

Title: Lexicalized Aspect in Advanced Speakers of Russian
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Although Advanced-Low speakers may lack “control of aspect at times,” Advanced-Mid speakers demonstrate “good control of aspect” (ACTFL, 1999). But is performance indicative of competence? Do American speakers of Russian *make correct aspectual choices*?

Data from over 50 low-stakes OPIs (collected for institutional research), mostly Advanced, show that learners overwhelmingly get the aspect right, but in half of all situations no real choice was called for; the verbs were *lexicalized*: assigned fixed English meanings according to aspect (e.g. сказал ‘said’, говорил ‘talked’). Determining whether an aspectual form has been lexicalized is discussed in detail.

L2 “lexical” aspect has been scrutinized in learners of other languages (Anderson, 1991; Bardovi-Harlig, 1995; Liskin-Gasparro, 1996) but previous work focused on Vendler’s lexical categories (telic, punctual, stative, durative).

This study concentrates on the specifics of Russian aspect and the degree to which Advanced Russian speakers make aspectual *choices*. A positive correlation is found between proficiency rating and number of choices, suggesting that competence may lag behind performance. The merits of using OPIs as opposed to traditional methods of data collection (such as prompting pictures) are discussed. The study provides the basis for pedagogy to improve aspectual performance of those reaching for Superior.