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Article abstract

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TOWARD THE PROBLEM OF TRANSLATING GRAMMATICAL MEANINGS: THE FACTUAL MEANING OF THE IMPERFECTIVE ASPECT IN RUSSIAN

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Résumé

À l'aide de l'étude de certains traits sémantiques telles la résultativité, la factualité, la multiplicité, etc., on établit les différences aspectuelles entre le verbe russe à la forme imperfective et à la forme perfective.

The imperfective aspect (Ipfv) of the verb in Russian is opposed to the perfective aspect (Pfv) and is supposed to have several meanings (see Bondarko 1971; Maslov 1984; Apresjan 1980; Glovinskaja 1982) — **progressive** *(aktual'no-dlitel'noe), i.e.* Не мещай мне, я работаю$_{Ipfv}$: *Do not bother me*, I am working; **habitual** (*uzual'noe*), *e.g.* Кажбое у*м*ро он открывает$_{Ipfv}$ окно: *Every morning he* opens (lit.: is opening) *the window*; and a further meaning which is called **factual** (*obščefaktičeskoe*) and can be illustrated by the following examples:

(1) Вот на этой стене висела$_{Ipfv}$ картина.
Here on this wall there *hung* (lit.: was hanging) a picture
(From Apresjan 1980)

(2) Я же Мам объяснял$_{Ipfv}$!
Did not I *explain*, (lit.: was not I *explaining*) it to you?
— Объяснял$_{Ipfv}$, да не Объяснил$_{Pfv}$.
— You did explain, but not to the full. (lit.: You were explaining but you did not explain.)
(From Bondarko 1971)

The translation of the forms bearing the progressive or the habitual meaning into European languages poses no problem. Thus, the progressive meaning can be translated into English by the continuous forms (the term **progressive meaning** is used by A. Timberlake (1984) both for *aktual'no-dlitel'noe* in Russian and for continuous in English):

(3) Не мешай, я работаю$_{Ipfv}$.
(3') Do not bother me, I *am working*.

There are no special means of expressing the habitual meaning[1], but it can be quite adequately translated by unmarked tense forms. In English these will be the forms of the present or the past indefinite.

As for the factual meaning, one can say that its translation is definitely a problem. Thus (1) can be translated into French in two ways:

(1') Sur ce mur, *il y avait / il y a eu* eu un tableau.

In (2) a translator into French would be likely to explicate the idea of a futile attempt, though the Russian sentence Я же Мам объяснял$_{Ipfv}$ does not express this meaning openly:

(2') — *J'ai bien essayé de vous l'expliquer!*
— *Oui, mais vous n'y êtes pas arrivé.*

It seems reasonable to suppose that several different meanings can be singled out within what is generally called the factual meaning. Consequently, a more fundamental semantic analysis of the forms bearing this meaning appears to be necessary in order to establish the possible equivalents in target languages.

Although the factual meaning of the Russian Imperfective aspect (Ipfv) has been much discussed in linguistic literature, it still remains fertile ground for those who are fond of complex linguistic problems.

The basic meaning among the factual meanings is the factual **resultative**. It is expressed by a verb in the Ipfv (Past tense) which denotes an action that has reached a natural limit; thus, Ты показывал$_{Ipfv}$ ей это письмо? (*Did you* show (lit.: *were you* showing) *her this letter?)* means approximately the same as Ты показал $_{Pfv}$? (*Did you* show?) In connection with this meaning of the Ipfv the following question arises: why does the speaker who can use a verb in the Perfective aspect (Pfv), denoting a completed action, choose a verb in the Ipfv, normally devoid of this meaning? *I.e.* why does he say показывал$_{Ipfv}$ *(were showing)* and not показал $_{Pfv}$ *(showed, has shown)*? In other words, what are the semantic differences between the verb in the Ipfv and the matching verb in the Pfv?

The answer to this question should follow from the comparison between the semantic interpretations of the Pfv in its basic meaning and the resultative Ipfv. The interpretation of the Pfv causes no problems, but there is no complete and satisfactory interpretation for the resultative meaning of the Ipfv[2].

The semantic interpretation of the Ipfv to be given further is not intended to be complete for the factual meaning — it is purely functional, *i.e.*, this interpretation must perform the following functions:

1. It must make clear the conditions under which it is possible to use the Ipfv in its factual meaning, resultative or otherwise. *E.g.* it must explain why we cannot say *Кто ронял $_{Ipfv}$? кошелек*?: Who* dropped (lit.: *was* dropping) *the purse?* in the Ipfv (When we are talking of a purse which has just been dropped) or why Ты решал$_{Ipfv}$ задачу? (*Did you* solve (lit.: *were you* solving) *the problem?* does not mean Ты решил$_{Pfv}$ (*Did you* solve?) *i.e.*, does not have a resultative meaning.

2. It must determine the lexical, syntactic and pragmatic context which is needed for the verb in the Ipfv to acquire a resultative meaning: ideally, all the conditions which are favourable or which, conversely, make the realization of the factual resultative meaning impossible (see Glovinskaja 1982: 132-144) must follow from one or another component of this semantic interpretation.

3. It must ensure a possibility of semantic comparison between Ipfv and Pfv; *i.e.*, all the semantic differences between the factual resultative and its aspectual match Pfv must either consist in the differences between some of the components of their semantic interpretation or must be the natural semantic entailments of these differences.

4. Finally, it must serve as a convenient basis for providing adequate equivalents for the Russian aspectual form in the target languages.

The factual resultative is opposed to **non-resultative** (*neresul'tativnoe*), e.g. Ты сегодня решал$_{Ipfv}$ задачу? Did you solve (lit.: *were you* solving) *the problem today?* and **non-telic** (*nepredel'noe*), *e.g.* Вот на этой стене висела$_{Ipfv}$ картина. *Here on this wall there* hung (lit.: *was* hanging) *a picture*. The so-called meaning of **factual two-way action** (*dvunapravlennoe*) (К тебе кто-то приходил$_{Ipfv}$ ⊃ 'и ушел' — *Someone* came (lit.: *was* coming) *to see you* ⊃ 'and left') is according to Glovinskaja (1982: 123) a variation of the resultative, as приходиол$_{Ipfv}$ ⊃ 'пришел'$_{pfv}$. The possible ambiguity as to the fact whether the action has indeed reached the natural limit or not we shall consider just as an ambiguity (caused *e.g.* by insufficiency of the context) and not as a separate meaning. Cf.: Кто строил$_{Ipfv}$ этот завод? Who *built* (lit.: was *building*) this plant? (The construction of the plant may never have been completed).

The question of the presence or absence of the resultative presentation can be put only in respect to such a verb in the Ipfv that has a matching verb in the Pfv: only the meaning of the verb in the Pfv fixes the result, *i.e.*, the resultant final state of the situation which can be either reached or not. Only a matching verb in the Ipfv can basically *allow* for a resultative interpretation. Thus, for the verb искать$_{Ipfv}$ (*to be looking for*), which has no match in the Pfv, in the phrase Вы искали$_{Ipfv}$ коменданта? *Did you* look (lit.: *were you* looking) *for the superintendent?* (Glovinskaja 1982: 124) the idea that the action has reached a natural limit cannot be expressed same as it cannot be expressed by the verb висеть$_{Ipfv}$ *(to be hanging)*; the factual meaning of the Ipfv we call **non-telic**. The same goes for стрелять$_{Ipfv}$ *(to shoot oneself)*, драться на дуели$_{Ipfv}$ *(to fight a duel)*, подстрекать$_{Ipfv}$ *(to instigate)*, etc. Verbs in the Ipfv having no match in the Pfv even if they have an obvious resultative meaning, *e.g.* the verb видеть$_{Ipfv}$ *(watch — e.g.* a film), analyzed by Apresjan (1980), will be outside the scope of our interest, because our final aim is to establish the difference between the resultative Ipfv and the matching Pfv.

It should be noted that the verb in the Ipfv forms an aspectual pair with Pfv if it can denote a multiple realization of the situation denoted by the verb in the Pfv (see Padučeva 1989, also Bulygina, Šmelev 1989). *E.g.* находить$_{Ipfv}$ — найти$_{Pfv}$ (lit.: *to be finding — to find*) is an aspectual pair, whereas заподозрить$_{Pfv}$ — подозревать$_{Ipfv}$ *(to start suspecting — to be suspecting)* is not: побозревать$_{Ipfv}$ cannot mean "to start suspecting many times." In the same way the following verbs cannot make an aspectual pair either: умолять$_{Ipfv}$ — умолить$_{Pfv}$ *(to be beseeching — to have besought)*, уверять$_{Ipfv}$ — уверить$_{Pfv}$ *(to be assuring — to have assured)*. Умолять$_{Ipfv}$ does not mean 'умолить$_{Pfv}$ many times', уверять$_{Ipfv}$ — "make somebody assured many times." Nor does настаивать$_{Ipfv}$ *(to be insisting)* mean 'неоднократно настоять'$_{Pfv}$ (to have had one's own way many times).

Further we shall consider a number of the semantic features which were offered in a few linguistic papers as components of the factual resultative meaning. We shall show that many of these features are realized only in part of the usages, but in spite of that their combination forms this meaning as such.

1. RESULTATIVITY

The component "Resultativity": "the situation (denoted by the verb) has reached its natural internal limit and at a certain moment its resultant state has set in." For verbs of achievement like находить$_{Ipfv}$ *(to find)*, which do not have the process phase, *i.e.*, which do not denote a process aimed at reaching a natural limit, "Resultativity" is just the setting in of the resultant state.

The component "Resultativity" is, naturally, common for all the resultative usages of the Ipfv. However, the status of this component in different contexts is different. Thus, in the phrase

(4) Где апельсины покупал$_{Ipfv}$?
Where did you *buy* (lit.: were you *buying*) the oranges?

the "resultativity", *i.e.*, the idea that the limit has been reached is an implicature arising under the influence of the context which, more likely than not, cannot be included into the semantic presentation of the sentence (see Padučeva 1986). Cf. The semantic presentation of (5).

(5) К тебе кто-то приходил$_{Ipfv}$.
Someone *came* (lit.: was *coming*) to see you.

where the component "came (and left)" is definitely present.

There are a number of semantic or lexical classes of verbs for which the resultative interpretation of Ipfv is in the past tense the only possible option and in which, obviously, the component "resultativity" is included into the semantic presentation of the sentence. These verbs can be divided into two groups.

1. Verbs in the Ipfv which do not allow for a progressive (and, in general, a synchronic non-iterative) meaning of the Ipfv in Russian:

a) виде*т*ься (**see someone**), покуша*т*ься (**make an attempt** — *e.g.* on someone's life), ос*т*анавлива*т*ься (**stop** — *e.g.* in a hotel), о*т*луча*т*ься (**leave**), собцра*т*ься (in the meaning of "get together" as for a meeting), посещ*т*в (**visit**) — (Cf.: Он сейчас посещает род*ст*венников (lit.: **he** is **now** visiting **his relatives**), etc.

b) случа*т*ься (**happen**), с*т*алкива*т*ься (**come upon**), вс*т*реча*т*ься (**meet**), быва*т*ь (**frequent**); приходи*т*ь (**come**), находи*т*ь (**find**), приноси*т*ь (**bring**), приезжа*т*ь (**arrive**), etc.; вызубрива*т*ь (**learn by heart**), высушива*т*ь (**make dry**), съеда*т*ь (**eat up**), выпива*т*ь (**drink up**), ус*т*арева*т*ь (**become dated**), ослабева*т*ь (**wear off**), etc. Cf.: * Мне (в данный момент) вс*т*реча*ет*ся$_{Ipfv}$ девочка с ведром — **I** (at the present moment) **meet** (lit.: **am meeting**) **a girl with a bucket.**

2. Verbs which have the following semantic property: Ipfv Pres ⊃ "Pfv Past" (this class was singled out by Maslov 1948):

a) verbs of "immediate effect": каса*т*ься (**touch lightly**), гладиmь (**stroke**), обнима*т*ь (**hug**), *т*рога*т*ь (**touch**), щупа*т*ь (**feel**), etc. (see Glovinskaja 1982: 131); thus, ксае*т*ся$_{Ipfv}$ (**is touching**) ⊃ 'коснулся'$_{Pfv}$ (has touched);

b) verbs which do not allow for a futile attempt: пы*та*ться (**attempt**), с*та*ра*т*ься (**try to**), пробова*т*ь (**venture**), etc. Thus пы*та*ется (**is trying**) ⊃ 'попытался' (has tried).

c) the verbs of informing (see Glovinskaja 1982: 131): проси*т*ь (**ask**), предупрежда*т*ь (**warn**), зва*т*ь (**call**), приглаша*т*ь (**invite**), разреша*т*ь (**allow**), посыла*т*ь (**send**), звони*т*ь (**call**), говори*т*ь (**speak**), *т*ребова*т*ь (**demand**), сове*т*ова*т*ь (**advise**), обеща*т*ь (**promise**), благодари*т*ь (**thank**), кляс*т*ься (**swear**) and so forth, which in the third person present tense can denote a state, accompanying the speech act. *E.g.* он обещае*т*$_{Ipfv}$ (**he is promising**) ⊃ 'он пообещал'$_{Pfv}$ (**he has promised**); *i.e.* он обещае*т*$_{Ipfv}$ presupposes 'пообещал'$_{Pfv}$. These verbs have the property mentioned above only in the third person: in the first person they are used performatively.

2. FACTUALITY

The component "Factuality": Ipfv in the factual meaning serves to assert a fact, *i.e.* in affirmative sentences with a verb in the Ipfv factual the attention is focussed on the fact that the situation, denoted by the verb, has taken place (and in negative sentence — on the fact that the situation has not taken place). The sense of the question with a verb in the Ipfv factual is to find out whether the situation has taken place or not.

It is due to this component that the term Ipfv factual is used for the meaning of the Ipfv discussed here: this component is considered as basic for the Ipfv factual by Rassudova (1968: 17) and Bondarko (1971: 85). Thus, Rassudova (1968) stresses the connection between the Ipfv factual and the illocutionary attitude of the speaker which is manifest in the main stress being on the opposition "was / was not" (*bylo / ne bylo*). Forsyth (1970: 82) translates the expression "констатация факта действия", used in Russian studies to describe the function of the Ipfv factual like this: a report or declaration that the action did occur (cf. also Chaput 1990).

The main sentence stress placement on the verb (usually it is contrastive stress) is in this case a means of expressing factuality. Indeed, in the paradigmatic examples of Ipfv factual the main sentence stress falls on the verb:

(6) Ты когда-нибуь возвращался$_{Ipfv}$ / этой дорогой?
Did you ever *return* (lit.: were you ever *returning*) / by this road?

(7) Я тебя предупреждал$_{Ipfv}$\.
I *warned* (lit.: was *warning*)\you.

Sentence (non-contrastive) stress on one of the arguments does not, however, deprive the utterance of the status of asserting the fact:

(8) Этот Фильм показывали$_{Ipfv}$ по телевизору\.
This film was *shown* (lit.: was *being shown*) on TV\.

The placement of the stress on the verb in this case would only put the sentence in the polemic context:

(8') Этот Фильм показывали$_{Ipfv}$\по телевизору\.
This film was *shown*\on TV.

Further we shall show that the concept of fact does not play a merely terminological role in the definition of the factual meaning (see §4).

Sentence stress in Russian can be in itself a factor, determining the use of the verb in the factual meaning rather than in the progressive one (see Glovinskaja 1982: 141), *e.g.*:

(9) a. Я смотрела$_{Ipfv}$ этот дурацкий Фильм\.
I *watched* (lit.: was *watching*) this stupid film\.
(progressive interpretation possible)

b. Я смотрела$_{Ipfv}$\этот дурацкий Фильм.
(only factual interpretation possible)

It would seem that the component "Factuality" can be included in the interpretation of the Ipfv factuals, however, the verbs in the Ipfv in the examples (10a) and (10b) for instance, cannot be interpreted as denoting a fact — the main stress is here on the adverbial and the fact that the situation denoted by the verb took place is a presupposition:

(10) a. Операцию делали$_{Ipfv}$ ему в Москве\.
He was *operated on* (lit.: was *being oparated on*) in Moscow\.

b. В этой портерной я написал... первое любовное письмо к Варе. Писал$_{Ipfv}$ карандашом\.
In this porternaya I wrote... my first love letter to Varya. I *wrote* it (lit.: was *writing* it) with a pencil\ (From Forsyth 1970)

c. Кто строил$_{Ipfv}$ эту дорогу?
Who *built* (lit.: was *building*) this road?

A general question is a question about a fact, see (11a); however in a special question as well as in a sentence with contrastive stress on one of the arguments, the fact that the situation took place is presupposed, cf. (11b):

(11) a. Ты выносил$_{Ipfv}$\мусор?
Did/you *take out* (lit.: were you *taking out*) the garbage? (a question about fact)

b. Ты / выносил$_{Ipfv}$? мусор?
Was it you who *took out* (lit.: was *taking out*) the garbage? (A question about the agent of the action; the fact of the action is presupposed)

Thus, the component "Factuality," while it is definitely relevant, is not common for all the usages of the Ipfv usually assumed to be factual.

Here are some more examples where the stress placement on the verb is relevant for the interpretation:

(12) a. Я открывал$_{Ipfv}$\окно.
I did*open* (lit.: was*opening*) the window. (only factual presentation possible)

b. Я открывал$_{Ipfv}$ окно\(ambiguous); cf. (13):

(13) a. Когда ты позвонил, я открывал$_{Ipfv}$ окно\.
When you called I *was opening* the window\.

b. * Когда ты позвонил, я открывал$_{Ipfv}$\окно.

(14) a. Вода доходила$_{Ipfv}$\ему до колен.
The water *reached* (lit.: was *reaching*) *up to* his knees. (factual meaning)

b. Вода доходила$_{Ipfv}$ ему до колен\. (progressive)

(15) a. Иван возглавлял$_{Ipfv}$\отдел кадров.
Ivan *headed*\(lit.: was *heading*) the Staff department. (factual)

b. Иван возглавлял$_{Ipfv}$ отдел кадров\. (ambiguous)

Also relevant for the interpretation is the word order. Cf.:

(16) "Капитанскую дочку" я читал$_{Ipfv}$\.
"Kapitanskaja docka" I have *read*\(lit.: was *reading*).
Анкету я заполнял$_{Ipfv}$\.
The form I have *filled out*\(lit.: was *filling out*).

3. MULTIPLICITY

The component "Multiplicity": "the situation (denoted by the verb) took place at least once or more than once": In other words, the Ipfv factual usually presents situations with indefinite multiplicity (see Bondarko 1971: 84). Cf.:

(17) Мне случалось$_{Ipfv}$ потерять паспорт.
I *happened* (lit.: was *happening*) to lose a passport (= "at least once I lost one");

Ты находил$_{Ipfv}$ в этом лесу рыжики?
Did you ever *find* (lit.: were you ever *finding* mushrooms in this forest? (= "have you found at least once?");
Я шил$_{Ipfv}$ такие куртки.
I *made* (lit.: was *making*) such jackets (= "made at least one").

However, the factual meaning is often present in the context of an utterance, denoting a single situation as in (18) or in (10);

(18) Вы обедали$_{Ipfv}$?
Did you *have* (lit.: were you *having*) dinner? (= "today")

Cf. the contrast — multiplicity in (19a) and a single situation in (19b):

(19) a. Сергей вешал$_{Ipfv}$\эту карту. <Он знает, как это делается>.
Sergei *put*\(lit.: was *putting*) this map on the wall. <He knows how it is done.>

b. Сергей вешал$_{Ipfv}$\тогда карту. <Я точно помню>.
Sergei did *put* (lit.: was *putting*) the map on the wall then. <I remember it exactly.>

It is possible to say that as a rule the information about the situation being single and not multiple is not included in the meaning of the Ipfv factual but is determined by some element of the context in which it occurs. Thus, in (18) the presentation of the situation as single is achieved on the pragmatic level — it follows from the fact that we dine once a day and the question refers to a particular day when the conversation is taking place. In (19) the singularity of the situation is expressed by the adverbial modifier of time: тогда (then = "at what time"). In (10) it is pointed to by the concrete referential status of the object: you cannot build the same road or write the same letter many times.

Multiplicity of the situation as well as factuality can be an important factor determining the interpretation of a verb in the Ipfv as resultative; *i.e.* the explicit multiplicity has as its consequence the definitely resultative interpretation of the Ipfv:

(20) a. Петя решал$_{Ipfv}$\такие задачи.
Peter *solved*\(lit.: was *solving*) such problems (multiple situation, resultative interpretation).

b. Петя решал$_{Ipfv}$\задачу.
Peter tried to *solve* (lit.: was *solving*) the problem (single situation, non-resultative interpretation).

Normally one and the same problem cannot be solved several times; it seems natural that just for this reason (20b) does not allow for a resultative interpretation — even under sentence stress, *i.e.* when the "Factuality" component is present, which in itself favours a resultative interpretation. If, however, a resultative interpretation does appear in this case, it is only because it is still possible to solve the same problem several times.

The context of multiplicity, *i.e.* the potential possibility of a multiple realization of the situation, turns out to be an important condition making possible the resultative interpretation of the Ipfv even when the action in question is single; in other words in some contexts it is multiplicity that brings forth the component "Resultativity." Cf. an example bearing out the connection between the resultative interpretation of the Ipfv factual and the potential multiplicity of the situation:

(21) a. А тыква/превращалась$_{Ipfv}$ в спектакле "Золушка" в карету\
And the pumpkin/*turned* (lit.: was *turning*) in the play "Cinderella" into a carriag\
(From Glovinskaja 1982: 129)

b. А дом/превращался\.
And the house/*was turning* into a heap of rubble\.

In (21b) unlike (21a) превраща*ть*ся$_{Ipfv}$ (to be turning into) is not used in the meaning 'превратиться'$_{Pfv}$ (to have turned into). The following explanation can be suggested. The only noticeable difference between (21a) and (21b) is that in (21a) we are told about a regular and, consequently, a reversible transformation, which happens several times during each performance, and (21b) describes a transformation which can take place only once. Hence the most natural interpretation for (21b) is progressive. Cf. another example:

(22) a. В прошлый раз я выразил$_{Pfv}$ ему свое неудовольствие.
Last time I *expressed* my displeasure to him.

b. Я сейчас выразил$_{Pfv}$ ему свое неудовольствие.
I *expressed* my displeasure to him now.

In (22a) we can change выразцл$_{Pfv}$ for выражал (*was expressing*) — from the point of view of reaching the limit these two forms are of equal value in Russian, but выражал$_{Ipfv}$ contrasts the situation mentioned with some other situations and, consequently, stresses the potential multiplicity of the situation when displeasure is expressed. However, if we change выразцл (Pfv) for выражал (Ipfv) in (22b), the Ipfv would be interpreted as progressive (synchronic with the point of reference, set by the adverbial modifier сейчас (*now*): "was at a given moment in the process of expressing").

The connection between resultativity and multiplicity, which comes through in the combinability, has an obvious semantic foundation: if a verb in the Ipfv signifies a multiple realization of the situation denoted by a verb in the Pfv, then "one quantum" of this process is a situation that has reached a natural limit.

Explicit means of expressing a single situation are equivalent to multiplicity for they presuppose the potential multiplicity of the situation. Rassudova (1968: 17, 26) states that однажды (*once*), один раз create a favourable context for the factual meaning: В э*т*ом гобу я уже один раз брал$_{Ipfv}$ о*т*пуск (*This year I have* taken (lit.: *was* taking) *a holiday once*.

It should be noted that the multiplicity of the situation means that the situation can be multiply reproduced in time — with an unchanging set of participants, — *i.e.* a multiple situation is a situation distributed in time. Multiplicity however should be distinguished from *distributivity*: distributivity is the distribution of the situation over a certain class of participants. The meaning of a limit being reached ("Resultativity") is brought forth both by multiplicity and by distributivity (the idea of *more-than-oneness* in both cases):

(23) a. Я много раз находил$_{Ipfv}$ клад.
I *found* (lit.: was *finding*) treasures many times. (Multiplicity)

b. Многие смельчаки находили$_{Ipfv}$ там себе могилу.
Many brave men *found* (lit.: were *finding*) their death there. (distribution over the set of participants)

The difference between a multiple and a distributive situation is however essential, for multiplicity (in all the cases excluding habituality) requires a retrospective point of reference and, consequently, adds to the factual meaning (see §6). Distributivity, on the other hand, is indifferent to the point of reference, so in the context of distributivity the component "Resultativity" is not tied with the factual meaning; thus in (24b) the

resultative interpretation exists in the Present tense, although not in the factual usage of the Ipfv, for in the Present the factual Ipfv is impossible:

(24) a. В этой стране люди старились$_{\text{Ipfv, Past}}$ к сорока годам.
In that country people *got old* (lit.: were *getting old*) by forty.

b. В этой стране люди рано старятся$_{\text{Ipfv, Present}}$
In that country people *get old* (lit.: are *getting old*) early.

4. ALIENATION OF THE ACTION FROM THE MOMENT OF SPEECH

The component: "Alienation of the action from the moment of speech": "the resultant state (or result) has not been preserved at the moment of speech or at any other point of reference." The term "*razobšennost*" (alienation) belongs to A.V. Isačenko; cf. also Rassudova (1968: 22). Cf. the typical contexts for the Ipfv (as different from the Pfv):

(25) a. Я прочел$_{\text{Pfv}}$ статью, и теперь знаю.
I *have read* the article and now I know.

b. Я читал$_{\text{Pfv}}$ статью, но ничего не помню.
I *read* (lit.: was *reading*) the article, but I remember nothing.

Glovinskaja (1982: 118) gives a weaker interpretation of the component "Alienation of the action from the moment of speech": "it is not known, whether the result has been preserved." In such interpretation the component need not be included in the interpretation of the Ipfv factual, because this meaning of the Ipfv follows from the opposition of form in the Ipfv to the form in the Pfv, the latter having the perfectivity, *i.e.* the retainment of the result at the moment of speech as one of the most obvious components of its meaning (see Padučeva 1989).

The stronger interpretation given at the beginning of this paragraph is true for such usages of the Ipfv resultative that also possess the components "Factuality" and "Multiplicity." "Alienation" treated like that is then a component of the Ipfv factual and not a component which the Ipfv has by default. Cf.:

(26) a. Мне предложили$_{\text{Pfv}}$ написать на нее рецензию.
I was *offered* (lit.: they offered to me) to write a review of her paper.

b. Мне предлагали$_{\text{Ipfv}}$ написать на нее рецензию.
I was *offered* (lit.: they were *offering to* me) to write a review of her paper.

(26b) is more suitable in a situation when I have already refused or when the time for a positive answer has expired. (26a) is natural when I am still thinking whether to agree or not. Here are a few other examples:

(27) — От кого письмо? — Не знаю, мне
няня передала$_{\text{Pfv}}$
*передавала$_{\text{Ipfv}}$

— Who sent the letter? — I do not know,
my nurse *gave*
(it to me)
* *was giving*

(28) Когда же выпал$_{\text{Pfv}}$ этот снег?
*выпадал$_{\text{Ipfv}}$

When did the snow *fall*?
* was the snow *falling*?

In (27), (28) the inappropriateness of the Ipfv is caused by the obvious retainment of the resultant state at the moment of speech.

(29) Я брал$_{Ipfv}$\твой ключ ⊃ 'Я его вернул'.
I *took* (lit.: was *taking*) your key ⊃ "I returned it."
Я открывал$_{Ipfv}$\окно ⊃ 'Окно сейчас закрыто'.
I *opened* (lit.: was *opening*) the window ⊃ "The window is closed now."

The component "Alienation" explains the semantic mechanism of the meaning of two-way action: if in the context of a verb denoting an action, for which the action in the opposite direction (or a reverse action) is possible, the resultant state has not been preserved, it follows that it was removed by a reverse action. Thus, from открывал$_{Ipfv}$ (*opened, was opening*) it follows that 'потом закрыл' (then closed) or 'потом закрылось' (then it closed).

Besides that the semantic component "Alienation" unites the factual resultative with the non-telic; the only semantic component within the factual non-telic is the following: "a state or a non-telic process is not taking place at the moment of speech." Cf.: Во*т* на э*т*ой с*т*ене висела$_{Ipfv}$ кар*т*ина — *Here on this wall there* hung (lit.: *was* hanging) *a picture*, Я вас любил$_{Ipfv}$ *I* loved (lit.: *was* loving) *you*. The resultant state of the situation is thought of as its integral part.

There is a specific class of the factual usages of the Ipfv which as it might seem testify against the inclusion of the component "Alienation" into this meaning:

(30) a. — Хочешь борща? — Спасибо, я обедал$_{Ipfv}$.
— Would you like some borščˇ? — Thanks, I have *had* (lit.: was *having*) dinner.

b. — Пойдем со мной в кино! — Я смотрел$_{Ipfv}$ этот фильм.
— Let us go to the cinema! — I *have seen* (lit.: was *watching*) this film.

c. Я дарил$_{Ipfv}$ тебе свою книгу? (=Она у тебя есть?)
Did I *give* (lit.: was I *giving*) you my book? (= "Have you got it?)

In all these cases, however, it is not the retainment of the resultant state that is spoken about, but the consequences of the fact that the corresponding action was performed (cf. Bondarko 1972: 88). Thus, in (31) the state of possessing is presented by the speaker as a consequence, following from the fact of giving. Cf. the same in (32):

(31) Он дарил$_{Ipfv}$ мне свою книгу. ⊃ 'Она у меня есть'
He *gave* (lit.: was *giving*) me his book. ⊃ "I have got it."

(32) Должна быть моя карточка. Я записывался$_{Ipfv}$.
There should be my registration card. I *got* (lit.: was *getting*) registered.
(From Lejnonen 1982)

In some contexts the information about the retainment of the resultant state of the process and the information about the consequences of the fact that the process took place are indistinguishable from each other:

(33) Почему ты не пришел? Мы же с тобой условились$_{Pfv}$/уславливались!$_{Ipfv}$
Why did not you come? We *arranged*/(lit.: were *arranging*) to meet.

In both cases the agreement is still in force (the force of the agreement is retained): in the first case because the resultant state still lasts, in the second — because of the fact of its conclusion, so the meanings of the Pfv and the Ipfv are barely distinguishable.

Here are a few more examples of another type which on the face of it testify against the proposed treatment of the component "Alienation":

(34) Ты брал$_{Ipfv}$ со стола ключи?
Did you *take* (lit.: were you *taking*) the keys from the table? (When the keys are not on the table)

(35) Ты переставлял$_{Ipfv}$ мои книги?
Did you *move* (lit.: were *moving*) my books? (When the books have been moved)

(34) can be explained as follows: it is not брал / не брал (*took / did not take*) that are contrasted here, but *You took the keys* is contrasted with *Something else happened to the keys. I.e.* the state that the speaker sees may be the result not of the given action only, but for some other actions, so that we cannot say that the utterance was made just in the context of the retained resultant state of the action denoted by the Pfv verb взя*т*ь (*to take*). (35) is obviously uttered in the absence of complete assurance that the books have been indeed moved. Otherwise it would be more natural to say Ты пере*ст*авлял$_{Ipfv}$ моц книги? *Was it you who moved my books?*

So if the components "Factuality" and "Multiplicity" are present the meaning of factual resultative includes the component "Alienation."

At the same time in the absence of these components the Ipfv is freely used in the context of retained resultant state, see (10).

5. INDEFINITENESS OF THE TIME OF COMPLETION

The component "Indefiniteness of the time of completion": "The time of the completion of the action and the setting in of the resultant state is indefinite" (see Glovinskaja 1982: 12).

This component of the Ipfv factual is obviously opposed to the Pfv, one of whose components is "the definiteness of the time of completion." Indeed, in a sentence where the Pfv verb has a point-of-time adverbial, the adverbial denotes the time of the completion of the action. In the absence of the adverbial the Pfv presupposes that the completion of the action coincides with the moment of speech or with some other point of reference, set in the context. This is well accounted for by the semantic interpretation of the Pfv in which the fact of completion is supposed to be the main assertion in its semantic layout.

For the Ipfv factual the typical usage is without the adverbial modifier of time or with an adverbial modifier which explicitly states temporal indefiniteness like когда-нибудь *(ever)*, как-*то* *(once)*. Under these conditions the time the resultant state sets in is a certain (indefinite) moment preceding the point of reference:

(36) Ты читал$_{Ipfv}$ "Капитанскую дочку?"
Lit.: were you ever *reading* "Kapitanskaja dočka?" (= "Have you ever read?")

A verb in the Ipfv factual allows for an indicator of a time period (the term is from Padučeva 1988) which sets a fairly wide time interval for the situation and does not eliminate the indefiniteness of the time of completion – in this case, in fact, it is not completion of the process that is localized, but the process itself:

(37) Я разбирал$_{Ipfv}$ одно похожее дело в прошлом году.
I *investigated* (lit.: was *investigating*) a similar case last year.

(From Lejnonen 1982)

Thus, we have sufficient reason to include "Indefiniteness of the time completion" as one of the components into the factual meaning of the Ipfv. The only exception here are the verbs of two-way action for which the moment of the resultant state setting in can be given quite definitely:

(38) Он когда-нибудь возвращался$_{Ipfv}$ в полночь?
Did he ever *return* (lit.: was he ever *returning*) at midnight?

Почтальон приходил$_{Ipfv}$ в 8 утра.
The postman *came* (lit.: was *coming*) at eight in the morning.

Мы встречались$_{Ipfv}$ с ней в два часа.
We *met* (lit.: were *meeting*) with her at two o'clock.

Two-way verbs also allow for an adverbial setting the period of time during which the resultant state lasted (it did not last after a certain point): Иван приходил$_{Ipfv}$ на полчаыа (Ivan *came* (lit.: was *coming*) for half an hour); Он просыпался$_{Ipfv}$ минут на пять (He *woke* up (lit.: was *waking* up) for about five minutes).

The semantic interaction of the Ipfv factual with a time adverbial is one of the consequences of the "communicative structure" of its semantic layout: the setting in of the resultant state (result) is not in the focus here, it is not the main assertion, as it is in the Pfv. Hence the fact that not only the time adverbial but all the other adverbial modifiers which are allowed in the context of the Ipfv factual refer to the process, *i.e.* to the activity and not to the result:

(39) Он приходил$_{Ipfv}$, чтобы проститься.
He *came* (lit.: was *coming*) to say good-bye.

It is the process that is directed towards the given aim and not its completion: in the interpretation of this sentence the aim should be related to шел$_{Ipfv}$ (*was going*) and not to пришел$_{Pfv}$ (*has come*); он шел, чтобы проститься (lit.: *he was coming to say good-bye*).

The constraint on the combinability illustrated in (40), taken from Rassudova (1968), also bears out the fact that the component "Indefiniteness of the time of completion" in the meaning of the Ipfv factual is a consequence of the non-assertive character of the resultative component:

(40) a. Ты, наконец, передал$_{Pfv}$ ему мою книгу?
Have you *given* him my book yet?

b. * Ты, наконец, передавал$_{Ipfv}$ ему мою книгу?
Lit.: were you *giving* him my book yet?

The basic context for Ipfv factual is with the adverbial modifier of time absent. Only in such contexts the component "Factuality" can be present, which requires the placement of sentence stress on the verb. In a sentence with a rhematic adverbial of time the fact that the action was performed will form the presupposition and thematic adverbial of time does not allow for factual meaning because it sets the synchronic point of reference (see §6).

"Indefiniteness of the time of completion" is a component which the Ipfv factual always has in the absence of an adverbial of time (Мой дядя восходил$_{Ipfv}$ на Эверест — *My uncle* climbed (lit.: *was* climbing) *Everest*). The way of semantic interaction with adverbials of time, like with many other semantic operators, is determined by the communicative status of the component "Resultativity" (non-assertive).

6. RETROSPECTIVE POINT OF REFERENCE

The component "Retrospective point of reference" (or the retrospective position of the observer; for the notion of observer see Apresjan 1986) is the only component that is really common for all the factual meanings of the Ipfv — both resultative and non-resultative, including non-telic (see Padučeva 1986), — unlike the progressive meaning which has a synchronic point of reference. It was stated most clearly by Wierzbicka (1967).

Besides the factual meanings of the Ipfv the retrospective point of reference is present only in durative meanings (Я гулялIpfv с двух до *т*рех — *I* walked *from two to three* (lit.: *was* walking) and definite multiple meaning — Maslov's (1984) term (Я стучалIpfv *т*ри раза — *I* knocked *three times*. lit.: *was* knocking). These meanings however are always marked by an explicit adverbial of duration or multiplicity. Thus the component "Retrospectivity" is the only one really characteristic of the factual meaning of the Ipfv. The hesitations, whether a certain Ipfv usage should be interpreted as factual or as progressive, arise when the position of the observer as to time (or, in other words, the temporal point of reference) is not clear; cf. the ambiguity of the following sentence:

(41) Она только что мылаIpfv пол в коридоре.
She was *washing* the floor in the corridor just a moment ago.

in the context Ты не видел машу? (*Have you seen Maša?*) (41) will be interpreted as having a synchronic point of reference and as used in the progressive meaning; however, in the context зачем *т*ы моешь пол? (*What for are you washing the floor?*) (41) will be seen as viewed retrospectively (having a retrospective point of reference) and used in the factual meaning of the Ipfv. Cf. also (10) where with the transition from one mention of the situation of writing to another the point of reference may change.

Thus, our analysis shows that the resultative usages of the Ipfv do not form one meaning but several different meanings. The meaning which includes all the six components discussed above may be called **existential** (Мой дядя восходилIpfv на Эвере*с*т — *My uncle* climbed (lit.: *was* climbing *Everest*). On the other side of the scale is the **actional** (*akčional'noe*) meaning (Где апельсины покупалиIpfv — *Where did you* buy *the oranges* (lit.: *where were you* buying?) which does not include any of the characteristic components of the factual meaning, except the retrospective point of reference. This complexity of the factual meaning — the presence of many different components — accounts for the difficulties arising in the process of translation: in different contexts different components come to the fore, which requires different equivalents in different cases.

Notes

1. As Jakobson (1955) — one of the best specialists in the theory of translation — says, the absence in a certain language of direct equivalents for expressing certain meanings does not hinder the process of translation so much. It is much more difficult for the translator to preserve the ambiguity if it is for one or another reason required by the original.
2. About the description of grammatical meanings by means of lexicographic definitions see Apresjan (1980). The method of lexicographic definitions was applied to slavonic aspect for the first time by Wierzbicka (1967). Definitions of the progressive meaning of the Ipfv (different semantic classes of verbs) were given by Glovinskaja (1982). She also formulated some of the components of the Ipfv factual, see further.

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