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Metonymy via Perfectivization of Russian Verbs*

1. Introduction

Though a great deal of attention has been paid to metaphor in Cognitive Linguistics, yielding a clear and largely uncontested theoretical framework for its analysis in terms of mappings between source and target domains (Lakoff & Johnson 1980 & 1999, Johnson 1987), metonymy remains more elusive and problematical (cf. the debate represented by Peirsman & Geeraerts 2006a&b and Croft 2006, contrasted with Kövecses & Radden 1998, and Panther & Thornburg 1999). The variety of Perfectives in the Russian aspectual system (Janda 2007) offer rich empirical material for studying the effects of metonymy in the domain of actions and events, since Perfectives express “a limitation in the extent of the narrated event” (Jakobson 1971). On the basis of this material it is possible both to test and to expand our framework by documenting some new varieties of metonymy attested among Russian verbs.

This article starts with a brief overview of metonymy in section 2, suggesting the approach that will be adopted for this discussion. Section 3 gives an introduction of the Cluster Model and the four-way distinction among Perfectives in Russian. The types of metonymies represented by the four types of Perfectives are inventoried in section 4. I conclude with a discussion of what this analysis contributes to our understanding of metonymy in section 5.

2. Metonymy and events

The traditional definitions of metaphor and metonymy were couched in terms of similarity and contiguity, both of which are highly problematic (cf. discussion in Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Johnson 1987; Lakoff 1999; Kövecses 2002). Cognitive linguists have endeavored to find new and more

* This publication is connected to the Exploring Emptiness (<http://uit.no/humfak/8775/>) research group at the University of Tromsø.

satisfactory definitions for these terms, which turned out to be easier for metaphor than for metonymy. Given the success Cognitive Linguistics enjoyed in defining metaphor in terms of domains and their relationships, it is unsurprising that scholars tried to employ a similar strategy in describing metonymy. The result was a definition of metonymy that is largely contrastive in its relationship to metaphor. Thus whereas metaphor (like *my love is a fire*) was described as a mapping from a source domain (physical experience of fire) to a target domain (emotional experience of love), metonymy (such as *Where's my Ožegov?*) was described as a shift of meaning within one domain or domain matrix (including both the author and his famous dictionary). The problem with this definition of metonymy is that it relies on an ill-defined concept, namely that of a “domain matrix”, that is itself elusive (cf. Peirsman & Geeraerts 2006, 269–270). We are still left with questions like: What defines a domain matrix where does it end? Is it only Ožegov's dictionary that we can refer to with his name, or can it be any possession or anything in his vicinity, and what are the limits on the relations it can include?

Peirsman & Geeraerts (2006) approach metonymy by selecting a different strategy from among those that have been successful for cognitive linguists, namely radial categories based on prototypes.¹ Peirsman & Geeraerts' new definition offers a radial category based on the prototypical core of spatial part-whole contiguity, as in *Where's the redhead?* where a part (hair) refers to an entire individual. Varieties of metonymy are related to this prototype via strength of contact (ranging from part/whole to adjacency), boundedness (where wholes and parts can be bounded or unbounded), and domain (spatial, temporal, event, and categorical domains). Viewing metonymy as a prototypically structured category produces a framework that is flexible enough to include many (perhaps all) types of metonymy. An additional advantage (oddly overlooked by Peirsman & Geeraerts 2006) is that this approach avoids the assumption of a contrast between metonymy and metaphor, making it possible to acknowledge the fact that both metaphor and metonymy may be present and interact in a single expression. For example, a nickname such as *Jumpy* can simultaneously act as a metonym (naming a person by a behavior) and as a metaphor (mapping jumping in the source domain of physical experience to the target domain of psychology/emotions, thus metaphorically referring to frequent abrupt changes in psychological states). This advantage is particularly valuable for the discus-

¹ An example of a prototype-based radial category is English *chair*, where a prototypical chair (wooden, with a back and four legs) stands at the center of a category of items that are related to it, such as *desk chair*, *high chair*, *beanbag chair*, etc. Cf. Janda 2006 for a discussion of core concepts of Cognitive Linguistics.

sion of metonymy among types of Russian Perfectives, which are metaphorically motivated (cf. detailed discussion in Janda 2008).

3. The four perfectives in the cluster model of Russian aspect

The Cluster Model of Russian aspect (Janda 2007) expands on the traditional “pair” model by acknowledging four types of Perfectives:

- *Natural Perfectives* describe the natural culmination of an activity, such as *napisat'* ‘write’. These Perfectives are usually aspectually related to an Imperfective with the “same” meaning, such as *pisat'* ‘write’, and it is not usually possible to derive a secondary Imperfective from such Perfectives.²
- *Specialized Perfectives* describe a culmination achieved in a certain way, as in *podpisat'* ‘sign’, where the prefix *pod-* ‘under’ indicates a specific kind of writing. A given Imperfective may be aspectually related to many Specialized Perfectives, and secondary Imperfectives such as *podpisyvat'* ‘sign’ are usually derived from such Perfectives.
- *Complex Act Perfectives* present an event with certain temporal limits, as in *popisat'* ‘write for a while’ and *zaskripet'* ‘begin to squeak’. It is usually not possible to derive secondary Imperfectives from Complex Act Perfectives.
- *Single Act Perfectives* portray a single cycle from a repetitive activity, as in *skripnut'* ‘squeak once’. Secondary Imperfectives are usually not derived from these Perfectives.

Different verbs have different combinations of Perfectives in their aspectual clusters. The composition of a given verb’s aspectual cluster is determined by the Completeness and Singularizability of the verb’s meaning. If a verb describes an activity that can be construed as Completable (leading to a culmination), then the verb can have a Natural Perfective. For example, writing can be goal-directed, such that continuation will eventually yield a document, so *pisat'* ‘write’ can have a Natural Perfective. *Skripet'* ‘squeak’ lacks a goal-directed construal and a Natural Perfective. However, both *skripet'* ‘squeak’ and *pisat'* ‘write’ can be construed as Non-Completable, which motivates the formation of Complex Act Perfectives describing temporally bounded engagement in their activities. *Skripet'* ‘squeak’ can additionally be construed as Singularizable (composed of a series of individual squeaks), motivating the formation of a Single Act Perfective.

² There are a few perception verbs with Natural Perfectives that describe an instantaneous instead of a culminated event (such as *uvidet'* ‘see’) and there is a handful of aspectual isolates unrelated to any Imperfective (like *ruxnut'* ‘collapse’).

The majority of verbs are either ambiguous for Completability, like *pisat* ‘write’, or unambiguously Non-completable like *rabotat* ‘work’ and *skri-pet* ‘squeak’. The remaining verbs (between 27% and 45%, cf. Janda forthcoming a) are unambiguously Completable, like *krast* ‘steal’. Non-completeness does not preclude the formation of Specialized Perfectives; one can form Specialized Perfectives such as *pererabotat* ‘revise’ from Non-completable Imperfectives.

Construals are, of course, to some extent language-specific and conventionalized. Janda 2008 explores in detail how the Determined vs. Non-determined distinction of motion verbs serves as the metaphorical source domain experience for construal of Completability vs. Non-completeness and how the experience of granular vs. liquid substances serves as the source domain for Singularizable vs. Non-singularizable. The present article takes the investigation of aspectual clusters in a new direction by examining the metonymy relations between Imperfectives and their Perfectives.

4. The metonymies present in Russian aspectual clusters

The central claim of this argument is that Russian Perfectives bear a metonymic relationship to the Imperfectives they are aspectually related to. Since there are four types of Perfectives, we have four metonymies. All four metonymies are consistent with the prototype structure of the radial category of metonymy suggested by Peirsman & Geeraerts (2006, hereafter referred to as the “P&G model”). However, none of these metonymies are specifically identified or illustrated in the P&G model (which does not examine all combinations of contiguity, boundedness, and domain). Thus the metonymies presented by Russian Perfectives fill in some gaps in the P&G model by documenting the existence of types of metonymies that are theoretically possible, but not previously attested. In addition, whereas the P&G model focused on lexical metonymies, this article presents a system of grammatical metonymies, showing another way in which the model can be expanded. Finally, it should be pointed out that because the topic of this article is grammatical metonymy, it investigates metonymical relationships. Lexical metonymy (unless it has become conventionalized through language change) is normally supported by lexical or syntactic context. Thus, for example, *heads* cannot usually refer to whole people, though it can do so in the context *we need some good heads*. The contexts for metonymical relationships in Russian aspectual clusters have been conventionalized through the use of prefixes and suffixes. For example, this means that, in the context of prefixes such as *na-*, *pod-*, and *po-*, the Perfectives of the verb *pisat* ‘write’ conventionally bear a metonymical relationship to the unprefixated Imperfective.

The primary dimension of the P&G model offers a four-point scale of contiguity (with examples from Peirsman & Geeraerts 2006):

- part/whole (cf. *grading papers*, where an entire process is named only by one part of the process, the actual recording of the grades)
- containment (cf. German *Frauenzimmer* ‘woman’, where a word that once meant ‘womanhood’ now denotes a single individual from that collection)
- contact (cf. cause & effect metonymy of French *lumière*, where ‘light’ stands for ‘lamp’, and the lamp as a cause is in contact with the light it produces)
- adjacency. (cf. German *Tafelrunde* ‘roundtable’, where the table stands for the people at it).

As argued below, the four types of Russian Perfectives correspond to the four types of contiguity on that scale as follows:

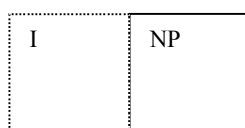
- Natural Perfectives – contact
- Specialized Perfectives – adjacency
- Complex Act Perfectives – part/whole
- Single Act Perfectives – containment.

The second dimension of the P&G model involves boundedness. Difference in boundedness is a consistent theme among the four Russian aspectual metonymies, for Imperfective verbs designate unbounded actions as opposed to Perfectives, which designate bounded actions (cf. Forsyth 1970, 8; Avilova 1976; Padučeva 1996; Janda 2004, 477). Thus all Russian aspectual metonymies target a bounded item (Perfective) in a metonymical relationship to an unbounded item (Imperfective).

The third dimension of the P&G model involves the domain of the metonymy, and since aspect is a verbal category, all our examples involve the domain of actions and events.

Here is an annotated inventory, illustrated with diagrams based on the P&G model and Russian examples.

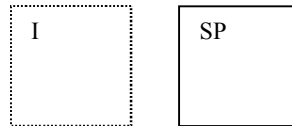
Natural Perfectives



Contact: The Natural Perfective (NP) is the natural culmination of the Imperfective (I) activity, the concrete result that one achieves at the conclusion of the otherwise unbounded effort. In the P&G model, this metonymy targets a bounded item (symbolized as a box with a solid line) that is contiguous to an unbounded item (symbolized as a box with a dotted line). The contiguity is clear in that the two verbs have the same meaning, but differ only in aspect. There is contact in the temporal domain because the activity

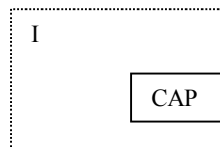
shares a temporal boundary with the result it produces. The Natural Perfective denotes an immediate consequence of the corresponding Imperfective event. This metonymy depicts the relationship between such “pairs” as *pisat*’(I)/*napisat*’(NP) ‘write’, *gotovit*’(I)/*prigotovit*’(NP) ‘cook, prepare’, *vjazat*’(I)/*svjazat*’(NP) ‘tie’.

Specialized Perfectives



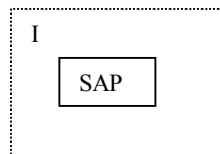
Adjacency: In relation to an unprefixated Imperfective (I), a Specialized Perfective (SP) represents a related action that is more specific in its focus and also bounded. The actions are not the same; there is some semantic difference here that corresponds to distance, and this distance is captured by the adjacency relationship. This type of metonymy can be illustrated by verbs such as *pisat*’(I: ‘write’)/*podpisat*’(SP: ‘sign’), *vjazat*’(I: ‘tie’)/*razvjazat*’(SP: ‘untie’), *govorit*’(I: ‘talk’)/*ugovorit*’(SP: ‘convince’), *dumat*’(I: ‘think’)/*peredumat*’(SP ‘change one’s mind’), *deržat*’(I: ‘hold’)/*zaderžat*’(SP: ‘arrest’).

Complex Act Perfectives



Part/whole: A Complex Act Perfective (CAP) describes a bounded portion of an unbounded Imperfective (I) activity, usually the beginning, ending, or another period of time. This is an example of the part/whole type of metonymy in the P&G model. Russian Complex Act Perfectives are most frequently marked with the prefixes *za-* ‘begin to’, *ot-* ‘stop’, *po-* ‘do X for a while’, and *pro-* ‘do X for a specified time period’. Examples of Complex Act Perfectives include: *skripet*’(I: ‘squeak’)/ *zaskripet*’(CAP: ‘begin to squeak’), *zvonit*’(I: ‘ring, call’)/*otzvonit*’(CAP: ‘finish ringing, calling’), *rabotat*’(I: ‘work’)/*porabotat*’(CAP: ‘work for a while’), *plakat*’(I: ‘cry’)/*proplakat*’(CAP: ‘cry through a certain time period’).

Single Act Perfectives



Containment: The relationship here is between an Imperfective (I) that describes an unbounded series of repetitions and a Single Act Perfective (SAP) that describes only one item contained the series. Most Russian Single Act Perfectives are formed with the *-nu* ‘do X once’ suffix, as in: *čixat*’(I: ‘sneeze’)/*čixnut*’(SAP: ‘sneeze once’), *skripet*’(I: ‘squeak’)/*skripnut*’(SAP: ‘squeak once’), *prygat*’(I: ‘jump’)/*prygnut*’(SAP: ‘jump once’). Non-determined motion verbs can denote an unbounded series of round trips

to a given destination, and they form Single Act Perfectives with the prefix *s-* ‘go someplace and come back once’, as in: *xodit*’(I: ‘walk’)/*sxodit*’(SAP: ‘walk someplace and back once’), *begat*’(I: ‘run’)/*sbegat*’(SAP: ‘run someplace and back once’), *ezdit*’(I: ‘ride’)/*s”ezdit*’(SAP: ‘ride someplace and back once’).

Of course this inventory oversimplifies the Russian aspect system somewhat, and a more detailed analysis would have to account for some untidy realities. There are basically two types of complications in the system; one has no theoretical bearing on the analysis, and the other actually lends further support to it.

The first complication involves morphological markings that do not parallel the direction of the metonymy. One might expect that all morphological derivation should be iconic and go from an (unmarked) Imperfective to a (marked) Perfective, and in the overwhelming majority of cases the marking is parallel, but there are deviations from this pattern. Such deviant markings come in four kinds: 1) there are a few Perfective simplex verbs such as *dat*’ ‘give’ where the direction of derivation is from the Natural Perfective to the Imperfective (*davat*’ ‘give’) and to the Specialized Perfectives (like *izdat*’ ‘publish’); 2) there are a few verb clusters that involve two simplex stems, one for the Imperfective (like *brosat*’ ‘throw’) and one for the Natural Perfective (like *brosit*’ ‘throw’), neither of which can be said to be derived from the other, and in such clusters the Specialized Perfectives (like *sbrosit*’ ‘throw down, shed’) are derived from the Natural Perfective stem whereas the Complex Act Perfectives (like *zabrosat*’ ‘begin to throw’) are derived from the Imperfective stem; 3) some verbal clusters exhibit suppletion, as we see with the Imperfective *govorit*’ ‘talk, say’ and its Natural Perfective *skazat*’, and in such clusters Specialized Perfectives can be formed from both stems (as in *rasskazat*’ ‘narrate’ and *ugovorit*’ ‘convince’), though Complex Act Perfectives (like *zgovorit*’ ‘begin to talk’) are formed from the Imperfective stem; and 4) biaspectual verbs such as *organizovat*’ ‘organize’ where a single form expresses both the Imperfective and the Natural Perfective.

As I have argued elsewhere (Janda 2007 and forthcoming b), the Cluster Model does not make any assumptions about the historical order of derivation, since it is a synchronic model. The aspectual relations for all four types of “deviant” morphological marking remain intact and the aspectual clusters maintain their integrity. The aspectual cluster of *davat*’/*dat*’ ‘give’ is just as valid as an example of a cluster with Natural and Specialized Perfectives as any other cluster of that type, and it also preserves clear aspectual relations among the verbs. Similar arguments apply to the remaining three types of morphological deviation. And likewise there is no a priori reason to assume that the morphological marking of a metonymic relationship must always be strictly iconic.

The second complication involves the fact that many Imperfective verbs have more than one Natural Perfective³. *Est* 'eat', for example, has two Natural Perfectives: *poest* and *s'est*. *Gruzit* 'load' has three Natural Perfectives: *zagruzit*, *nagruzit*, and *pogruzit*. *Putat* 'disorder' has four Natural Perfectives: *vputat*, *zaputat*, *pereputat*, and *sputat*. *Mazat* 'smear' has five Natural Perfectives: *vymazat*, *zamazat*, *izmazat*, *namazat*, and *pomazat*. Although at first glance this might seem problematic, it can be argued that these facts only provide further evidence of the power of metonymy in the system of Russian aspect. The Natural Perfective bears a metonymic relationship to its Imperfective in that it refers only to the natural result of a process, but there is no a priori reason to assume that a given process has only one natural result. The proliferation of Natural Perfectives for some verbs indicates that those verbs have multiple construals and can be subjected to multiple metonymies. The two Natural Perfectives of *est* 'eat' differ in their focus; *poest* takes the perspective of the person eating and can be translated as 'have a meal', whereas *s'est* takes the perspective of the food consumed and can be translated as 'eat up'. The trio of *gruzit* 'load' Natural Perfectives shows a similar, but more nuanced differentiation, with *nagruzit* usually taking the perspective of the place where the load is put, *pogruzit* taking the perspective of the load itself, and *zagruzit* behaving in a transitional fashion, as shown in an analysis of corpus data (Svetlana Sokolova, personal communication). It is likely that empirical analyses of the Natural Perfectives of *putat* 'disorder', *mazat* 'smear' and other verbs of this kind will also reveal that each Natural Perfective targets its own metonymical relationship.

5. Conclusion

The P&G model of metonymy has the theoretical capacity to account for the system of grammatical metonymies that distinguish the four types of Russian Perfectives from their aspectually related Imperfectives. This is possible because the P&G model recognizes: 1) metonymy in the domain of actions and events; 2) a distinction between bounded and unbounded entities; and 3) four types of contiguity relationships. All of the metonymies in the Russian aspect system are in the domain of actions and events, and all of them involve a relationship between an unbounded Imperfective and a more limited bounded Perfective. The four types of contiguity relationships correspond to the four types of Russian Perfectives, where a Natural Perfective signals contact between a process and its result, a Specialized Perfective signals adjacency between a process and a related event, a Complex Act Perfective signals a part/whole relationship between temporally bounded engagement

³ These examples come from the Exploring Emptiness database and personal communication from Olga Lyashevskaya.

in an activity and the activity as a whole, and a Single Act Perfective signals the containment of a single performance of a repeatable action in a series of such actions.

By demonstrating a further application of the P&G model, this article contributes to our theoretical understanding of metonymy. It also expands on our understanding of the Cluster Model of Russian aspect, which has heretofore been examined only in terms of its metaphorical motivations.

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