# Aspectual Function of Russian Verbal Affixes

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**Abstract**

This paper presents a treatment of aspectual formation in Russian based on the eventive characteristics of verbal forms. Unlike other proposals of this kind, my hypothesis assumes that aspect-changing processes in this language transform the event structure of the verb in two different ways: the perfectivizing prefixation selects for certain parts of the simple event as well as adds some extra bits of idiosyncratic meaning related to the manner of action, intensity, etc.; the imperfectivizing suffixation, in turn, is in charge of multiplying events or visualizing their preparatory phase. Thus, it if also confirmed that the mentioned processes are applied at different levels: the former is basically lexical and the letter syntactic. Concrete examples of the event structure transformations throughout the aspectual derivation are given.

## 1    Introduction

The existence of a level of event structure in the representation of predicates is assumed by and large by most linguists nowadays and especially by those interested in aspectual properties of the verbs and predicates. Moreover, its relevance is considered as extreme for the issues related to the lexicon-syntax interface. Nevertheless, the existent approaches differ in determining the locus of event interpretations: in the projectionist or lexicalist approach the event structure representations constitute the structural aspect of the verb meaning (Levin and Rappaport 1995, for instance), while in the constructionist or syntacticist approach these representations "do not reside in the lexical entries of individual verbs but rather are associated with certain basic syntactic structures" (Rappaport and Levin 1998). The latter approach is defended by Borer (2003) and Ramchand (2004), among others.

My basic claim is that we need to look into finer-grained distinctions of aspectual meaning in order to answer the above raised question correctly. Once we do that we will come to the conclusion that actually there exist two different sublevels of event structure representation, one of them is associated with the lexical aspect or

*Aktionsart* and, as its name indicates, is closely connected with the lexicon, and the other one, represented by the grammatical aspect, might be codified in the syntax. One of the borne-out predictions of my analysis is related to the issue of event typology, which, as will be argued here, is only an epiphenomenon of the above mentioned fine nuances of aspectual meaning represented as deep primitives.

This study makes use of the notion of subeventual structure as defined in Pustejovsky's "The Generative Lexicon", which rejects an atomic view on event structure and allows to describe internal aspects of the event by specifying the phases or subevents that constitute a complex event on the one hand, and representing the relation between an event and its proper subevents, on the other hand.

Before approaching the main task of this study, the description of the two types of aspect formation in Russian in terms of subeventual structure, I will review briefly the most relevant properties of the aspectual system in this language.

## 2    Section

Stems in Russian divide into two classes, perfective and imperfective. There have been many attempts of characterizing them semantically and, as Klein (1995: 672) shows, most of them can be divided into three groups of definitions[1]:

a) "According to the first, perfective presents the action referred to in its totality, whereas imperfective lacks this feature;

b) The second definition states that perfective presents the action as completed, and imperfective presents it as not completed;

c) The third definition operates with the notion of an inner boundary: in some way, perfective implies such a boundary, whereas imperfective does not".

The aspectual formation in Russian is morphological by nature, it means, different kinds of affixes are used to modify the aspectual meaning of a verbal form. The basic pattern of

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[1] Obviously, these definitions are not incompatible with each other, but rather highlight different nuances of the aspectual opposition.

word derivation is represented in scheme (1) (by Maslov 1985: 13):

(1) simplex (imperf.)>prefixal primary derivative (perf.)>suffixal secondary derivative (imperf.).

(2) *pisat'* [I] 'write, be writing'>*do-pisat'* [P] 'to finish writing'>*do-pis-yva-t'* [I] 'to be finishing writing' (ongoing or habitual).

Thus, in (2), the basic morphologically simple form *pisat'* 'write, to be writing' is imperfective[2]. The perfective form *do-pisat'* [P3] 'to finish writing' is derived from the first form by adding the perfectivizing prefix *do-*, and the secondary imperfective *do-pis-yv-at'* [I] 'to be finishing writing', which can have an ongoing or habitual interpretation, is derived from the prefixed form by means of imperfectivizing suffix *-yva-*.

It is generally assumed in classical descriptive studies (Isačenko 1965, Maslov 1985) that the second and the third members of the derivative chain (*do-pisat'* [P] and *do-pis-yva-t'* [I]) constitute a lexically identical pair differing only in aspectual meaning. In turn, the perfectivizing prefixation is not a purely grammatical process, because it normally adds some extra bits of meaning to the stem. When these additional elements of meaning lie beyond the scope of aspectual nuances and lead to the formation of a new lexical item, the prefixes responsible for this change are called *qualifying* (Isačenko 1965) or *lexical* (Smith 1991, Babko-Malaya 1999, Ramchand 2004). Lexically prefixed forms can usually undergo secondary imperfectivization and form a genuine aspectual pair. In other cases the prefixation does not change the verbal meaning that radically, it serves to express particular aspectual meanings or, in other words, information relating to how the event progresses, its phases, occurrences or frequency, connected with the modes of action or *Aktionsart* (these prefixes are labelled as *modifying* or *superlexical*).[4]

In the next part of the paper I am going to revise briefly the main arguments in favour and against labelling *Aktionsart* as a syntactic or lexical process to prove that a combined treatment is needed in order to describe it correctly.

## 3 *Aktionsart*: syntax or lexicon?

### 3.1 Some previous treatments

The question whether *Aktionsart* belongs to the grammar (syntax) or the lexicon, and is subsequently a form derivation or word formation process, has not been given a clear and generally accepted answer yet. A number of factors seem to suggest that it is a syntactic phenomenon: its regular semantics, relative systematicity of formation, impact on the syntactic properties of the predicate (type and number of arguments, adverbial modification, etc.) and, especially, its striking relation with the grammatical aspect (in fact, one of the most common terms for *Aktionsart* is *podvid* 'subaspect'). On the other hand, as will be evidenced further, each verb in Russian has its own, lexically determined, forms of *Aktionsarten* that do not form paradigms and are defective in many cases. Moreover, the same *Aktionsart* can be expressed by different morphemes. The distributive mode of action can be derived by means of two prefixes, *po-* and *pere-*, for instance (Isačenko, 1965):

(3) a. *Vse matrosy poprygali v vodu.*
    All sailors-nom. *po*-jump-past.pl.perf. in water-acc.

    'All the sailors jumped to the water (one by one)'

    b. *On perebil vsju posudu.*
    He pere-break-past.sg.perf. all dishes-acc.

    'He broke all the dishes (one by one)'

All these particular properties of the *Aktionsarten* and superlexical prefixes lead aspectologists to assert that it occupies an intermediate, transitional position between the syntax and lexicon. Indeed, ignoring its complex hybrid nature or trying to simplify it by paying attention to its syntax or its semantics alone would result in a superficial and confusing treatment.

Though it is difficult to integrate the insights of both the syntactic and lexical-semantic approaches in the context of formal theories, various recent studies have attempted to do so by decomposing the event structure and deducing the contribution of the prefixes to the verbal meaning compositionally (see Babko-Malaya 1999, Ramchand 2004, Svenonius 2004, Romanova 2004, etc.). Thus, Ramchand, from a constructional perspective, argues that the event structure can be decomposable hierarchically in three levels, represented by a sequence of heads: v – causing event, as postulated in Hale in Keyser 1993, V –

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[2] Most simple forms are imperfective; a small number (about 30) of simplex verbs are perfective and a few simplex verbs are ambiguous between perfective and imperfective.

[3] The superscripts I and P stand for imperfective and perfective forms respectively.

[4] According to Isačenko, the prefixed forms that represent the *Aktionsarten* are always *perfectiva tantum*, it means, they resist the morphology of secondary imperfectivization. Sometimes a third group of prefixes is identified, the *purely perfectivizing* or *semantically vacuous prefixes*, that as a rule add a terminativity meaning to the verb and nothing else. It is worth mentioning that the existence of purely perfectivizing prefixes is considered as dubious by a lot of aspectologists, since it is not true that terminativity and perfectivity mean the same. In addition, there are very few verbal pairs of this kind.

process and R – result subevent. According to her, the augmented event structure forms part of what she calls "first phase syntax" (or l-syntax in Hale and Keyser's terms). In this model, "the lexical prefixes appear low down in the predicational structure to allow the lexical specification of a Result Phase in the first phase syntax", which is consistent with the assumption that l-syntax is a phase for the assignment of idiosyncratic lexical information (remember that the addition of lexical prefixes gives rise to the formation of new lexemes). The superlexicals (as well as secondary imperfective suffixes), in turn, are attached to the functional head Asp which is sensitive to the existence of definite vs. indefinite event time and is located on the top of *v* outside the first phase. One of the advantages of this proposal is that it takes into consideration the internal structure of events and the time reference, extremely important for the correct description of the functioning of both, lexically and superlexically prefixed verbs. However, it does not account for some important semantic issues related to the *Aktionsart*: if the superlexical prefixes are really outside l-syntax, it is not clear how they select for the verb stems compatible with them, though it is obvious that this kind of selection must exist, i.e., the superlexical prefixes are not added to the verbs randomly; as will be evidenced further, each verb (or, probably, group of verbs) has its own *Aktionsarten*. In addition, it is difficult to see how syntax can codify subtle nuances characteristic of the modes of action and that sometimes do not have to do with the event structure, such as intermittent-attenuative (4a), adversative-resultative (4b), etc.:

(4) a) *sidet'$^I$ – po-sižyvat'$^I$* 'to sit – to sit a short while from time to time'

  b) *čitat'$^I$ – do-čitat'sja$^P$* 'to reat – to read until getting negative consequences (headache, etc.)'

  Syntactically, remains unexplained the possibility of attaching the secondary suffix on top of certain superlexicals (*do-*, *-pro*, for example) if they are supposed to occupy the same slot (5a) and the fact that some of them do change the argument structure of the verb (5b):

(5) a) *do-čitat'$^P$ - do-čityvat'$^I$* 'to finish reading – to finish reading (ongoing, habitual or iterative), *pro-smotret'$^P$ – pro-smatrivat'$^I$* 'to look throw – to look throw (ongoing, habitual, iterative)

b) *Ja    čital$^I$          (knigu)*
  I    read-past.imp.    (a book)
  'I was reading (a book)'-
  *Ja    dočital$^P$          *(knigu)*
  I    do-read-past.perf. a book-acc.
  'I finished reading (a book)'

  In addition, positing the same locus for the superlexical prefixes and the secondary imperfectivizing suffixes or even a higher one for some of the superlexicals – the cumulative ones, contradicts to the fact that secondary imperfective suffixes are indeed purely grammatical, unlike the superlexical prefixes, and should therefore occupy a higher position in the structure.[5]

  In what follows I will propose an alternative view on the function of superlexical prefixes and imperfectivizing suffixes: my claim is that the superlexical prefixes specify (or select, focus, etc.) certain parts or subevents of the matrix event represented by the simplex verb, which is in principle underspecified with respect to the *Aktionsart* and only has one of the interpretations available for the grammatical perfective or imperfective aspect. By contrast, one of the main functions of the imperfectivizing suffixes is to multiply the event or divide it into several parts (perfectivizing *–nu-*) independently of their internal structure, as well as to highlight the preparatory phase of the event.

### 3.2. Subeventual analysis of *Aktionsarten*
  I will start presenting a concrete implementation of Pustejovsky's (1995: 68) event typology, that classified the events "into at least three sorts: processes, states and transitions". Furthermore, a subeventual structure to these events is assumed, so that not only the bigger complex event can be referred to but its subevents as well. For example, *build* is analyzed as involving a process "to be building" that leads to the resultant state, "to be built". The mechanism responsible for making prominent a certain subevent is called *event headedness* or *focusing*.
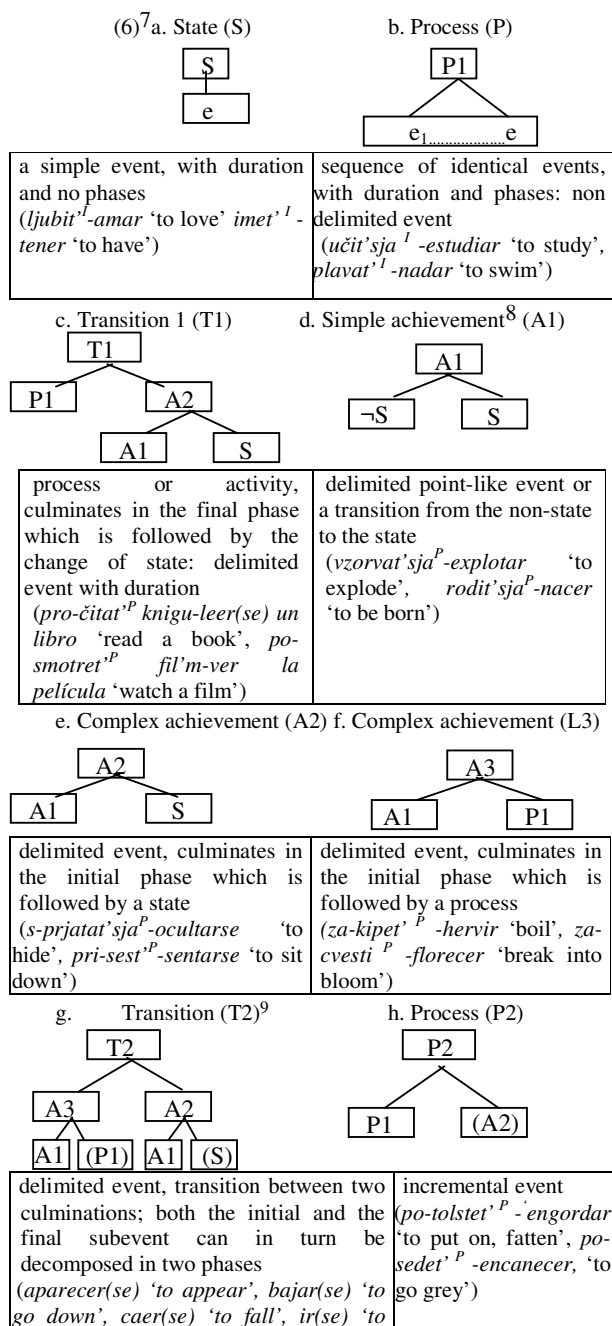
  As De Miguel and Fernández Lagunilla (2000) showed, this classification can be amplified to account for the event types in Spanish. These authors based their proposal on three basic event types: state, process and achievement, that, combined in different ways, give rise to complex events: complex achievements, processes and transitions.[6]

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(6)[7] a. State (S)  b. Process (P)

a. State (S):
```
  S
  e
```

b. Process (P):
```
    P1
  e1······e
```

| a simple event, with duration and no phases (*ljubit'*[1]-*amar* 'to love' *imet'*[1]-*tener* 'to have') | sequence of identical events, with duration and phases: non delimited event (*učit'sja*[1]-*estudiar* 'to study', *plavat'*[1]-*nadar* 'to swim') |
|---|---|

c. Transition 1 (T1)  d. Simple achievement[8] (A1)

c. Transition 1 (T1):
```
       T1
   P1      A2
         A1   S
```

d. Simple achievement (A1):
```
     A1
  ¬S     S
```

| process or activity, culminates in the final phase which is followed by the change of state: delimited event with duration (*pro-čitat'*[P] *knigu-leer(se) un libro* 'read a book', *po-smotret'*[P] *fil'm-ver la película* 'watch a film') | delimited point-like event or a transition from the non-state to the state (*vzorvat'sja*[P]-*explotar* 'to explode', *rodit'sja*[P]-*nacer* 'to be born') |
|---|---|

e. Complex achievement (A2)  f. Complex achievement (L3)

e. Complex achievement (A2):
```
     A2
  A1     S
```

f. Complex achievement (A3):
```
      A3
   A1     P1
```

| delimited event, culminates in the initial phase which is followed by a state (*s-prjatat'sja*[P]-*ocultarse* 'to hide', *pri-sest'*[P]-*sentarse* 'to sit down') | delimited event, culminates in the initial phase which is followed by a process (*za-kipet'*[P]-*hervir* 'boil', *za-cvesti*[P]-*florecer* 'break into bloom') |
|---|---|

g.  Transition (T2)[9]  h. Process (P2)

g. Transition (T2):
```
          T2
    A3         A2
  A1 (P1)    A1 (S)
```

h. Process (P2):
```
       P2
   P1     (A2)
```

| delimited event, transition between two culminations; both the initial and the final subevent can in turn be decomposed in two phases (*aparecer(se)* 'to appear', *bajar(se)* 'to go down', *caer(se)* 'to fall', *ir(se)* 'to | incremental event (*po-tolstet'*[P]-*engordar* 'to put on, fatten', *po-sedet'*[P]-*encanecer,* 'to go grey') |
|---|---|

case of processes it is a process (for incremental verbs mainly); as for transitions, as the term itself suggests, all the subevents constituting them are equally relevant.

[7] In the scheme (6) S stands for state, P, for process, A for achievement and T for transition.

[8] The achievements are simple, point-like events in De Miguel and Fernández Lagunilla (2000); later, in De Miguel and Fernández Lagunilla (2004) they are interpreted as transitions from a non-state to the state.

[9] Parenthesis in (g) and (h) mean that the respective subevents are optional, that is, they might be visualized or not depending on the context:

i) *Peter came at 5 o'clock. – Peter came with us for two days*. (Phases A and S of T2 are visualized).

ii) *My father is going grey. – My father went totally grey*. (Phases P and A of P2 are visualized).

| *leave', morir(se) 'to die', venir(se) 'to come'* In Russian-*Aktionsarten* of verbs of motion*: pro-xodit'*[P] *'to spend a period of time walking', s-xodit'*[P] *'to go and come back', za-xodit'*[P] *'start walking'* | |
|---|---|

The schemes supra must not be seen as a fixed classification. Since complex events are constituted by simpler and smaller entities, overlaps are inevitable and natural. Thus, simple achievement A1 is the first subevent of complex achievements A2 and A3. A2 and A3, in turn, are capable to participate as building blocks of T1 and T2. However, the mentioned event types are not unlimitedly recursive within the same language (Spanish in this case). The above classification pretends to be exhaustive (or almost exhaustive) for the Spanish data.[10]
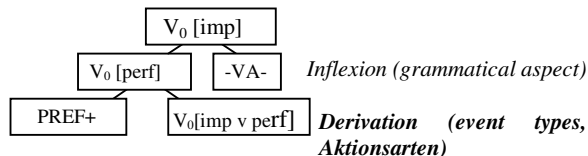
As Russian examples above show, all these event types can be found in Russian as well (Batsiukova 2003). Still, the apparently equivalent Spanish and Russian forms behave differently, as can be deduced from the examples of ingressive events in (7): while in Spanish and in English the same verbal form (*florecer* and *blossom*) is used to express the beginning of the event and the subsequent process, in Russian the prefixed perfective form and the simplex imperfective verb seem to be in complementary distribution: the former only denotes the initial subevent, and the latter always expresses the second subevent, the process.

(7) a. *El árbol floreció ayer*
    a'. *Derevo*      *\*(za)-zvelo*      *včera.*
    Tree-nom    (za)-blossom-past  yesterday.
     'The tree blossomed yesterday' (=start blossoming, break into bloom)
    b. *El árbol floreció durante todo el mes.*
    b'. *Derevo*      *(\*za)-zvelo*      *ves' mesjac.*
    Tree        (za)-blossom-past  whole month.
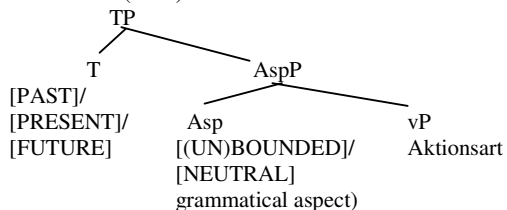    'The tree blossomed (for) the whole month'

This fact was given the following explanation in Batsiukova (2003): the morphological processes of word formation related to the *Aktionsart* are applied to the verb before those associated with the verbal inflexion (secondary imperfectivization, for instance) and the construction of the predicate, including adverbial modification. That is why the information codified at the morphological level remains invariable throughout the derivation and selects for sentential elements compatible with it and not vice versa. The hierarchical representations of Filip (2000: 78) and Pancheva (2003) support this reasoning: they assign a high position to the grammatical aspect and a low one to *Aktionsart*.

[10] For an extended analysis of this classification, see Moreno Cabrera (2003).

(8) a. Filip (2000): hierarchy of aspectual formation in Russian:

```
              V₀ [imp]
          ┌──────┴──────┐
     V₀ [perf]       -VA-      Inflexion (grammatical aspect)
   ┌─────┴─────┐
 PREF+    V₀[imp v perf]   Derivation (event types,
                            Aktionsarten)
```

b. Pancheva (2003)

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              TP
          ┌───┴────┐
         T         AspP
     [PAST]/     ┌──┴───┐
     [PRESENT]/ Asp      vP
     [FUTURE]  [(UN)BOUNDED]/  Aktionsart
               [NEUTRAL]
               grammatical aspect)
```

In addition to the above mentioned cross-linguistic differences, as will be evidenced straightaway, Russian shows a much greater variety of nuances characteristic of the *Aktionsart* than Spanish and, presumably, English. Isačenko, for instance, lists over 16 (!) modes of action which, naturally, cannot be properly described by the event types of (6) alone. Russian clearly allows for a much wider range of event composition or specification. Some of them (only a few, for reasons of space) can be seen in (9). Each table corresponds to a particular *Aktionsart*, in the first column are listed the most common prefixes used for the formation of the *Aktionsart*, in the second the groups of simple verbs that can be combined with the prefix, in the third column is specified the event structure of the complex prefixed verb, in the fourth, the phases of the latter event that can be actually realized in the syntactic contexts that are specified in the last fifth column.

(9) **1. Ingressive *Aktionsart***

| pref | Simple verbs combined with the prefix | Complex event | Visible phases | Tests for the event structure of the prefixed verb |
|------|---------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| za | Only intransitives:<br>1. acoustically perceived phenomena: *za-aplodirovat'* start applauding, *za-ryčat'* start growling | A+P–unerg. | A | Point adverbials:<br>With P<br>-*Lev zaryčal v pjat' časov* 'the lion started growling at 5' |
| | 2. visually perceived phenomena: *za-sijat'* start shining, *za-alet'* redden, flush | A+S-unerg. | | With E<br>-*Zvezda zasijala v pjatnizu* 'the star started shining on Friday' |
| | 3. olfactorily perceived phenomena: *za-paxnut'* start smelling, *za-vonjat'* start stinking | A+S-unerg. | Preparatory phase (rare) | Time frame adverbials:<br>With P<br>?*Kompjuter zarabotal za čas* 'it took one hour for the computer to work' |
| | 4. non-directed motion VV: *za-begat'* start running (non-dir.), *za-letat'* start flying (non-dir.) | A+P–unerg. | | With E<br>*V ego rukax zvezda zasijala za 5 minut* 'in his hands the star started shining in five minutes' |
| | 5. activity VV: *za-rabotat'* start working, *za-kurit'* start smoking | A+P–unerg. | | |
| po | 1. directed motion VV mainly: *po-bežat'* start running (dir.), *po-plyt'* start swimming (dir.) | A+P-unerg. | A | Point adverbials:<br>-*Oni pobežali v pjat' časov* 'they started running at 5' |
| | 2. some states: *po-ljubit'* start loving, *po-čuvstvovat'* start feeling | A+E | A | Point adverbials:<br>-*On počuvstvoval bol' v pjat' časov* 'he started feeling pain at 5' |
| | | | Preparatory phase (rare) | Time frame adverbials:<br>-*Oni poljubili drug druga za 5 minut* 'it took 5 minutes for them to fall in love with each other' |
| | | | Resultant S | *Na* adverbial 'for X time':<br>-*Oni poljubili drug druga na vsju žizn* 'they fell in love with each other for the whole life' |

**2. Evolutive *Aktionsart*-** expresses gradual increasing of the intensity of the event till reaching the maximal intensity characteristic of this event. Preparatory phase. Isačenko (1965: 233): "the beginning of the event itself lies beyond the scope of these events".

| pref | Simple verbs combined with the prefix | Complex event | Visible phases | Tests for the event structure of the prefixed verb |
|------|---------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| raz (ras)+s ja | 1. activity VV mainly: *raz-axat'sja* start gasping little by little, *raz-boltat'sja* start chattering little by little, *ras-smejat'sja* start laughing little by little, *raz-goret'sja* start burning little by little | A+(P) | A | Point adverbials:<br>-*Okolo pjati babuška opjat' razaxalas'* 'at about 5 the granny started gasping again' |
| | | | A+(P) (preparatory phase) | Time frame adverbials:<br>-*Deti razlenilis' za nedelju* 'the children became very lazy in a week' |
| | | | Preparatory phase P (for the VV with 2imperf.) | Ongoing present:<br>-*Ogon' razgorajetsja* 'the fire is flaring up' |

**3. Delimitative *Aktionsart:*** selects for a phase with duration (P or S) and delimits it "from outside" (for any period of time) without changing the general state of affairs. It is derived from imperfective VV normally.

| pref | Simple verbs combined with the prefix | Complex event | Visible phases | Tests for the event structure of the prefixed verb |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| po | 1. intransitive VV mainly (P or S-less frequent): *po-rabotat'* work a while, *po-igrat'* play a while, *po-begat'* run a while, *po-stojat'* stand a while, *po-molčat'* keep silence a while, *po-čitat'* read a while | delimited P or S | delimited P or S<br><br>P or E (the duration is less prominent) | Durative adverbials:<br>*-Oni poigrali pjat' minut i ušli* 'they played for five minutes and then left'<br>Point adverbials (with duration):<br>*-My poveselilis' na prošloj nedele* 'we had fun last week' |
| po | Loses the delimitative meaning with other groups of VV:<br>1. Is incompatible with most S: *znat'* know, *zaviset'* depend, *xotet'* want<br>2. With change of state (incremental) VV **becomes resultative**: *po-tolstet'* put on weight, *po-gasnut'* become dim, *po-bednet'* become poor(er)<br>3. With accomplishments **becomes resultative**: *po-serebrit'* silver-plate, *po-krasit'* paint, *po-čistit'* clean | P+(A)→(P)+A<br><br><br><br>P+(A)→(P)+A | P+A<br><br>P+A<br><br>P+A (the duration is less prominent)<br>Resultant S | Measure adverbials:<br>*On potixon'ku potolstel* 'He gained weight little by little'<br>Time frame adverbials:<br>*On potolstel za god* 'he became fat in a year'<br>Point adverbials (with duration):<br>*On potolstel v prošlom godu* 'he gained weight last year'<br>*Na* adverbial 'for X time':<br>*On potolstel na vremja s'emki fil'ma* 'he put on weight for the filming' |

*3.1. Attenuative-delimitative **Aktionsart***: the nuance of intensity is added to the temporal delimitation. It is derived from perfective prefixed VV normally and is used in colloquial speech.

| pref | Simple verbs combined with the prefix | Complex event | Visible phases | Tests for the event structure of the prefixed verb |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| po | 1. Perfective accomplishments (S mainly): *po-oboždat'* wait a little bit, *po-otvyknut'* get out of the habit of smth a little, *po-prideržat'* hold smth a little bit, *po-prosoxnut'* dry up a little | delimited S+A (or P+A) | S+A or P+A<br><br>S+A or P+A (the duration is less prominent) | Time frame adverbials:<br>*-Ja pootvyk ot raboty za eti dni* 'I got out of the habit of working a little these days'<br>Point adverbials (with duration):<br>*-Rebjata porazvlekli menja na prošloj nedele* 'the guys entertained me a little last week' |
| pri | 1. Perfective accomplishments (P mainly): *pri-nažat'* press a little, *pri-podnjat'* raise a little, *pri-sest'* sit down a little, *pri-ostanovit'* brake, stop a little, *pri-otvorit'* open a little | delimited P+A (or S+A) | P+A or S+A<br><br>P+A or S+A (the duration is less prominent)<br>P (for the VV with 2imperf.)<br><br>Resultant S | Time frame adverbials:<br>*-Parlament priostanovil dejstvije zakona za sčitannye dni* 'the parliament suspended the implementation of the law in very few days'<br>Point adverbials (with duration):<br>*-Ja včera priotkryl dver'* 'I opened the door a little yesterday'<br>Ongoing present:<br>*-Ona pripodnimajet zanaves* 'she is raising the backdrop'<br>*Na* adverbial 'for X time':<br>*-On prisel na pjat' minut* 'he set down for 5 minutes' |

**4. Resultative *Aktionsart*** and its variants. In most cases turns processes into accomplishments. This *Aktionsart* is very close to the meaning of the perfective aspect, and is interpreted therefore as perfective equivalent of imperfective verbs sometimes.

*4.1. Resultative-adversative Aktionsart*: to perform an action until getting adversative consequences. It has got ironic connotation, very productive in colloquial speech.

| pref | Simple verbs combined with the prefix | Complex event | Visible phases | Tests for the event structure of the prefixed verb |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| do+sja | 1. imperfective VV (P): *do-čitat'sja* read until getting negative consequences, *do-kričat'sja* shout until getting negative consequences, *do-xodit'sja* walk until getting negative consequences | P+A–unerg. | P+A<br><br>A+P+A (rare)<br><br><br><br>P+A (the duration is less prominent) | Time frame adverbials:<br>*-Za tri goda on dočitalsja do slepoty* 'He read so much that he got blind in 3 years'<br>Time frame adverbials of the beginning and the end:<br>*-S devjati utra i do poludnja mal'čik doguljalsja do iznemoženija* 'The boy got exhausted after having played from 9 o'clock in the morning to noon'<br>Point adverbials:<br>*-Okolo pjati tolpa uže dokričalas' do xripoty* 'At about 5 the crowd shouted itself hoarse' |

4.2. *Terminative Aktionsart*: focuses on the final phase of the event. Can be characterized as opposed to the evolutive *Aktionsart*. (According to Isačenko, stands outside the *Aktionsarten* because can derive secondary imperfective).

| pref | Simple verbs combined with the prefix | Complex event | Visible phases | Tests for the event structure of the prefixed verb |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| do | 1. imperfective VV (P): *do-goret'* burn down out, *do-pisat'* finish writing smth, *do-jti* go until coming somewhere | P+A | P+(A) | Durative adverbials (with imperf. form): *-Sveča dogorala polčasa* 'The candle took half an hour to burn down' |
| | | | P+A | Time frame adverbials: *-On dopisal pis'mo za pjat' minut* 'He finished the letter in 5 minutes' |
| | | | A+P+A | Time frame adverbials of the beginning and the end: *-S trex do pjati my dočityvali knigu* 'We were finishing reading the book from 3 to 5' |
| | | | A | Point adverbials: *-V tri my dopili čaj i pošli* 'At 3 o'clock we finished drinking tea and left' |
| | | | P (for the VV with 2imperf.) | Ongoing present: *-Sejčas ja dodelyvaju domašnee zadanie* 'right now I am finishing doing my homework' |

**5. Semelfactive *Aktionsart***: singles out one particular realization of a complex divisible event that intrinsically consists of multiple identical realizations (*to jump repeatedly– to jump once*). If the event does not consist of separable realizations, the function of *–nu-* is to focus a period of time during which the events are being carried out. Sometimes, when the base verb can be interpreted as both, non-iterative and iterative (*On vstaet I prygaet v vodu* 'He stands up and jumps into the water' vs. *On vsegda prygaet s etogo berega* 'He always jumps from this bank'), the form with *-nu-* can be viewed as the aspectual perfective pair of the non-iterative verb and as semelfactive *Aktionsart* derived from the iterative verb (Isačenko, 1965: 256). This fact would prove that *-nu-* occupies an intermediate position between the grammatical aspect and *Aktionsart*. The suffixes *–anu-* and *–janu-* add the nuance of intensity to the event and are used in colloquial speech mainly.

Semelfactives with the prefixes *s-, so-* are added to the verbs ending in *–ničat'* and other verbs expressing negative features of a person. As semelfactives, they denote one single act that reveals a certain negative feature. Besides, they are used with non-directed motion verbs to express a single motion both ways, the way out and the way back.

| Aff. | Simple verbs combined with the prefix | Complex event | Visible phases | Tests for the event structure of the prefixed verb |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| nu, anu, janu | 1. Inherently iterative verbs. Axn (achievement repeated n times) a. VV denoting actions of a person or an animal: *tro-nu-t'* touch once, *vil'-nu-t'* wag the tail once b. acoustically perceived phenomena: *ščelk-nu-t'* crack once, *kark-nu-t'* croak once c. visually perceived phenomena: *bles-nu-t'* shine once, *mel'k-nu-t'* flash, appear for a moment. | A | Preparatory phase | Time frame adverbials: *-On prygnul v vodu za minutu* 'It took him a minute to jump to the water' |
| | | | A | Point adverbials: *-Kometa mel'knula okolo časa nazad* 'The comet appeared for a moment an hour ago approximately' |
| | | | Resultant S (rare) | *Na* adverbial 'for X time': *-Sun' ruki v karmany na paru minut* 'Stick your hands into the pockets for a couple of minutes' |
| | 2. Non-iterative verbs (P): a. VV denoting actions of a person or an animal: *glja-nu-t'* throw a glance at, *rug-nu-t'* scold a little, *igra-nu-t'* (col.) play a little b. acoustically perceived phenomena: *burk-nu-t'* growl out smth., *xrust-nu-t'* crunch little, *šum-nu-t'* (col.) make a noise a little. | delimited P | delimited P | Durative adverbials: *-My kurnuli minutku I poexali* 'We smoked for a minute and set off' |
| | | | delimited P (rare) | Time frame adverbials: *-Ivan čerkanul zapisku direktoru za polminuty* 'Ivan wrote a message to the director in half a minute' |
| | | | P (the duration is less prominent) | Point adverbials: *-Eto ty včera rugnul Pavla?* 'Was it you who scolded Pavel a little yesterday' |
| s, so | 1. VV of negative behaviour or negative features of character (S or P): *s-glupit'* do a foolish thing, *s-trusit'* to shrink back, *s-umničat'* show off one's intelligence once, *s-mošenničat'* swindle once. | Delimited P or S | P or S (the duration is less prominent) | Point adverbials: *-Zrja ty včera strusil pered sobakoj* 'You shouldn't have shrunk back from the dog yesterday' |
| | 2. Non-directed motion verbs (P): *s-* | Delimited P | A+P+A | Time frame adverbials: |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *xodit'* go somewhere and come back, *s-letat'* fly somewhere and come back, *s-plavat'* swim somewhere and come back | (A+P+A) | | A+P+A | *-Cmožeš sbegat' v magazin za pjat' minut?* 'Will you be able to go to the shop and to come back in 5 minutes?' Time frame adverbials of the beginning and the end: *-S dvux do trex sxodi v bank I na počtu* 'From 2 to 3 o'clock you have to go to the bank and the post-office' |
| | | | A+P+A (the duration is less prominent) | Point adverbials: *-V tri my sxodili k vraču* 'At 3 o'clock we went to see the doctor and came back' |
| | | | Resultant S | *Na* adverbial 'for X time': *-On sletal v London na tri dnja* 'He went to London for 3 days' |

**6. Distributive *Aktionsart***: denotes an action directed to many or all of the subjects or objects involved, not just some of them. In addition, separate realizations of the complex event are understood as performed one after another (this connotation in particularly clear when the prefix *pere-* is used). A very productive mode of action. Can be derived from imperfective as well as perfective verbs.

| pref. | Simple verbs combined with the prefix | Complex event | Visible phases | Tests for the event structure of the prefixed verb |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| pere, po | 1. Transitive VV (P): *pere-bit'* break (kill) smth (smb) one by one, *pere-brosat'* throw one after another, *po-kusat'* bite one by one, *po-lomat'* break one by one | P1, P2, …, Pn (P1 precedes temporarily P2 and Pn) | sequence of P (the whole event delimited) | Time frame adverbials: *-Za sčitannye minuty sobaka perekusala vsju sem'ju* 'In few minutes the dog bit all the family' |
| | | | sequence of P (the whole event delimited) | Time frame adverbials of the beginning and the end: *-S trex do pjati on perečital vse stat'i* 'He read all the articles from 3 to 5' |
| | | | sequence of P (the duration is less prominent) | Point adverbials: *-Včera mal'čik polomal vse igruški* 'Yesterday the boy broke all the toys' |
| | 2. Intransitive VV (P or S): *pere-rugat'sja* quarrel with smb (one by one), *pere-bolet'* have had an illness (a group of people), *po-prygat'* jump one by one, *po-vjanut'* wither one by one | | sequence of P or S (the whole event delimited) | Time frame adverbials: *-Za nedelju vse deti v gruppe pereboleli gripom* 'In a week all the children in the group have had flu' |
| | | | sequence of P or S (the whole event delimited) | Time frame adverbials of the beginning and the end: *-S avgusta po oktjabr' vse moi zvety povjali* 'From August till October all my flowers withered' |
| | | | sequence of P or S (the duration is less prominent) | Point adverbials: *-Pjat' minut nazad vse oni poprygali v vodu* 'They have all jumped into the water 5 minutes ago' |
| | | | Resultant S | *Na* adverbial 'for X time': *-Oni pererugalis' po krajnej mere na nedelju* 'They have fallen out for week at least' |

What we can conclude from these data is that:

1. There is a clear relation between the lexical meaning of simple verbs and the *Aktionsarten* derived from them. For instance, in the case of ingressive *Aktionsart* two different prefixes are used for directed and non-directed verbs of motion (*po-* and *za-* respectively).

2. Inherent, lexically determined (in)transitivity also seems to determine the "choice" of superlexical prefixes (ingressives with *za-* are all intransitive).

3. Within *Aktionsarten*, purely aspectual meanings are combined with other lexical nuances, among them intensity (evolutive *Aktionsart*), attenuation (attenuative-delimitative *Aktionsart*) and even adversity (adversative-resultative *Aktionsart*). It is another proof of the lexical nature of *Aktionsarten*.

4. *Aktionsart* also seems to be sensitive to the event type of the basic verb: evolutive and the resultative-completive *Aktionsart*, for example, select for processes, and the attenuative-delimitative for accomplishments. Most

superlexicals are combined with simple verbs, processes or states, to specify a concrete phase of the event. *Aktionsarten* differ in focusing one (ingressive, evolutive) or various (resultative, delimitative, etc.) phases of the event at a time. Note that many of the prefixed forms can also visualize the preparatory phase (ingressive verbs) and the resultant state of the event (this possibility is not available for the simplex forms). When it occurs, simultaneous focusing of other subevents is excluded. This shows the specificity of the preparatory phase and the result event on the one hand, and of the prefixes involved in its selection, on the other hand.

5. Ones the prefix is added, as a rule the state or process phase codified by the simplex form become inaccessible for the syntactic processes (i.e. adverbial modification). It is only possible for the verbs that have secondary imperfectives (see examples in attenuative-delimitative and resultative-terminative modes of action). But even in these cases the most natural interpretation for the secondary imperfectives is the iterative or habitual one. In other words, the main function of imperfectivizing suffixes consists in adding up or multiplying identical events.[11] Precisely because of its regular meaning and formation secondary imperfectivization is considered to be a purely grammatical process. The prefixation, in turn, seems to have a much grater variety of meanings and to be less predictable and productive.

6. On of the advantages of this view on *Aktionsarten* is that it allows to avoid postulating the existence of complex events for each group of verbs (all kinds of transitions), and to derive them compositionally from a reduced number of primitive subevents: state (including the resultant state), process, achievement, and, perhaps, preparatory phase[12].

## 4   Conclusion

In this study I have assumed that the aspect is related to both, the syntax and the lexicon, and, therefore, needs to be represented at both levels. After having examined the two types of aspect formation in Russian I confirmed that perfectivizing prefixation and *Aktionsarten* are closely (but not exclusively) connected with the domain of lexical semantics, and the imperfectivizing suffixation is a grammatical (or syntactic) process.

I have also attempted to describe the function of *Aktionarten* from the perspective of subeventual structure as a process of focusing or specification of simple, aspectually underspecified matrix events that obtain the possibility of denoting more complex, articulated events. On this evidence, the notion of event typology is seen as an epiphenomenon of subeventual composition, a dynamic process and not a fixed classification (as in De Miguel 2004).

The results of this study could also have some possible practical applications. For instance, it opens the possibility of reconsidering the way the *Aktionsarten* of the same verb are treated in dictionaries: traditionally, they constitute different entries. Nevertheless, given the common elements of meaning they conserve it would be more correct to join them together, indicating explicitly the aspectual properties of each of them. This approach could contribute to make easier the methods of L2-teaching and, especially, to facilitate the explanation of how verbal semantics is acquired.

## 5   Acknowledgements

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[11] Note that when the suffix is a perfectivizing semelfactive one, the event is divided, i.e., one particular realization of the complex event is singled out.

[12] The latter is being paid a considerable attention in recent semantic studies (see Rothstein 2004, for instance).

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