

Title: Imperfectivization in Russian: In Search of Functional Correlates
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Imperfectivization can be understood in two different ways that should be thoroughly distinguished. The first corresponds to morphological imperfectivization, i.e. the derivation of an imperfective verb from a perfective one by the addition of a suffix. The second meaning of the discussed term corresponds to “obligatory imperfectivization”, i.e. a more general functional mechanism that forces the speaker to replace any perfective verb with an imperfective partner in contexts where perfective verbs are not allowed.

According to the Maslov criterion, a perfective and an imperfective verb can be considered as an aspectual pair if and only if the imperfective verb can be substituted for the perfective verb in situations where the latter is not allowed (such as descriptions of reiterated events or narration in historical present). Thus, while narrating in historical presence or describing an iterative situation, one should say *Prixožu, vižu, pobeždaju* ‘I come, I see, I conquer’ instead of *Prišel, uvidel, pobedil* ‘I came, I saw, I conquered’.

In real speech production, the speaker can substitute for a perfective verb an imperfective verb that is not its “true” correlate, cf. *prokričat’ – kričat’, zaxodit’ po komnate – xodit’ po komnate, poljubit’ – vlljubljat’sja* (such cases may be referred to as instances of an aspectual relation, rather than an aspectual correlation). The verbs entering into an aspectual relation in Maslov contexts, be they correlates or not, will be called “aspectual partners”. This partnership is understood as a purely functional relation and does not impose restrictions on the morphological form of the partners.

Imperfectivization is obtained by three means:

1. Morphological imperfectivization (suffixation).
2. Deprefixation. This mechanism has a different status. Prefixed perfective verbs are morphologically derived from imperfective verbs, but the addition of a prefix cannot be considered as a regular mechanism of deriving perfective correlates; its function is limited to a lexical, not grammatical derivation. On the other hand, the deprefixation can hardly be considered as a real derivational mechanism, but it is the only adequate way to describe a regular substitution of the non prefixed imperfective verb for a prefixed one in Maslov contexts.
3. The use of a semantically related imperfective verb formed from a different stem, or the use of a periphrasis.

The three strategies of the imperfectivization produce three standard types of aspectual pairs: 1) PF – IMPF2 (*otrkyt’ – otrkyvat’*); 2) PF – IMPF1 (*napisat’ – pisat’*); 3) suppletive and semi-suppletive pairs (*skazat’ – govorit’; stat’ – stanovit’sja*). The system tends to conventionalize one aspectual partner as the aspectual correlate of each perfective verb. But the potential partners that are generated by the two remaining mechanisms may also appear in real speech production, and their relevance may vary from verb to verb.

A procedure for establishing the aspectual correlate from a set of imperfective partners will be proposed in the paper.