

Title: Iconicity and Prototypicality in Russian Biaspectual Verbs

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The category of aspect reflects a speaker's interpretation of a situation. As a grammatical category, Russian verbal aspect shows binary opposition of the perfective and imperfective forms. One aspectual form is assigned to a verb used in a sentence. However Russian biaspectual verbs do not have a formal difference between both aspects. Verb *arestovat* 'arrest' (bias.) can be either perfective or imperfective in a context without a formal change. The meaning of the aspect in a given context is decided by the construction of the sentence. Biaspectual verbs are often identified by the suffix *ova* in their infinitive. Russian has borrowed a number of verbs from foreign languages and uses the suffix *ova* for the new biaspectual verbs. The isomorphism between form and meaning, however, gets weaker as newly borrowed biaspectual verbs use affixes to express or to highlight aspectual difference. Prefix *po* and suffix *iva* are frequently used for the highlight. In other words, new biaspectual verbs create newer aspectual pairs by the "unbiaspectualization" process.

A pair of unaffixed and affixed verb forms function as the prototype of Russian verbal aspect system. And Russian biaspectual verbs were in the periphery of the category of Russian aspect, but the newly borrowed biaspectual verbs adapt themselves to the aspectual prototype using prefix or suffix. The process of "unbiaspectualization" using affixes shows the evolution of biaspectual verbs from the periphery to the center of aspectual category in Russian. In "unbiaspectualization", the verbs lose their isomorphic characteristics as traditional biaspectual verbs and imitate the aspectual relationship of the prototypical imperfective and perfective opposition. However, the individual process of "unbiaspectualization" varies according to the lexical and constructional semantics of the new verb phrases. The present study attempts to describe the linguistic situation of Russian biaspectual verbs. The description will contribute to explain the aspectual system of Russian in general.