several successive tasks of the same kind, etc.

# Introduction

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- ❖ The defects of an experimental method can be compensated for at least partially by combining several methods (Anstatt 2008; Bermel 2012; Dieser 2009).
- ❖ The combination of multiple data sources and multiple methods as evidence within one study is a relatively new phenomenon.
- ❖ Until the mid-1990s the two main sources of evidence in linguistics were introspection and corpus data, which stood in a strong opposition to each other. (cf. Arppe and Järviski 2007)

# Introduction

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- ❖ But during recent years a large number of studies have appeared that use different types of empirical data and methods (cf. Hundt 2005; Arppe and Järviki 2007; Kempen and Harbusch 2008; Bermel and Knittl 2012).
- ❖ Combining several methods helps the researcher to understand the advantages and disadvantages of each method

# Introduction

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- ❖ It makes it possible to shed light on various aspects of a linguistic phenomenon
- ❖ but in some cases it also raises new puzzling questions when the discrepancies between the results of different methods are too large (cf. Kempen and Harbusch 2008).

# The aim of the present study

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- ❖ In the present study, some "cases of doubt" in the Russian grammar are analysed on a broad empirical basis:
  - Grammaticality and acceptability judgements:
    - The scale without endpoints (cf. method of the thermometer judgements )
    - The scale with the endpoints



# The aim of the present study

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- Tests with enlarged tasks: The participants were asked – in addition to judging the grammatical acceptability of sentences – to improve the forms or constructions which they considered wrong/ungrammatical. Moreover, the informants were asked to report on the situation or style of speech in which these deviating forms would be allowed (cf. Hundt 2008).
- The questionnaires (test persons were asked to fill the gaps)

# The aim of the present study

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- ❖ In view of the methodology, it should be clarified
  - which diverging or correspondent results can be achieved with the different methods
  - whether additional tasks have an effect on the numerical judgement of forms and constructions (if, yes, whether the difference is statistically relevant)
  - whether the presence of endpoints on the scale influences the test persons in their decision, etc.

# The aim of the present study

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- ❖ The data collected from the experiments will be contrasted with the use of such forms (The questionnaires ).
- ❖ The questionnaires and the first kind of acceptability judgements were carried out in several Russian regions as well as in Belarus and Germany. Unfortunately, it was only in Samara that I could carry out the second and third kind of acceptability judgements.

# A linguistic "case of doubt"

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A linguistic "case of doubt", which is to be examined within the scope of this study, is understood as a linguistic unity (word / word form / sentence), about which the competent speaker in view with regard to (at least) two variations (a, b...) might have doubts concerning which of the forms is (standard-linguistically) correct (or it would be more correctly ...) (cf. linguistic variation, double form, double). (Klein 2003/2004, 1)

# A linguistic "case of doubt"

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- ❖ Grammatical cases of doubt of the Russian (periphery of the Russian grammar)

a) *Девочка увидела в траве две лягушки.*

b) *Девочка увидела в траве двух лягушек.*

# Reasons for the occurrence of "case of doubt"

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- ❖ Pressure of the system (corresponding to system errors appropriate for system as a window to the faculty of language, cf. Reis 2005, 101) (L1 acquisition: Children acquire the language system earlier than the linguistic norm, cf. Coseriu in 1970). Examples of errors appropriate for system: Filling linguistic gaps, avoiding the forms which feel foreign for the respective language (Indeklinabilia in the Russian)
- ❖ Influence of the dialect, sociolect, etc.

# Data sources and methods: Thermometer judgements (Featherston 2006)

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## **Elevation of introspective gradated relative judgements of grammaticality within the scope of a web experiment**

gradated: Judgements in numerical form (scale without terminator points)

relative: relative to two reference sentences and to own previous judgements

The main difference to the method Magnitude Estimation (Bard et Al. In 1996): always two reference sentences whose authoritative values are settled by the test leader

Reason: Informants can often deliver disproportional judgements.

# Data sources and methods: Thermometer judgements (Featherston 2006)

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## Observance of different orders of the experimental control

❖ in view of the material to be tested:

- understandable sentences
- only one divergence per sentence
- Installation of distractors (which deflect the attention of the aim stimulus) or combination of test sentences with divergences in different linguistic areas

“The art of a good interviewer is to overcome the observer’s paradox, ideally by indirect elicitation techniques that mask what the researcher is interested in, leaving the inter-viewed ignorant about it.” (Penke / Rosenbach 2004, 490)

- grammatical, marginal and ungrammatical test sentences



# Data sources and methods: Thermometer judgements (Featherston 2006)

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## Observance of different orders of the experimental control

- ❖ In view of the realisation:
  - Judgments of at least 25 + informants
  - two practise phases (purpose: Preparation to the test, "Filtering" of "unreliable" test persons)
  - Elevation of meta data (age, gender, occupation, birthplace and place of residence)
  - Measurement of response times

# Data sources and methods: Thermometer judgements (Featherston 2006)

## Observance of different orders of the experimental control in view of the evaluation:

- Statistically oriented analysis (calculation of the average value, the standard divergence, realisation of significance tests)
- Standardization of different scales: z-transformation of the number broads assessments with the help of the following formula:

$$z_i = \frac{x_i - \bar{x}}{s}$$

# Data sources and methods: Thermometer judgements

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## Composition of the material in the present study

- ❖ A total of 4 tests
- ❖ carried out mainly by the directives of the method thermometer judgments
- ❖ Participants: 96 native speakers of Russian; The average age was 24 years
- ❖ Per test on an average 16 test sentences (4 grammatical, 4 ungrammatical, 8 marginal with divergences in the area of the categories Aspect, Case, Gender, Animation)
- ❖ control sentence

## Относительные оценки

Пожалуйста, оцените, насколько естественно в сравнении со вспомогательными предложениями, звучит предложение с красным шрифтом.

Вспомогательное предложение 1: его естественность оценивается значением 20.

Процессор данного типа совершает порядка тысяча семьсот операций в секунду.

Вспомогательное предложение 2: его естественность оценивается значением 30.

Процессор данного типа совершает порядка тысячи семисот операций в секунду.

Пожалуйста, оцените, насколько естественно в сравнении со вспомогательными предложениями, звучит предложение с красным шрифтом.

Читать книг - моё любимое занятие.

Продолжить

# Data sources and methods: Thermometer judgements

Please judge please the naturalness of the red written sentence in comparison to the reference sentences)

## Hilfssatz 1: Seine Natürlichkeit erhält den Wert „20“

„Ein Prozessor diesen Typs vollzieht circa Tausend **Nominativ** sieben Hundert **Nominativ** Operationen pro Sekunde.“

## Hilfssatz 2: Seine Natürlichkeit erhält den Wert „30“

„Ein Prozessor diesen Typs vollzieht circa Tausend **Genitiv** sieben Hundert **Genitiv** Operationen pro Sekunde.“

Beurteilen Sie bitte die Natürlichkeit des rot geschriebenen Satzes im Vergleich zu den Hilfssätzen

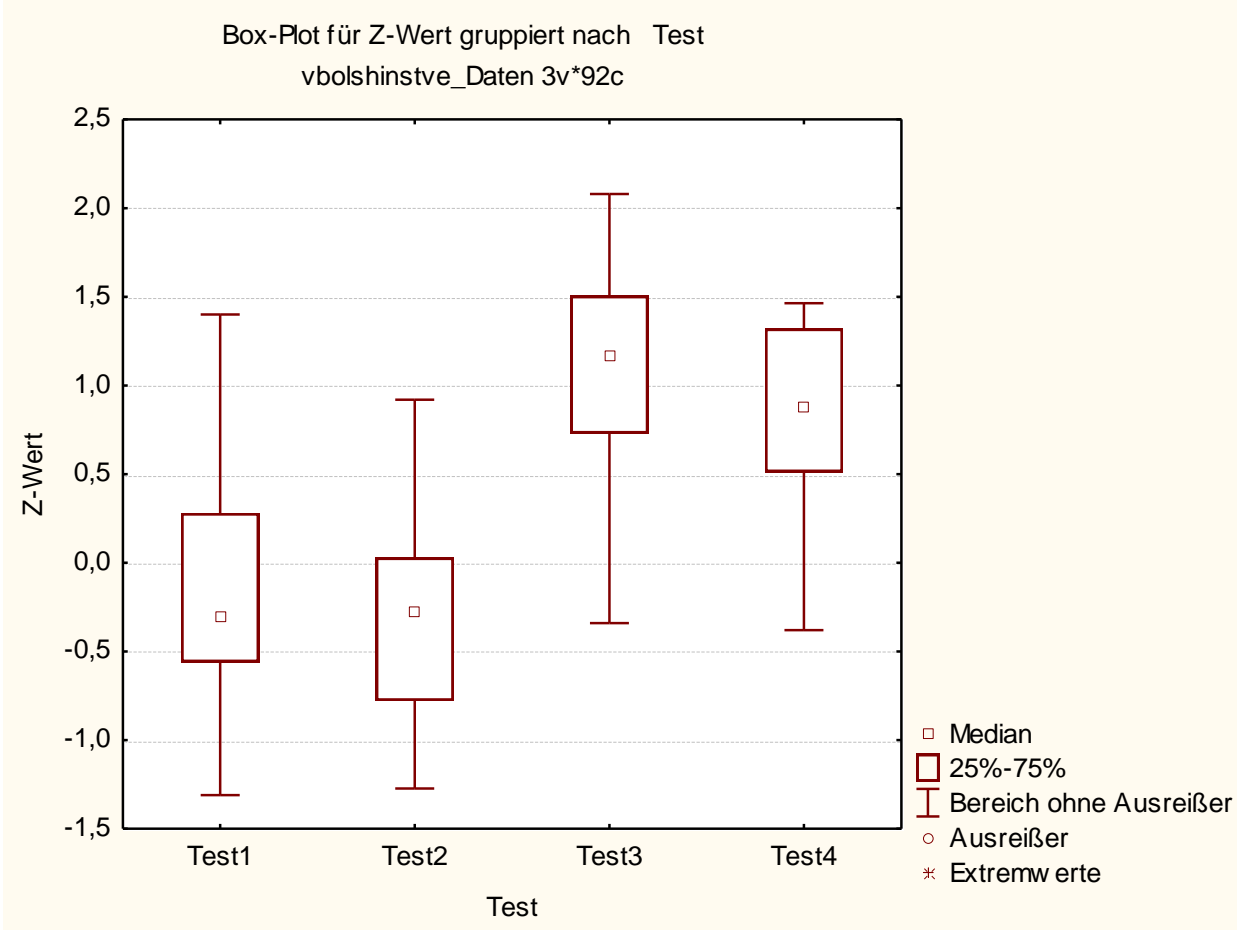
**Уже в начале осени похолодало и все пришли на работу в пальтах.**

„Bereits zum Herbstanfang wurde es kalt und alle kamen zur Arbeit mit **Mänteln** **Dekliniert**.“

# Data sources and methods: Thermometer judgements

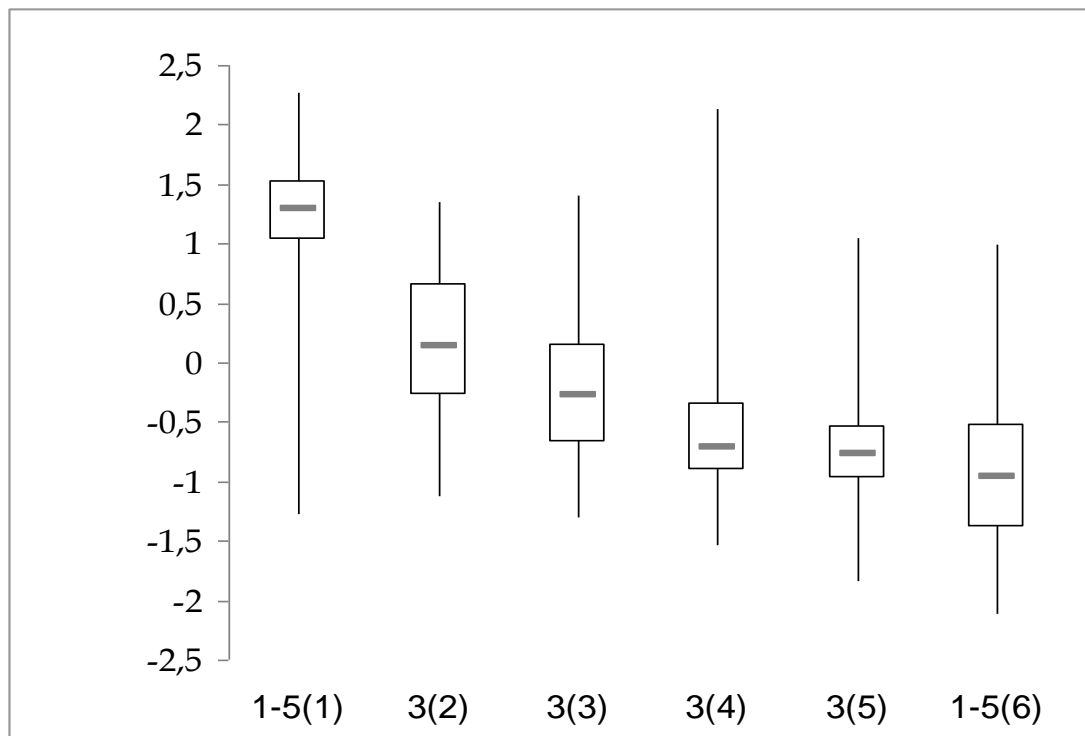
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- ❖ Native speakers divide linguistic facts not categorically into right and wrong, but perceive them in view of the grammaticality / non-grammaticality in a highly sophisticated manner.
- ❖ Nevertheless, this differentiated appraisal of linguistic phenomena is not any, but agrees with the majority of the informants.



Test1 und Test 2: **В большинстве случаев** преподаватель отвечал на вопросы студентов весьма подробно.

Test3 und Test 4: **В большинстве случаев** преподаватель отвечал на вопросы студентов весьма подробно.



1-5 (1) Кто разрешил тебе выйти на улицу?

3 (2) Не всё, что кажется неразумно, является таковым на самом деле.

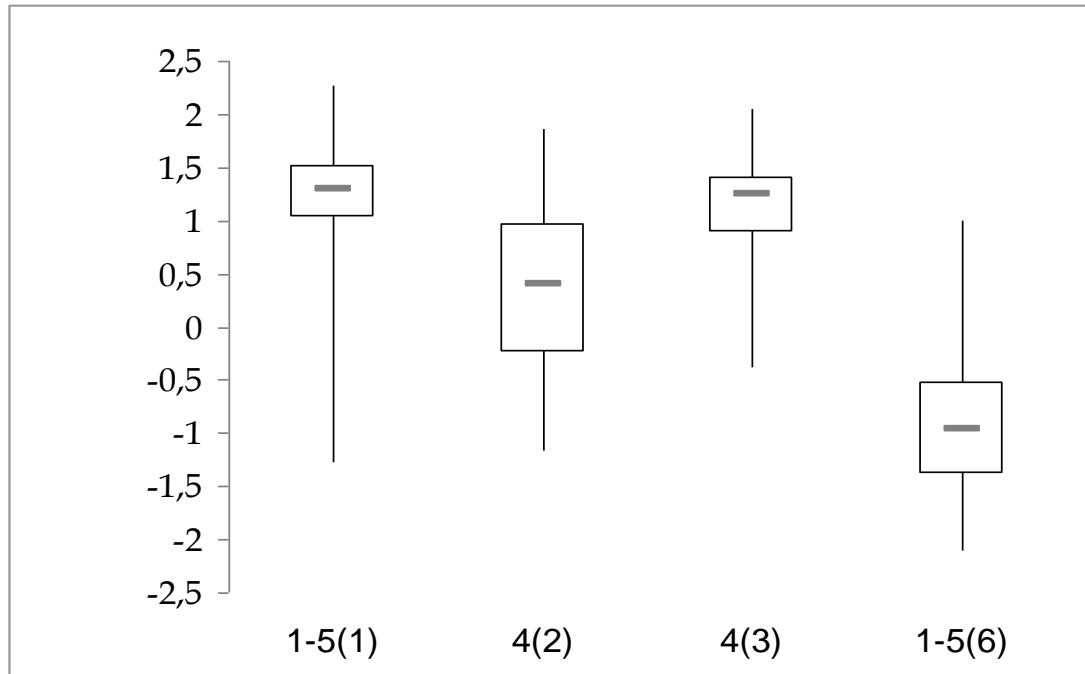
3 (3) В большинстве случаев преподаватель отвечал на вопросы студентов весьма подробно.

3 (4) Об этих художников уже писали.

3 (5) Сегодня я намереваюсь посмотреть хорошего фильма.

1-5 (6) Виктор начал написать курсовую работу в конце семестра.



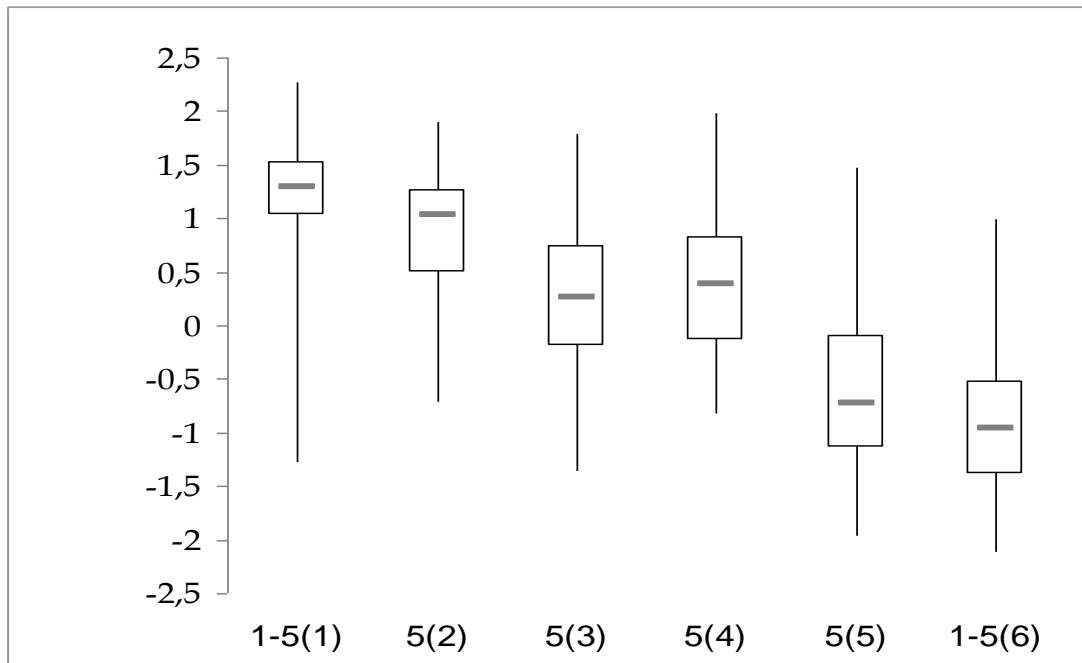


(1) Кто разрешил тебе выйти на улицу?

4 (2) В любом кафе города можно заказать чашку чаю.

4 (3) В любом кафе города можно заказать чашку чая.

1-5 (6) Виктор начал написать курсовую работу в конце семестра.



1-5 (1) Кто разрешил тебе выйти на улицу? ‚Wer hat es dir erlaubt, hinauszugehen?‘

5 (2) Я забрала **свою** куртку из гардероба последней. ‚Ich holte **meine** seine eigene\* Jacke aus der Garderobe als letzte.‘

5 (3) Я забрала **мою** куртку из гардероба последней. ‚Ich holte **meine** Jacke aus der Garderobe als letzte.‘

\* Die Form **свой** (m) **своя** (f) **своё** (n) **свои** (pl) (‚sein eigenes‘) ersetzt alle Possessivpronomen (Singular und Plural), wenn das Subjekt im Satz der Besitzer des Objektes ist.

1-5 (6) Виктор начал **написать** курсовую работу в конце семестра. ‚Viktor begann am Ende des Semesters die Hausarbeit zu **schreiben** Perfekt. Aspekt.‘

# Data sources and methods: Thermometer judgements

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## The disadvantages of the method:

- ❖ Low attention of the test persons sometimes leads to distorted results
- ❖ This type of data is not immune to performance factors. (Bornkessel-Schlesewsky and Schlewsky 2007)
- ❖ Two reference sentences
- ❖ Too complicated for the informants

# Data sources and methods: Acceptability judgements: The scale with the endpoints

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- ❖ In some points it agreed with the thermometer Judgement experiment, in others it differed from it
- ❖ Judgements in numerical form, but the scale with terminator points: from 1 (very bad) to 5 (very good)
- ❖ relatively: relatively only to their own previous judgments, no reference sentences
- ❖ in view of the material to be tested:
  - only one divergence per sentence
  - Installation of distractors

# Data sources and methods: Acceptability judgements: The scale with the endpoints

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- ❖ Participants: 45 students of the Samara University, native speakers of Russian; The average age was 19 years
- ❖ The same test persons took part in all three tests.
- ❖ Per test on an average 14 test sentences (4 grammatical, 4 ungrammatical, 6 marginal with divergences in the area of the categories Aspect, Case, Gender, Animation)
- ❖ control sentence
- ❖ The tests were carried out with a 2 week time difference. They were distributed in the lessons and were collected 10 minutes afterwards. The students did not know after the first one and the second test that other tests were going to follow.

# Data sources and methods: Acceptability judgements: The scale with the endpoints

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## What constituted the differences between the tests:

- ❖ The first test concerns the pure collection of grammaticality and acceptability judgements, in which the participants express their appraisal of the naturalness of test sentences numerically.
- ❖ During the second and third test the participants were asked – in addition to judging the grammatical acceptability of sentences – to improve the forms or constructions which they considered wrong/ungrammatical.
- ❖ Moreover, the informants were asked to report on the situation or style of speech in which these deviating forms would be allowed (cf. Hundt 2008).

# Data sources and methods: Acceptability judgements: The scale with the endpoints

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- ❖ The test sentences in the first and in the second test were identical.
- ❖ In terms of construction, the third test was like the second, containing i.e. additional questions. However, there were other test sentences, some of them being controlling sentences for the sentences with a modification which were tested in the test 1 and 2.
- ❖ The results of these tests were compared to each other as well as with the results of the thermometer Judgements Experiments. The values awarded by the test persons were z-standardised.

# Data sources and methods: Acceptability judgements: The scale with the endpoints: Results

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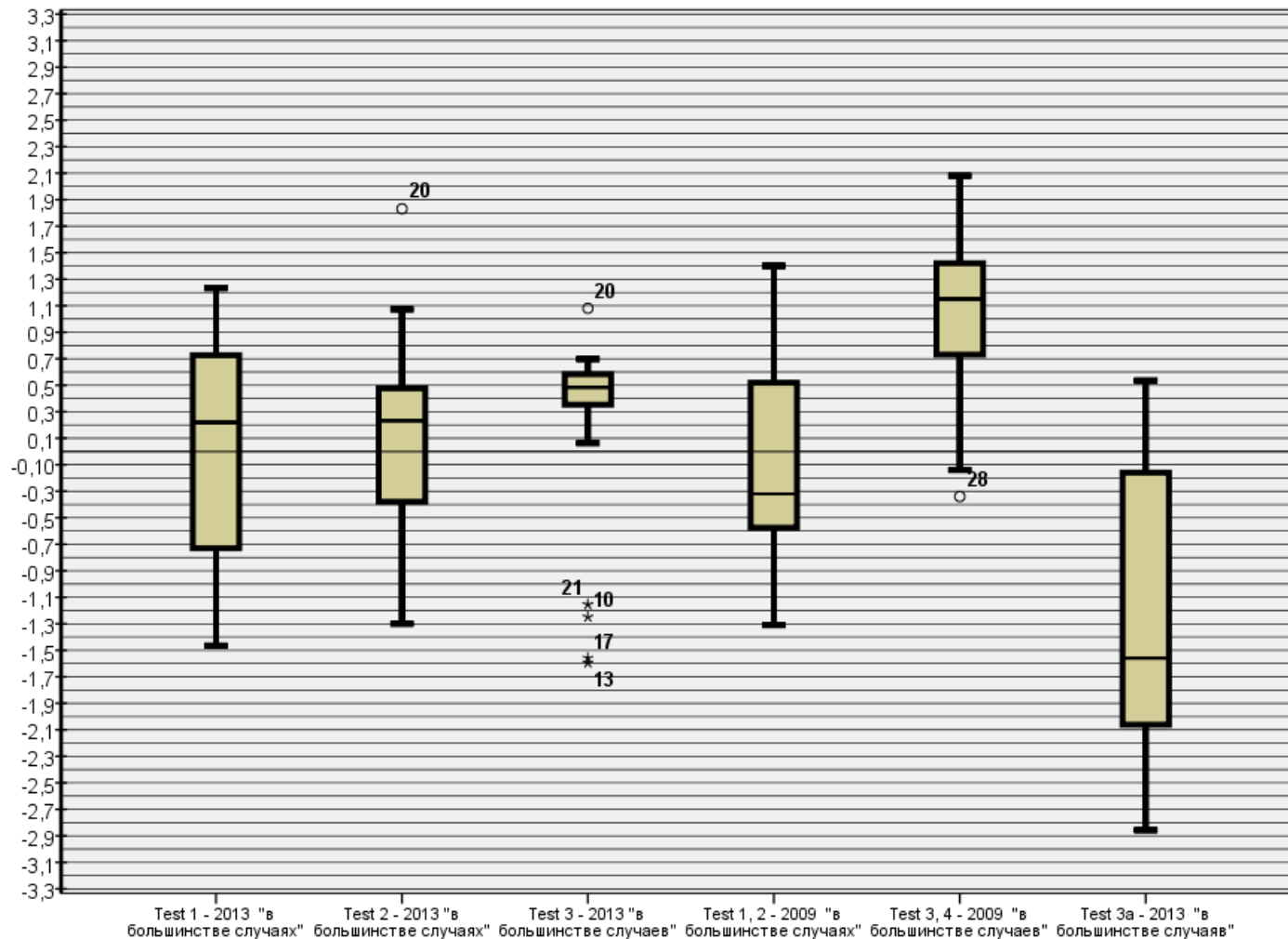
- ❖ The first aim was to examine whether additional tasks have an effect on the numerical judgement of forms and constructions (if, yes, whether the difference is statistically relevant) and whether the presence of endpoints on the scale influences the test persons in their decision etc.



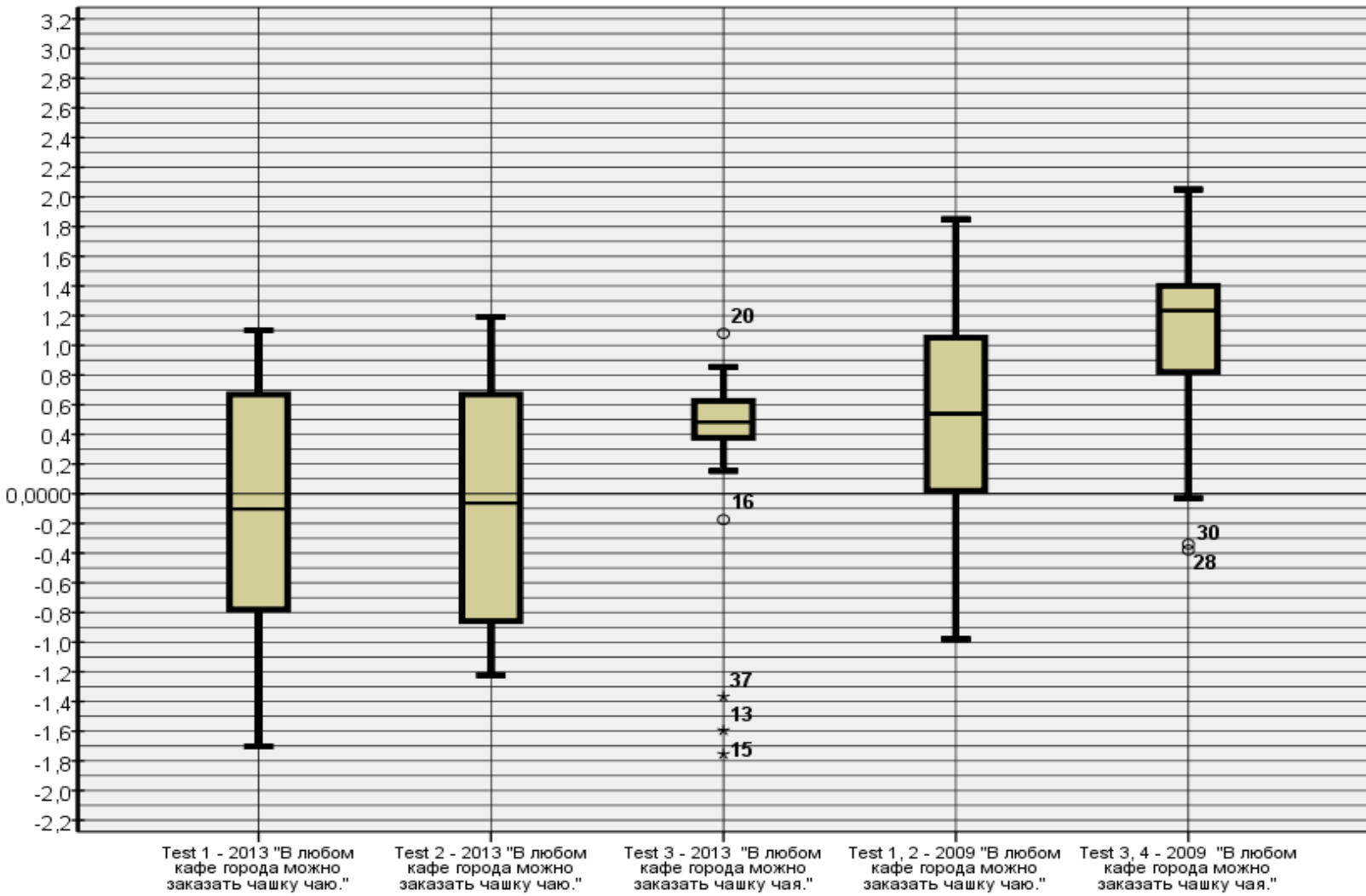
В большинстве случаях преподаватель отвечал на вопросы студентов весьма подробно. (Test 1 – 2013; Test 2 – 2013; Test 1,2 – 2009)

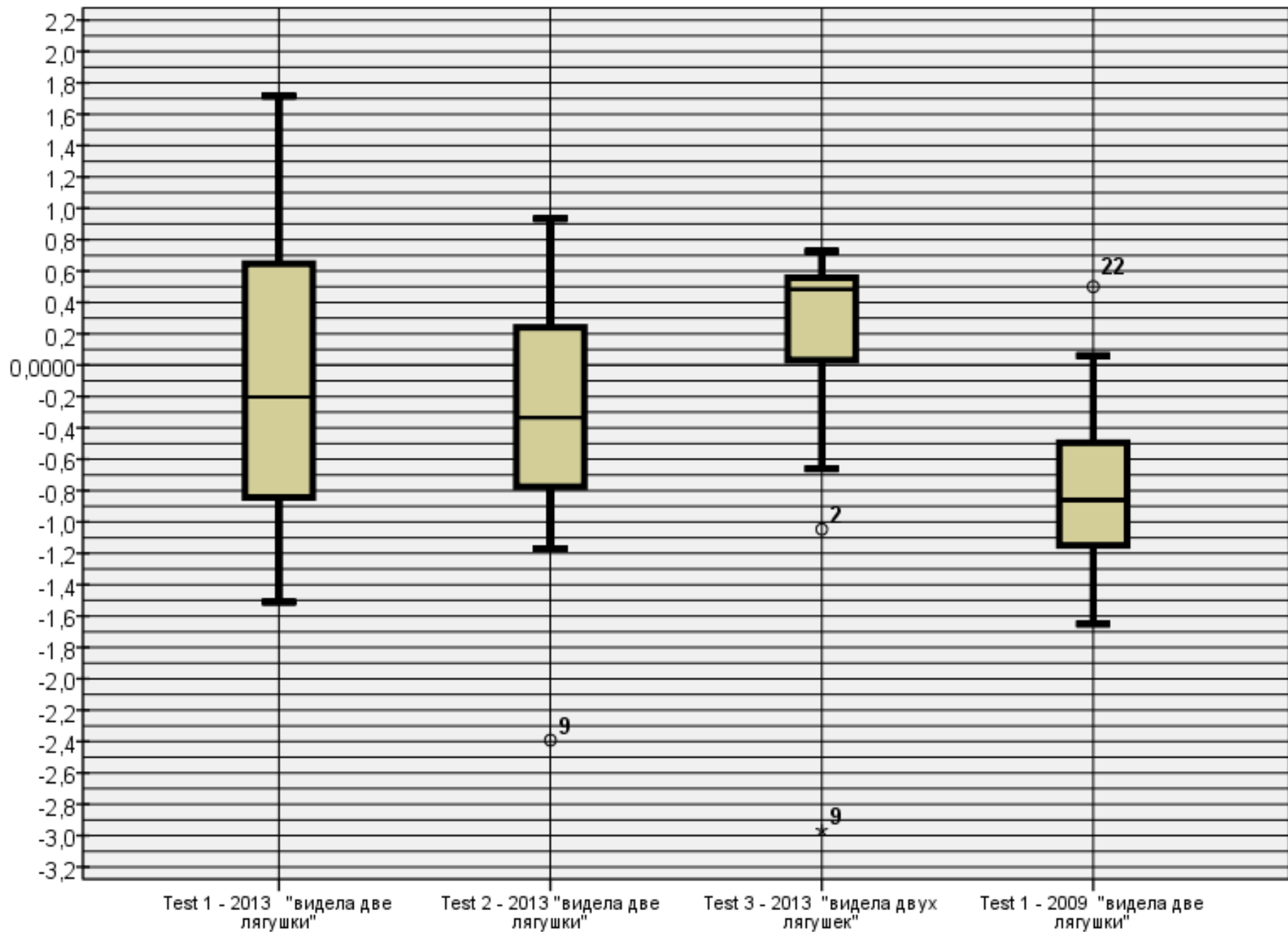
В большинстве случаяв преподаватель отвечал на вопросы студентов весьма подробно. (Test 3а – 2013)

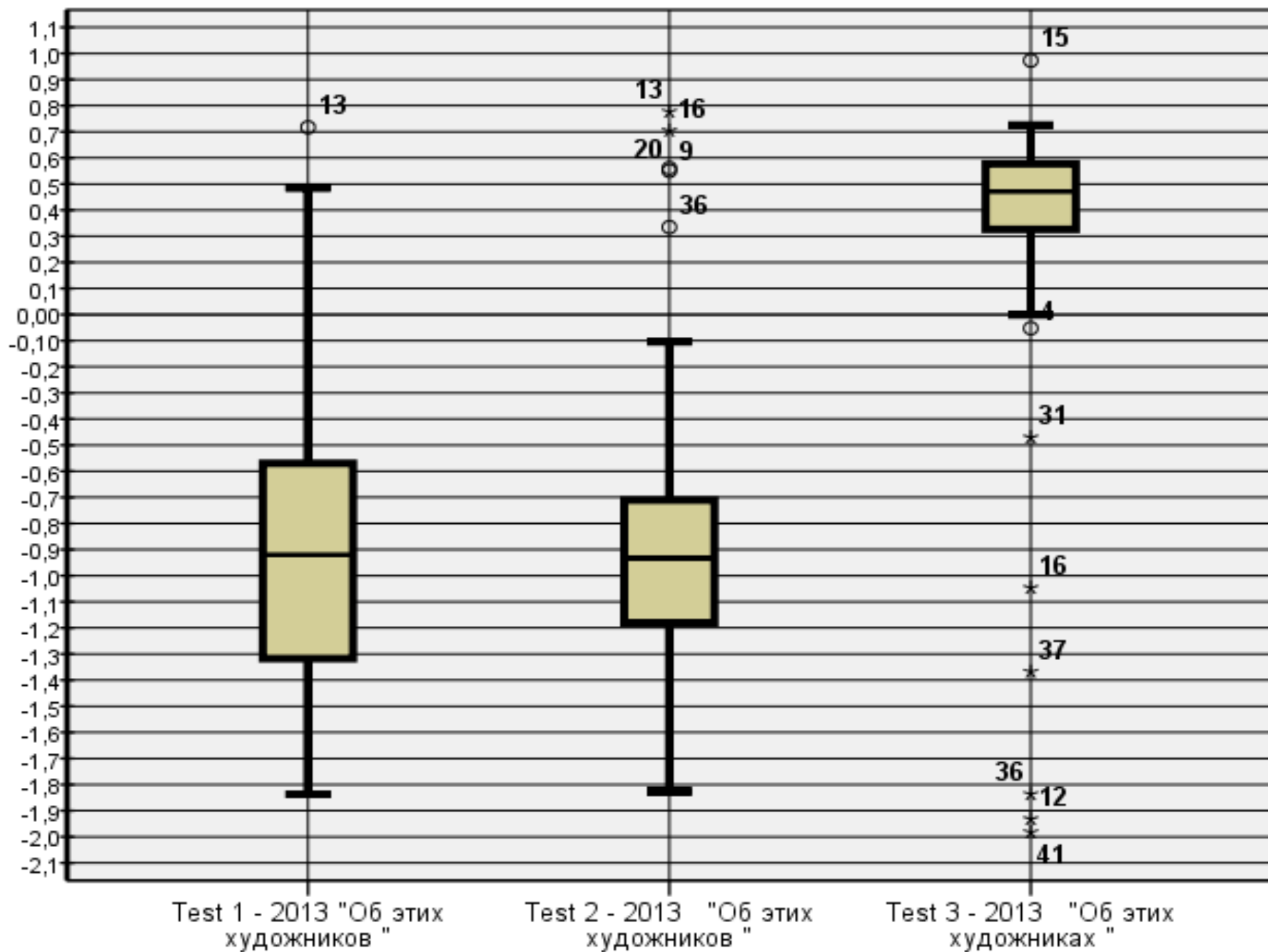
Kontrollsatz: В большинстве случаев преподаватель отвечал на вопросы студентов весьма подробно. (Test 3 – 2013; Test 1,2 – 2009)

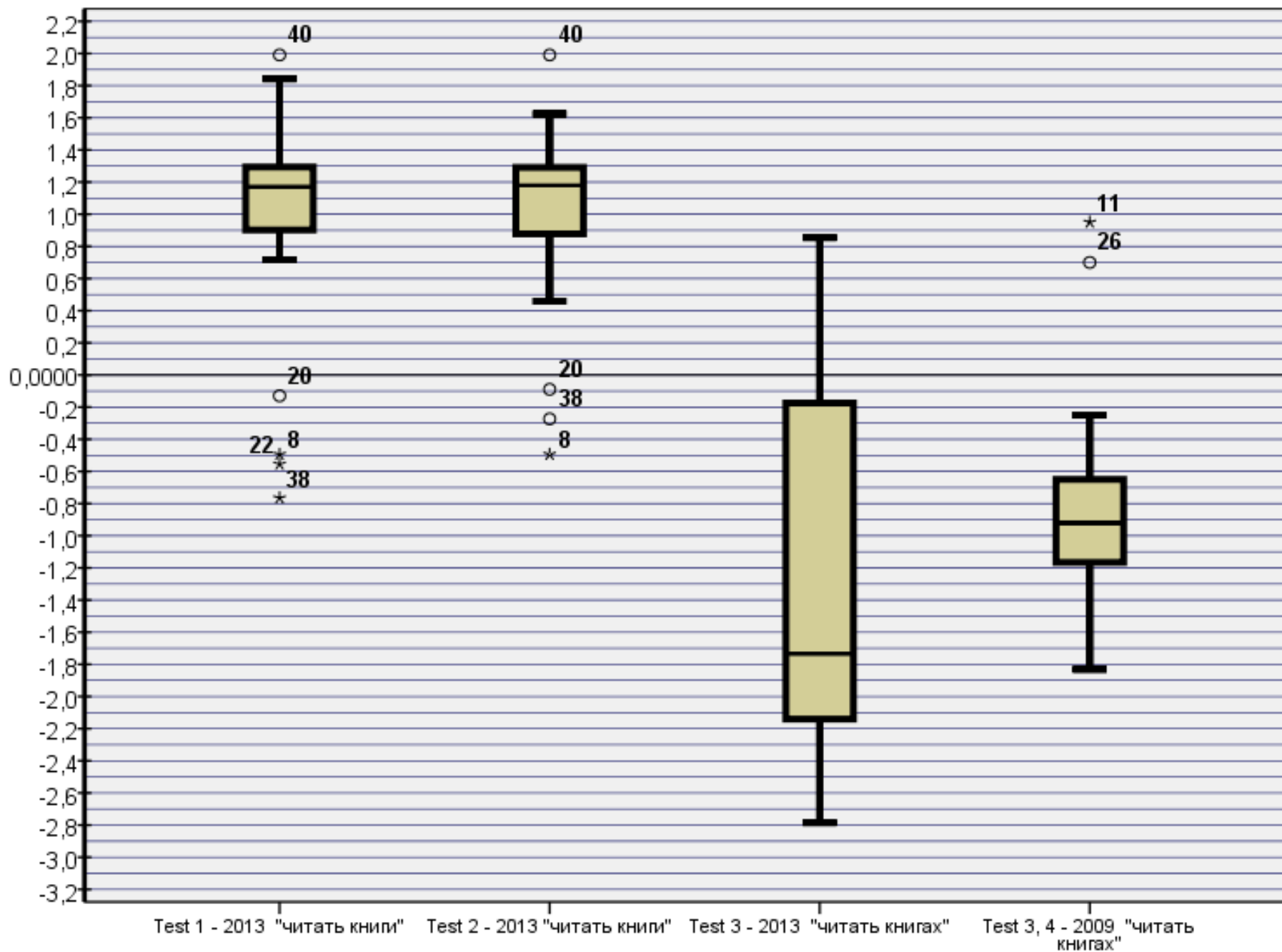


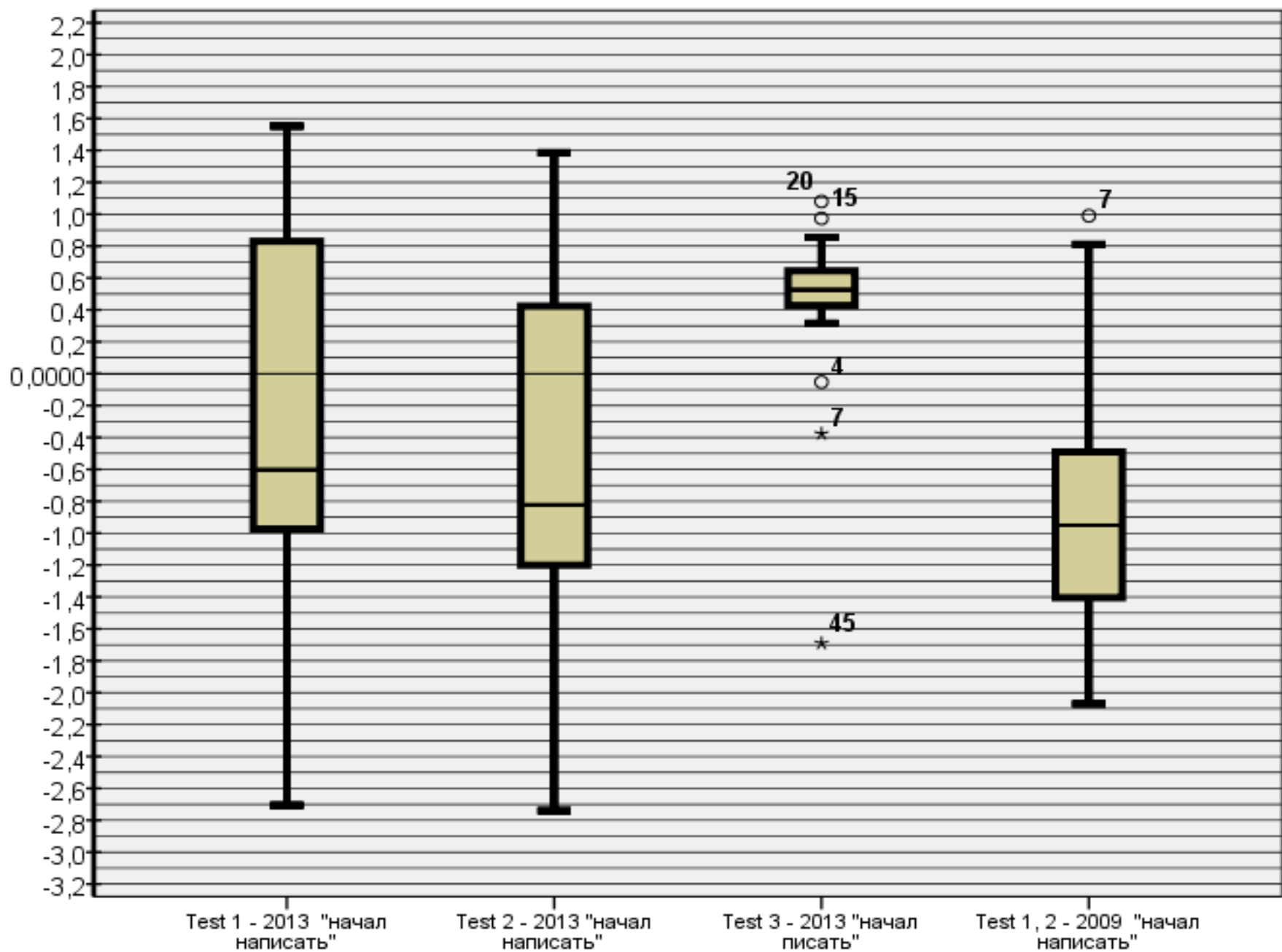
В любом кафе города можно заказать чашку чая. (Test 1 – 2013; Test 2 – 2013; Test 1,2 – 2009).  
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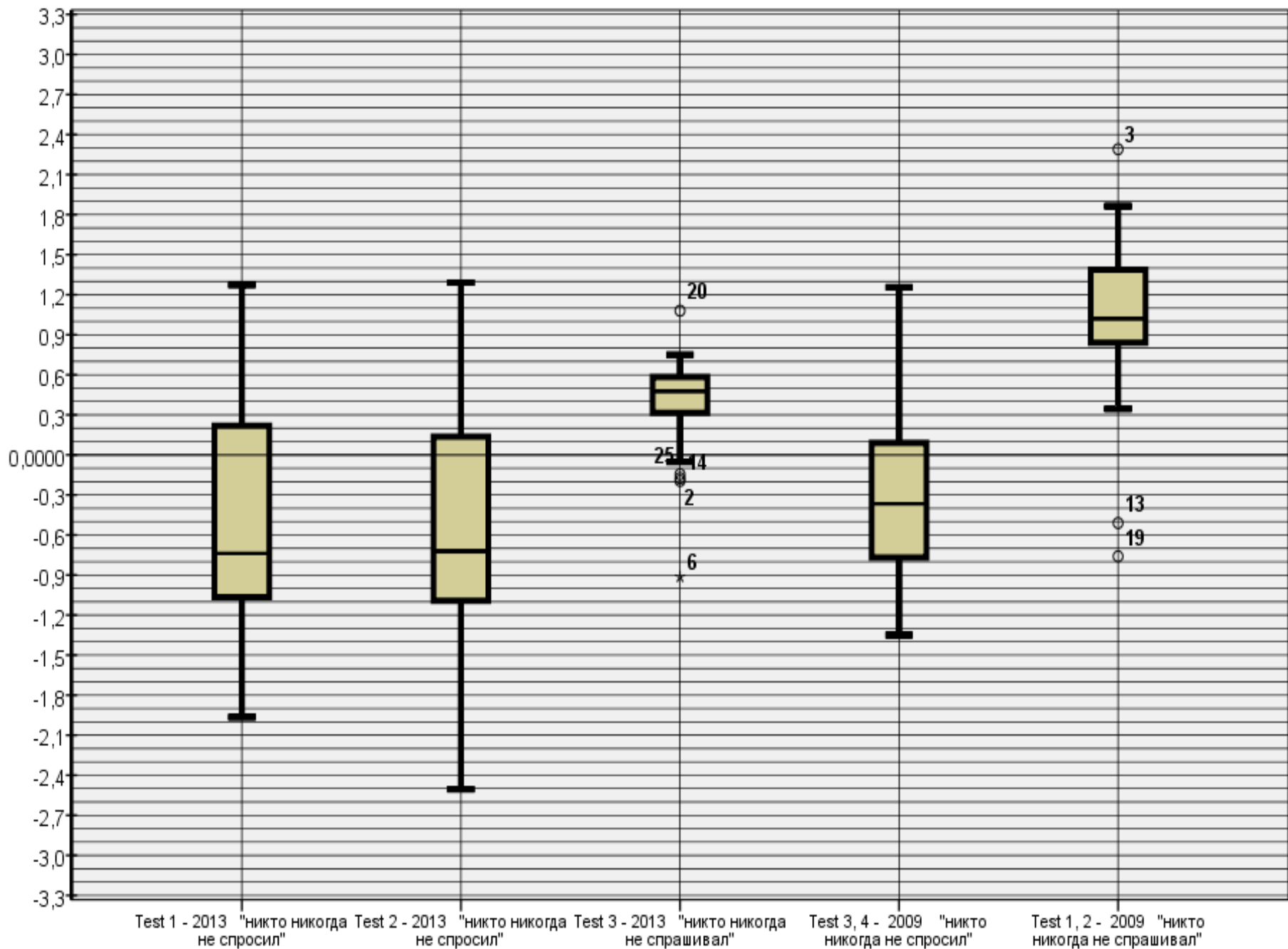


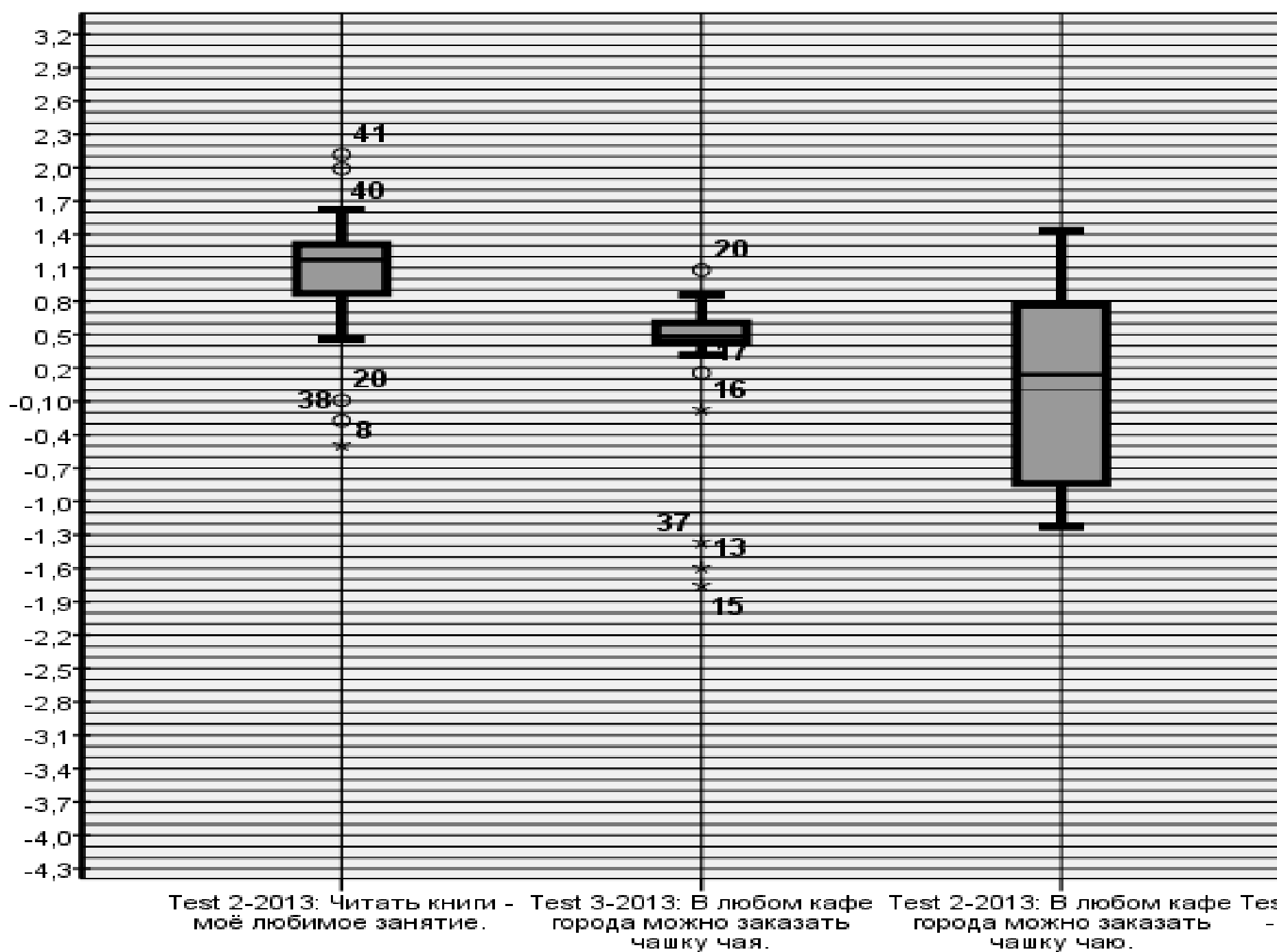




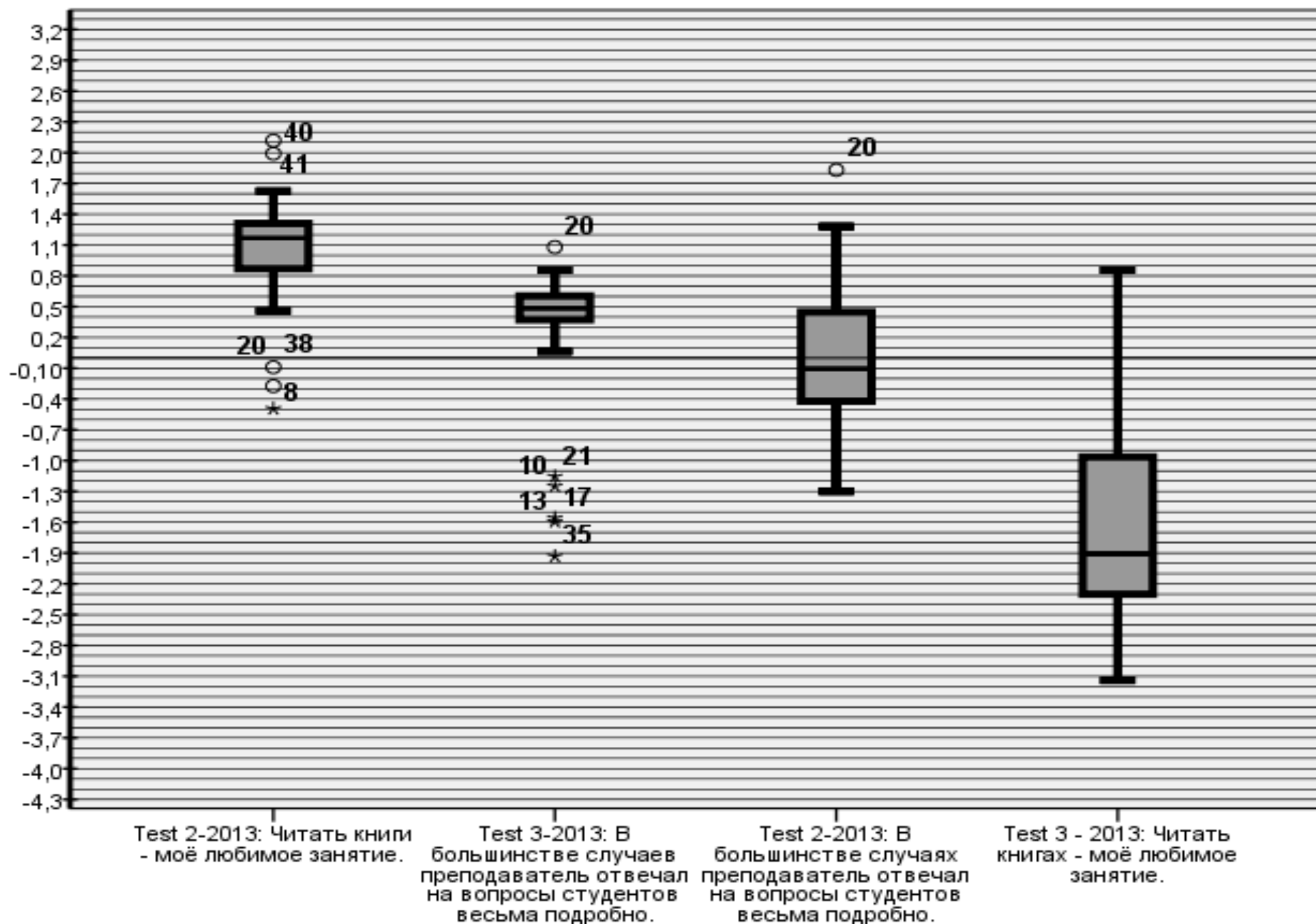












# Data sources and methods: Acceptability judgements: The scale with the endpoints: Results

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- ❖ The first aim was to examine whether additional tasks have an effect on the numerical judgement of forms and constructions (if, yes, whether the difference is statistically relevant)
- No, the difference between the results was not significant in any case, i.e. that the additional tasks do not have a decisive effect on the numerical judgement of forms and constructions.

# Data sources and methods: Acceptability judgements: The scale with the endpoints: Results

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- ❖ Nevertheless, the answers for the additional tasks were interesting within the scope of a qualitative analysis.
- ❖ Several informants would allow constructions or forms with modifications, e.g. “В большинстве случаев” or “видела в лесу две лягушки” in colloquial language.
- ❖ In some cases just codified forms were classified as colloquial and modified as a standard.

# Data sources and methods: Acceptability judgements: The scale with the endpoints: Results

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- In the case of the verb pair " езжу" / "ездию " 13 of 45 informants classified the form " езжу" as colloquial. 5 of them (approx. 10%) recommended using "ездию". This led to the fact that of the differences in the assessment from "ездию" (test 1 and test 2) and " езжу" (test 3) were not significant.
- In the case of "В большинстве случаев" / "В большинстве случаях". 6 of 45 informants classified "В большинстве случаев" as colloquial and would recommend, "В большинстве случаях " (> 10% of all test persons.) Also in this case the differences in the assessment of "В большинстве случаях " (test 1 and test 2) and "В большинстве случаев" (test 3) were not significant.

# Data sources and methods: Acceptability judgements: The scale with the endpoints: Results

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- ❖ The second aim was to examine whether the presence of endpoints on the scale influences the test persons in their decision etc.
- The judgements of the modified sentences are more alike than the judgements of the sentences without modification.
- The significant differences emerge almost only with the sentences without modification.
- What could be the reason?
- A technical problem? Sentences without modification have a lower dispersion with a school marking system because in most cases the mark "5" is assigned to them.
- Or it is a regional specific feature?

# Questionnaires

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- ❖ The material received in such way is close to natural written language or to the "found" linguistic data.
- ❖ Clarification of how the assessment of the language fact and its use in speech correspond to each other was the purpose of carrying out additional experiment.
- ❖ Whether the assumption is fair that the aberrations apprehended by native speakers not absolutely negatively will occur in questionnaires regularly.
- ❖ The main task of the questionnaire was to put the words in brackets in an initial form in the form demanded by this grammatical design.
- ❖ Material of the questionnaire corresponded to material of introspective experiment

# Questionnaires

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9 groups of students and pupils of the average higher educational institutions (from St. Petersburg, Samara, Minsk, Almetyevsk and Würzburg) took part in filling the questionnaire, each group totaled from 25 to 32 examinees.

# Questionnaires

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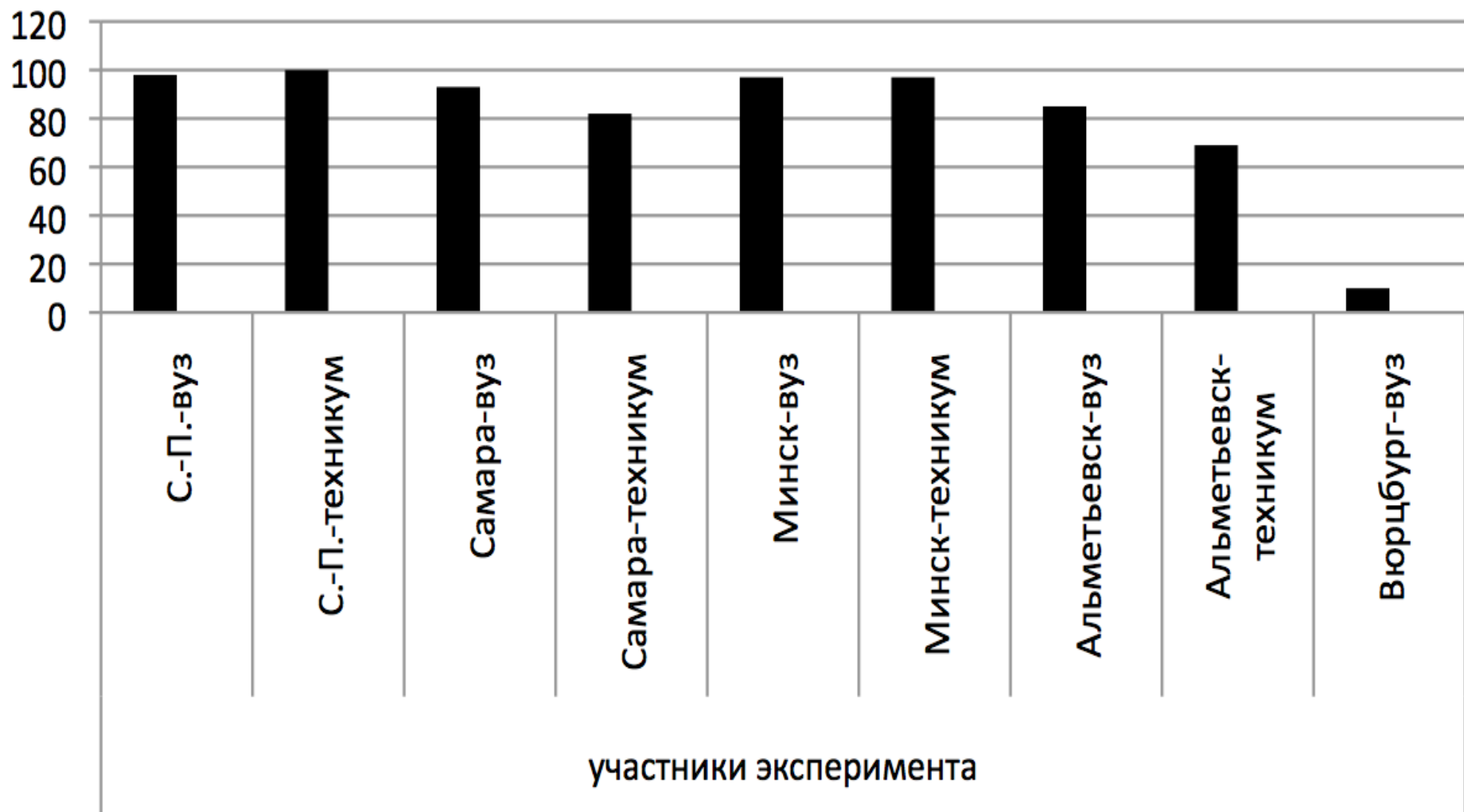
9 groups of students and pupils of the average higher educational institutions (from St. Petersburg, Samara, Minsk, Almetyevsk and Würzburg) took part in filling the questionnaire, each group totaled from 25 to 32 examinees.



# Questionnaires: Results

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- ❖ We will address again the quantitative nominal phrase в боль-шин-ст-ве слу-чаев and its not codified option в большинстве слу-чаях.
- ❖ Participants in the experiment were faced by a task to put the words in the correct form.



# Questionnaires: Results

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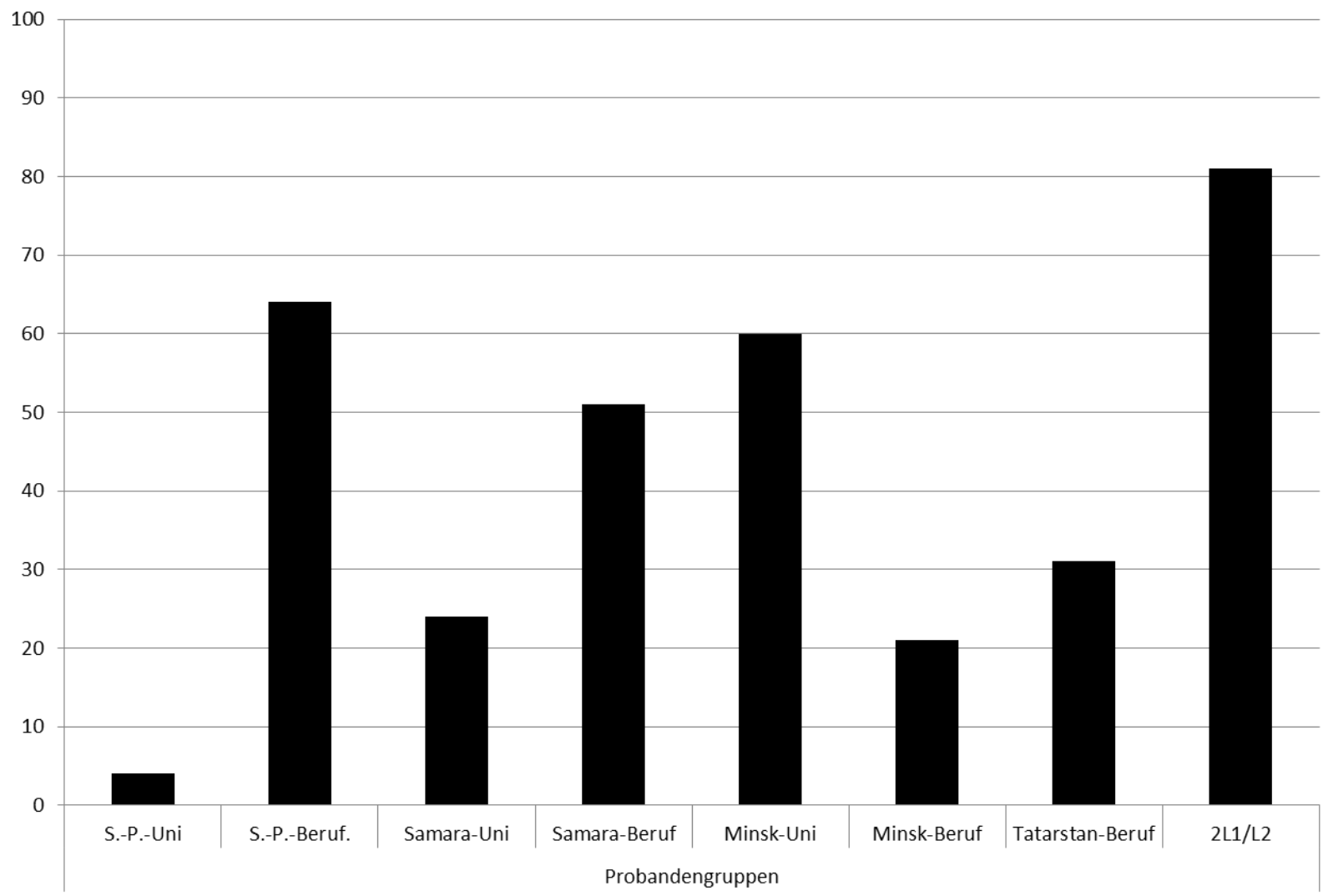
- ❖ We will address again the quantitative nominal phrase в боль-шин-ст-ве слу-чаев and its not codified option в большинстве слу-чаях.
- ❖ Participants in the experiment were faced by a task to put the words in the correct form. (It is shown what percent of examinees successfully coped with this task. The most frequent deviation from the norm is the combination use в большинстве слу-чаях.)
- ❖ Thus, assumptions are confirmed that the aberrations evaluated by native speakers not absolutely negatively, will be encountered in questionnaires relatively often.

# Questionnaires: Results

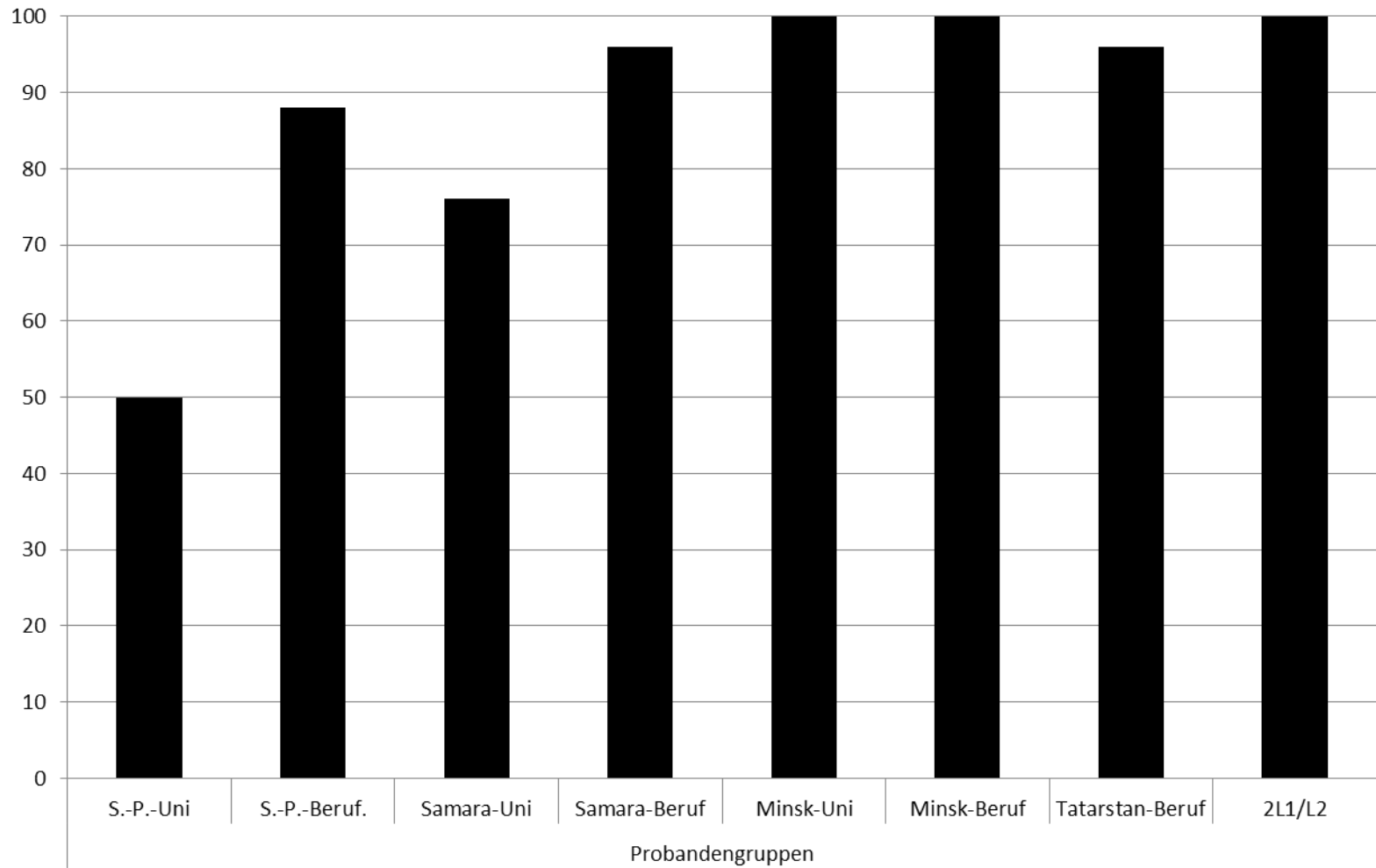
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- ❖ This thesis can be also confirmed on the basis of other examples. On the picture, one sees, e.g., how high the percent is of the test persons who have used the construction *две лягушки* in the accusative or who could not decline the compound numeral ... correctly.

На кочке мы заметили две лягушки.



В театре был найден кошелек с шестьюстами семьюдесятью тремя рублями (Abweichungen).



# Questionnaires: Results

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- ❖ This thesis can be also confirmed on the basis of other examples. On the picture, one sees, e.g., how high the percent is of the test persons who have used the construction *dve ljagushki* in the accusative or who could not decline the compound numeral ... correctly.
- ❖ In all these cases the results of the questionnaires support the results from previous Acceptability judgments experiments.

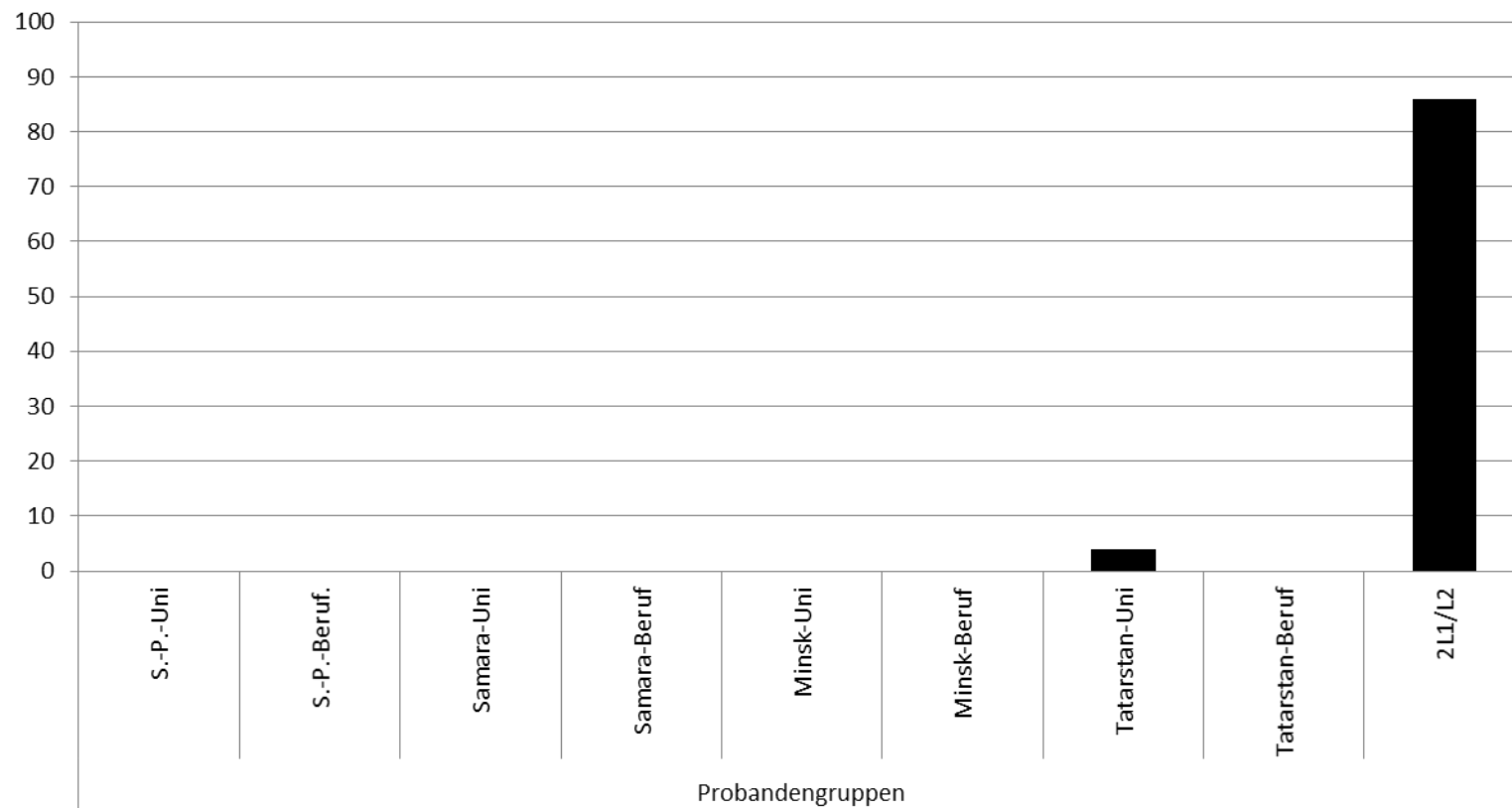
# Questionnaires: Results

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- ❖ Indeed, there are also cases if it comes to discrepancies between the results. On the ext picture one sees that the sentence \*Виктор начал написать курсовую работу в конце семестра. is not used at all in the questionnaires in St. Petersburg, Samara and Minsk.



\*Виктор начал написать курсовую работу в конце семестра.



# Questionnaires: Results

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- ❖ Indeed, there are also cases if it comes to discrepancies between the results. On the ext picture one sees that the sentence \*Виктор начал написать курсовую работу в конце семестра. is not used at all in the questionnaires in St. Petersburg, Samara and Minsk.
- ❖ However, the judgement of this sentence within the scope of both acceptability judgement experiments does not appear so negative at all.
- ❖ The distribution looks as follows. With the first test the highest value, "5", was awarded 11 times, "4" – 8 times, "3" – 2 times, "2" – 2 times and "1" – 22 times.

# Questionnaires: Results

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- ❖ With the second test (with the additional duties) "5" was awarded 8 times, "4" – 3 times, "3" – 3 times, "2" – 2 times and "1" – 28 times. About such a phenomenon that the single constructions which practically never appear in the corpus, by the native speakers are not classified as „so badly“, it is reported in many studies (Kempen and Harbusch in 2008 (so-called Grammaticality-frequency Gap); Featherston in 2005 etc.). For it there are different explanations.

# Questionnaires: Results

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- ❖ With data introduced here I assume from the fact that a good judgement for this sentence is due to a lack of attention. One could see in the fact that this sentence – in contrast to the so-called Case of doubts – hardly have a middle mark (in this case: "3"). The assessment of this sentence is basically split between very bad and very good.
- ❖ Nevertheless, it is hardly possible that this construction was seen by a quarter of all test persons as "very good". Therefore, I suppose in cases of assigning the highest value, a lack of attention was responsible.

# Conclusions

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All together it can be said that the combination of different methods can be estimated as a big enrichment. It helps to recognise the limits of every single method and to balance it out.

Native speakers divide linguistic facts not categorically into right and wrong, but perceive them in view of the grammaticality/non-grammaticality in a highly sophisticated way.

Nevertheless, this differentiated appraisal of linguistic phenomena is not any, but agrees with the majority of the informants

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# Thank you

# Ergebnisse

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## Conclusions concerning the setting of speakers to the grammar system of their native language

- ❖ The thesis can be proposed that grammaticality shows a calibrated phenomenon with adult speakers. In the illustrations 3 and 4 it is to be seen that in the judgement of different sentences a categorical allocation „too properly“ or "wrong" was not possible, but here belongs to a grey area.
- ❖ In this transitional area gradations between more and less satisfactory forms and constructions can be seen. The concept of prototypicality that is so productive in the linguistics (Rosch in 1975 among other things) can be applied therefore apparently also for the perception of the grammaticality.

# Questionnaires

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- ❖ The material received in such way is close to natural written language or to the "found" linguistic data.
- ❖ Clarification of how the assessment of the language fact and its use in speech correspond to each other was the purpose of carrying out additional experiment.
- ❖ Whether the assumption is fair that the aberrations apprehended by native speakers not absolutely negatively will occur in questionnaires regularly.
- ❖ The main task of the questionnaire was to put the words in brackets in an initial form in the form demanded by this grammatical design.
- ❖ Material of the questionnaire corresponded to material of introspective experiment