

Title: The role of motion verbs in the development of aspect in Russian
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It is traditionally assumed that aspect has been stable since the dawn of Slavic. Schenker (1993) and Lunt (1974) describe the aspectual systems of Proto-Slavic and Old Church Slavic in virtually the same terms one would use to describe modern Russian. However some empirical work (Mayo 1985, Bermel 1997, Nørgård-Sørensen 1997, Dickey 2007) indicates that aspect as we know it in Russian today was sorted out much later, in the 16th-17th centuries. This presentation will argue that the motion verbs provide evidence in support of the latter view.

There are two reasons to believe that motion verbs are prototypical in the Russian aspectual system: 1) motion events and situations provide a concrete source domain experience for the metaphorical understanding of abstract concepts such as progress, result, process, and repetition; 2) motion verbs form the maximum number of types of Perfectives, including Natural Perfective (*noïmu* ‘walk’), Specialized Perfective (*npuiïmu* ‘arrive on foot’), Complex Act Perfective (*noxodumь* ‘walk for a while’), and Single Act Perfective (*cxodumь* ‘walk someplace and back once’) (cf. the Cluster Model of Russian aspect presented in Janda 2007). The privileged status of the motion verbs has played a role in the grammaticalization of aspect in Russian. Determinacy, which was in previous times more widespread (including approximately forty “pairs” of verbs such as *кycуми/кyуаму* ‘bite’, *мecуми/мuаму* ‘mix’; cf. Mayo 1985, 76-105) and the core concept has been generalized to the entire verbal lexicon as a distinction between Completability and Non-Completability. Evidence in support of this hypothesis comes from both synchronic and diachronic studies showing the distribution of Perfectives, their order of grammaticalization, and changes in the way in which Determinacy/Completability is expressed in Russian.

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