Same, but different: Russian and Estonian response particles

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Language items = meaning + usage

(1) Use a good dictionary!
Ty idjosh’ s nami? – Da net pozhaluj \textit{Rus}
Are you coming with us? – *Yes no maybe
– \textit{Well no I suppose}

(2) Do not trust dictionary!
ahah/ahaa \textit{Est} ≠ aha/aga \textit{Rus}
jah/jaa \textit{Est} ≠ da \textit{Rus}
treated as (full) equivalents both by Est-Rus and Rus-Est dictionaries

(3) Beware!
ahah ≠ ahaa \textit{Est}
jah ≠ jaa \textit{Est}
aha ≠ aga \textit{Rus}
Contrastive research

- **scope**: 4 response particles (the most frequent)
  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Est</th>
<th>Rus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ahah/ahaa</td>
<td>aha(aga)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jah/jaa</td>
<td>da</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mhmh</td>
<td>mhmh(ugu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nii</td>
<td>tak</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- **data**: comparative corpus of phone calls to outpatient hospital reception
  (2 monolingual corpora, 144 calls, about 17000 words in total)

- **method**: CA, paying attention to the sequential and prosodic environment of the item

Differences in sequential environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sequential position</th>
<th>ahah/ahaa E</th>
<th>aha/aha R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>reaction to a self-identification</td>
<td>■</td>
<td>■</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reaction to a directive</td>
<td></td>
<td>■</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>continuer</td>
<td>■</td>
<td>■</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>answer to a question</td>
<td></td>
<td>■</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd turn in a question-answer sequence</td>
<td>■</td>
<td>■</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reaction to a closing-up signal</td>
<td></td>
<td>■</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Differences in sequential environment – jah/da

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sequential Position</th>
<th>jah/da R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jah/da E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction to a summons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction to a self-identification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction to a directive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answer to a question</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction to a statement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd turn in a question sequence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other-repair initiation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### question – answer – jah (Est): regular

1. C: tere? (.) kas te `ütleksi(,)te `mis `päevadel ja mis `kellahe.(,)del võtab vastu (,) `suguaiguste arst.  
   hello would you tell me what are the days and hours of venerologist’s reception

2. (.)

3. R: mm `suhkr(,)gumaiguste arst võtab `vastu `esmaspäeval `kolmeteist- ee poole (,) kahe `teistkümnest ee (.), h e kella `neljani?  
   mm diab- venerologist’ reception is Monday thirtee- er half twelve to er four o’clock

4. (.)

5. C: jah
   jah

6. R: ja `kolmapäeval `üheksa kolmekümnest kolm`teist kolmekümneni.  
   and Wednesday nine thirty to thirteen thirty
question – answer – da (Rus): rare

1. C: zdravstvujte, (.) ´mozhno uznat', kak prinimает vrah ´Borisova se ´vodnja?
   hello may I ask when is doctor Borisova’s reception today?
2. (.)
3. R: .hh vy ´znaetc, ona rabotaet=e (.) v ´ofise svojom (.)
   na ´Musta ´sem´.
   (inbreath) you know, she is working at her own office at Musta street seven
4. (0.7)
5. C: [da:]
   da:
6. R: [o´ni] u nas u´zhe ne ra´botajut.
   they do not work at our place any more
7. C: da:?
   da:?
   da

question – answer – aha (Est): regular

1. R: nad võtavad ´reumatoloogi ´Jaanimäe kabinetis.
   they are taking patients in the rheumatologist Jaanimäe’s room
2. (0.6)
3. C: ´kus see on.
   where is it?
4. (0.5)
5. R: .hh see on ´rõntgeni ´koridori peal.
   that is in the X-ray therapy corridor
6. (.)
7. C: aha
   aha
8. R: jah, seal ´viimase koridori peal ´paremale.
   yes, there in the last corridor, right hand
question – answer – aha (Rus): regular

1. R: poliklinika slushaet, (. ) dobyj den’.=
   hospital’s listening, good afternoon
2. A: =a zdrastvujte devochki Marina Velesova, [.hh a]
   Nadin Anatoljevny netu tam?
   eh hello girls it’s Marina Velesova, eh isn’t Nadine
   Anatoljevna there?
3. R: [* aha *]
   aha
4. R: ona=e: (. ) poshla=e (. ) k sekretarju.=
   she’s gone to the secretary
5. A: =aha, a peredajte pozhalujsta..
   aha, eh tell (her) please

Summary

The corresponding particles in the two languages have a common usage field and differences in usage (which can be overlooked due to the common part).

The Estonian ahah/ahaa do not regularly occur as an answer to a question or agreeing reaction to a directive.

The Russian da does not normally occur in the 3rd turn position.

Russian aha and Estonian jah/jaa may serve as a neutral acknowledgement. Their quasi-equivalents in another language lack this function.

The functional differences between the particles are revealed by the sequential position of the particle, its prosody and its prosodical environment.
Упростив понял – усложни обратно!

*Understand by simplifying – AND complexify back!* (Jury Ustinov)