

Title: The Choice of Morpheme in Russian Factitive Verbs
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Modern Russian has two grammaticalized patterns for the formation of de-adjectival factitive verbs: O-...-IT' and U-...-IT' (e.g. *o-složn-i-t'* vs. *u-složn-i-t'* 'complicate' from *složn-yj* 'complicated.ADJ'). I present the first corpus-based contrastive analysis of the two patterns and show that they are not semantically identical. I propose that in factitive verbs the two prefixes O- and U- make different semantic contributions, motivated by their spatial meanings (move around vs. move away, respectively). I argue that the prototypical meaning of the U- pattern is 'MAKE X BE Y-ER', while the prototypical meaning of the O- pattern is 'MAKE X BE Y'.

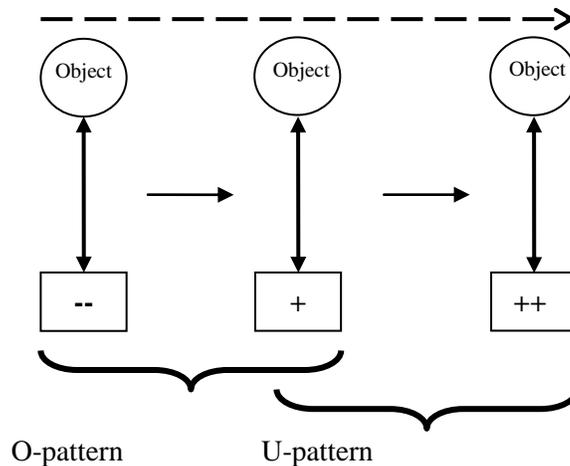


Figure 1. Semantic opposition of O- and U- patterns in Russian factitive verbs

Figure 1 depicts the scale of a property subdivided into three grades: null (-), positive (+), and comparative (++) degrees. The two factitive morphemes are specialized for different parts of this scale: the circumfix O-...-IT' makes the transition from the null degree of a property to the positive degree (-) → (+), while the circumfix U-...-IT' expresses the transition from the positive degree of the property to its higher degree (+) → (++) . Although there are peripheral uses of the U- pattern, where the two meanings overlap or can hardly be distinguished from each other, the overall distribution of the two morphemes across the proposed semantic patterns is found to be statistically significant.

The derivation of factitive verbs is analyzed here as a type of class-changing derivation in terms of Langacker's Cognitive Grammar (Langacker 2008). I argue that the cognitive approach makes it possible to capture both subtle central semantic differences as well as less distinct peripheral contrasts.

Langacker, Ronald W. 2008. *Cognitive Grammar: A Basic Introduction*. Oxford University Press.