

Title: Aspect and modality: The 'potential' reading
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The Russian imperfective aspect allows for readings of dynamic/internal modality (*potencial'noe značenie*) without the presence of modal lexemes (predicates, particles, etc.) or constructions (dative-infinitive, modal infinitive, etc.):

- (1) a. *deduška govoril po-turecki* [potential]
b. *ja mnogo trenirovala i podnimala 100 kg* [potential]

This potential reading can be overridden by the context:

- (2) a. *deduška govoril po-turecki, kogda ja vošla* [actual-processual]
b. *so svoimi druž'jami, deduška govoril po turecki* [habitual]

Not all verbs are equally likely to get the potential reading as default (Zaliznjak & Šmelev):

- (3) a. *ee muž p'et viski s sodovoj* [default: habitual]
b. *ee muž gotovit plov* [default: potential]

Again, context may change the default:

- (4) a. *ee muž p'et viski s sodovoj, kak sejčas uže nikto ne umeet pit'* [potential]
b. *po voskresen'jam on gotovit plov* [habitual]

Facing these data the question arises, where this specific interpretation derives from (cf. Glovinskaja 2001). This paper accounts for the potential reading in terms of the interaction of an underspecified aspect semantics and processes of pragmatic reasoning. That pragmatics has to be considered is indicated by the role of context in (2) and (4). Whereas the potential (1a) and the actual-processual (2a) reading are based on two different semantic configurations of the imperfective aspect (pragmatic ambiguity; Lascarides et al. 1996), the potential and the habitual readings, cf. (3) and (4), share the same configuration (sense-generality; Atlas 1989) which is basic to all temporally non-anchored events. This also captures the closeness of habitual, potential and, furthermore, property-like readings.

Atlas, J. 1989. *Philosophy without Ambiguity*. Oxford

Glovinskaja, M. 2001. *Mnogožančnosť' i Sinonimija v Vido-Vremenno Sisteme Russkogo Glagola*. Moskva

Lascarides, A. et al. 1996. "Ambiguity and coherence." *Journal of Semantics* 13/1, 41-65

Zaliznjak, A.A. & A.D. Šmelev. 1997. *Lekcii po Russkoj Aspektologii*. München