

Marina Ja. Glovinskaja,
Russian Language Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences

On a Dictionary of Russian Verb. Aspecto-Temporal Meanings.

Abstract: This paper is devoted to the project of a dictionary of aspecto-temporal meanings of the Russian verb. It contains a sketch of the theoretical foundations of the dictionary, the format of a dictionary entry and a more detailed discussion of the information stored in some zones of the format. The appendix contains a sample dictionary entry.

1. Theoretical foundations of the dictionary

The basic inspiration for this dictionary was the idea that aspect manifests itself rather individually within a particular lexeme. Recently much evidence has been produced testifying that in many cases aspectual properties are specific not only to lexico-semantic classes of verbs but to separate lexical items as well. Therefore grammatical description alone does not provide a sufficient foundation either for a full theoretical understanding of Russian aspect or for mastering it practically.

In defining what lexicographic information should be considered relevant for the proposed dictionary I proceeded from the following facts.

1) The grammemes IMPERF and PERF are semantically heterogeneous. Each of them can be likened to a polysemous word in that it has a number of meanings, some of them contextually constrained (see below).

2) Not all the verbs are equally capable of having both aspectual forms and not all of them display a complete set of meanings of IMPERF and PERF. Both these properties are determined by the lexical meaning of the verb in question.

3) Aspectual pairs can differ from one another by the type of semantic opposition obtaining between the members. Current grammatical descriptions confine themselves to stating that IMPERF denotes movement to the terminal point of an action while PERF denotes the attainment of that point: *On dolgo vytaskival breveno iz jamy i, nakonec, vytaščil* 'He tried to pull the log out of the pit for a long time and at last he pulled it out'. It is obvious, however, that this simple semantic proportion is far from being universal. Cf. the ungrammaticality of **On dolgo vozglavljal kafedru i, nakonec, vozglavil ee* 'He was chair of the department for a long time and at last he became its chair' or **Ceny dolgo povyšalis' i, nakonec, povysilis'* 'Prices have been going up for a long time and at last they have gone up'.

4) The IMPERF and PERF forms of the same lexeme can have different combinatory power (selectional restrictions). Cf. *On očen' prosil menja priiti* 'He asked me to come very

insistently', but not **On očem' poprosil menja prijti; On gorjačo ubeždal syna poehat' v derevnju* 'He was ardently persuading his son to go to the country', but not **On gorjačo ubedil syna poehat' v derevnju* 'He ardently persuaded his son to go to the country'. This and similar information should be stored in the aspectual dictionary.

5) Last, but not least. I proceed from the assumption that grammatical meanings should be explicated in the same way as words in an explanatory dictionary (Wierzbicka 1967, Glovinskaja 1982), and not described by means of "distinctive semantic features" like "resultativeness", "terminativeness", "totality", as is usually done in grammars. Definitions of the aspecto-temporal meanings and of the semantic types of aspectual oppositions will be given in the grammatical Introduction to the Dictionary, and the concrete dictionary entries will contain references to it.

2. The format of a dictionary entry

The entry format of the proposed dictionary consists of the following zones:

- 1) Head word.
- 2) Morphological data and information on transitivity and intransitivity.
- 3) Definition of the lexical meaning which serves the following two purposes: a) to highlight the meaning at issue, b) to give an idea of the type of difference between IMPERF and PERF for a given verb. That is why, in contradistinction to the current practice, both members of the aspectual pair are defined.
- 4) The type of aspectual opposition. The Introduction to the dictionary is supposed to contain a description (based on Glovinskaja 1982) of five standard types of aspectual oppositions, referred to by their numbers in the dictionary entries. This is meant as a more theoretically-minded improvement over the loose formulation of semantic distinctions hinted at in the previous zone.
- 5) A set of aspectual and temporal meanings of IMPERF and PERF for a given verb illustrated with examples.
- 6) Specification of those aspectual and temporal meanings of IMPERF and PERF that the given verbal lexeme cannot express.
- 7) Differences in combinatory power (selectional restrictions) between IMPERF and PERF.
- 8) Phrasemes which contain the given verbal lexeme and are subject to aspectual constraints.

3. Details on some zones

3.1. The type of aspectual opposition

There are five standard (sufficiently richly represented) types of oppositions of IMPERF and PERF in their principal meanings. The first four types are composed of pairs where IMPERF has the progressive meaning.

Type I. This is the core type represented by the greatest number of verbal pairs. It is composed of terminative verbs denoting an action or a process with an apriori known eventual result inevitably obtained if the action or process develops normally. E.g.: *vyzdoravlivat' – vyzdorovet'* 'to get well', *zasyhat' – zasohnut'* 'to wither', *vbivat' – vbit'* 'to drive in' (of a nail). The IMPERF forms for this type signify that at the point of observation (reference) the result is partially obtained and that at every subsequent point of observation it is accumulated to a greater degree. The PERF forms signify that the result is completely obtained. After the terminal point of the action or process is attained it cannot any longer continue (e.g., after someone has put on his coat, he cannot continue putting it on).

Type II. It is composed of non-terminative verbs which denote a resultative action in both aspectual forms. E.g.: *ulučsat'(sja) – ulučšit'(sja)* 'to improve' *uhudšat'(sja) – uhudšit'(sja)* 'to get worse'. As distinct from type I verbs, the PERF forms of this type denote an action or a process which can go on; cf. *Ceny uže očen' povysilis' i prodolžajut povyšat'sja* 'The prices have already gone up very considerably and still continue to grow'. PERF denotes that at a certain point of observation the object at issue has a certain property to a certain degree. At the subsequent point this degree is smaller or greater. IMPERF denotes a whole sequence of such points where every two contiguous points feature this relation. The phrase *Ceny povyšajutsja* 'The prices are growing' means that the prices have gone up to a certain extent and go on growing.

Type III. It comprises terminative verbs denoting purposeful activity, such as *rešat' – rešit'* 'to solve' (of a problem), *dokazyvat' – dokazat'* 'to demonstrate' (of a proof), *lovit' – pojmat'* 'to catch' (e.g., a butterfly). IMPERF denotes an action that aims at bringing about a certain situation, whereas PERF means that the aim has been achieved, i.e., the situation has been brought about. Cf. IMPERF *On rešaet zadaču* = 'He is carrying out certain actions with the view to getting the right answer' – PERF *On rešil zadaču* = 'He was carrying out certain actions with the view to getting the right answer; he got the right answer'. Type III verbs in the IMPERF differ from type I verbs in that the latter denote the accumulation of result whereas the former denote an action about which it is not known whether it produces a partial result at every moment of its performance or remains unsuccessful.

Type IV is more peripheral. It comprises statives (in the sense of Vendler 1967), position in space verbs such as *vybivat'sja – vybit'sja* (of hair showing from under the cap), contact verbs such as *kasat'sja – kosnut'sja* 'to touch', and some verbs with the meaning of transmitting or receiving information. The IMPERF of those verbs denotes a) being in a state (*On obižatsja* 'He feels offended'); b) having a certain property (*On vyděljaetsja svoej ser'ěžnost'ju* 'He is outstandingly earnest'); c) engaging in an activity (*On zanimaetsja matematikoj* 'He studies mathematics'). The PERF of those verbs denotes the beginning of a state, having a certain property or engaging in a certain activity: a) *On obidelsja* 'He felt offended', b) *On srazu vydělilsja svoej ser'ěžnost'ju* 'He stood out at once as an extremely earnest person', c) *On zanjalsja matematikoj* 'He took up mathematics'. With certain verbs the PERF forms suggest additionally the idea of cessation: *On nasladilsja muzykoj* 'He relished the music', *On tronul cvetok* 'He touched the flower'.

Type V comprises pairs where IMPERF has no progressive meaning, such as *prihodit'* 'to arrive', *prisylat'* – 'to send', *okazyvat'sja* 'to turn out, to appear' etc; cf. the ungrammaticality of **Ja vižu, što on prihodit* 'I can see that he is arriving', **Vot on okazyvaetsja bol'nym* 'Look, he is turning out to be ill'. IMPERF here has a resultative meaning, including iterative resultative. The opposition of IMPERF and PERF in this case is possible, in particular, along the axis 'many times – once'.

Apart from those standard types there are rather many aspectual pairs featuring individual semantic relations between IMPERF and PERF; cf. *prodolžat'* – *prodolžit'* 'to continue' where the PERF form denotes the continuation of an action or a process after a break.

3.2. The set of admissible aspecto-temporal meanings

This zone is devoted to the constraints imposed on the set of admissible aspecto-temporal meanings by the lexical meaning of a particular verb. Before proceeding to the constraints themselves let me comment on the meanings of the grammemes IMPERF and PERF that the proposed dictionary will record. It will take into account 9 meanings of IMPERF and 3 meanings of PERF.

IMPERF:

1) Progressive – 'the action is taking place at a specified point of observation', e.g. *Kogda ja vošel v komnatu, on smotrel v okno* 'When I entered the room he was looking out of the window'.

2) Iterative – 'the action occurred a number of times yielding or not yielding a result', e.g. *Ona tri raza podogrevala tebe obed* (resultative) 'She put your dinner on fire three times'; *On iskal eë vo vseh gorodah* (non-resultative) 'He looked for her in all the towns'.

3) Habitual – 'the action which normally occurs over a certain time span', e.g. *Begaet ves' den', est na hodu, rabotaet po nočam* 'She runs about all day long, gets a snack on the run, works at night'. The habitual action can also be either resultative or non-resultative.

4) Assignment of property. This meaning can suggest either a potential or a permanent property depending on the type of subject and some other factors. By potential property is meant the ability of the subject to perform a certain action. This meaning is typical for the verbs implying a rational subject who controls his action: *Ona govorit po-francuzski* 'She speaks French' (= 'can speak French'). If the subject is not rational or if he does not control his behaviour the property is interpreted not as potential but as permanent: *Zemlja vraščaetsja vokrug solnca* 'The Earth rotates round the Sun', *On hromaet* 'He is lame'.

5) General factual resultative. This meaning implies that the action brought about a result at some indefinite point in the past, and it remains unknown whether the effect of the action is preserved up to the moment of speech. Cf. PERF *Časy počinili* 'The watch has been fixed' ('The watch is in order') and IMPERF *Časy činili* 'The watch was fixed' ('It is not known whether it is in order at the moment of speech').

6) General factual bidirectional (Forsyth's two-way-action 1970). It implies an action that brought about some result in the past which at a later point was annulled by the inversely directed action (Rassudova 1968, 26-29). *Kto-to otkryval okno* 'Someone opened

the window' = 'At some point in the past someone opened the window and at a later moment it was closed again'.

7) Processive factual. It implies an action extending over a certain time span but not divisible into smaller parts that might be observable at certain temporal points. The action is presented as a whole, with only the initial and the final points discernable in it. Cf. *Ona segodnja s utra do večera iskala ključ* 'She has been looking for the key from morning till night today'.

8) Present picturesque (Peškovskij's term). It subsumes those meanings of IMPERF which present the action as if unfolding before the eyes of the hearer, e.g. Praesens historicum, stage directions and the like.

9) Praesens propheticum. It relates to a future point of the action which has already been decided upon or can be predicted with high probability: *Zavtra ja brosjaju kurit'* 'Tomorrow I shall give up smoking'.

PERF:

1) Concrete factual. This is the principal meaning of PERF implying the presence of result at a certain point in time. *Ona prišila pugovicu* 'She has sewn on the button'.

2) Habitual. It implies an action that tends to be a rule with somebody: *Ona vseгда sama večerom pribežit i vsě rasskažet* 'She has a habit of looking in at night and blurting out everything'.

3) Potential. It implies the possibility on the part of the subject to perform a certain action: *On ne rešit takuju zadaču* 'He will not be able to solve this problem'.

After this brief survey of the aspecto-temporal meanings considered in the dictionary I shall proceed to the respective zone in the dictionary. It is broken into two parts. The first part features the aspecto-temporal meanings permissible for the given verbal lexeme, while the second part records those meanings which are ruled out for it.

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APPENDIX: A sample dictionary entry

In the grammatical notation of this entry I use Apresjan's concept of the non-proper perfective member of the verb. Information of the verbal paradigm is borrowed from "Russian Pronouncing Dictionary" (Moskva, 1983) where the grammatical information is due to N. A. Es'kova.

ИСКАТЬ СВ нет; в некот. знач. несобст. СВ найти; ищ^{у́}, ищ^{ет}, прич. действ. наст. ищ^{ущий}, прич. страд. наст. *неуотр.*, прич. страд. прош. *исканный* *вышло из употр.*, деепр. ища.

1. перех.

НСВ 'перемещать орган восприятия с целью начать иметь в поле восприятия определенный объект, который в данный момент не находится в поле восприятия действующего лица; отыскивать, разыскивать'. *Он ищет ключ на полу. Полицейский ищет преступника.*

Наличные значения:

Акт—длит. То, что собака искала именно их, теперь Заур знал точно, потому что, пройдя шагов тридцать, она свернула по их следам (*Ф. Искандер*).

Многokr. нерез. Он искал ее в Геленджике, в Гаграх, Сочи (*И. Бунин*).

Узуальн. Она ему рассказывала <...> про какого-то преподавателя, который, входя в аудиторию, ищет ее глазами, а она нарочно прячется от него (*Ф. Искандер*).

Процессн. Соседи не ругались, сочувствовали, искали вместе с нами, и шапка, наконец, нашлась. (*В. Каверин*).

Наст. живописн. Муж нервно ходит по комнате, безуспешно ищет свою трость и обращается, наконец, к жене.

Наст. предстоящее (*редк.*) Главного преступника уже нашли, завтра ищем его сообщников.

Ограничения:

Нет многокр. рез., свойства, ОФ рез., ОФ двунапр.

СВ несобст. **НАЙТИ** I (см.) 'Искать определенный объект, в результате поиска начать иметь его в поле восприятия; отыскать, разыскать'. *С трудом нашел ножницы.*

III тип видového противопоставления

2. перех.

НСВ 'Перебирать различные возможности с целью начать иметь в своем распоряжении некоторый объект, отвечающий определенным требованиям; подыскивать'. *Искать работу <дачу, квартиру>.*

Наличные значения:

Акт—длит. В этот момент он напряженно искал ошибку в своем доказательстве теоремы и не слышал, что ему говорили.

Многokr. нерез. В этом лесу мы не раз искали грибы, но ничего не находили.

Узуальн. Горячо любил всякую жизнь, но как-то так случилось, что искал он ее не там, где нужно (*А. Аверченко*).

Свойство Собаки этой породы хорошо ищут наркотики.

Процессн. Они давно ищут дачу, но купить не удастся.

Наст. живописн. Мы переезжаем в город, долго ищем и, наконец, находим квартиру.

Наст. предстоящее (*редк.*) Решено: завтра ищем (лучше: будем искать) дачу по Ярославской дороге.

Ограничения:

Нет многокр. рез., ОФ рез., ОФ двунапр.

СВ несобст. НАЙТИ 2.1 (см.) 'Искать некоторый объект, отвечающий определенным требованиям, в результате начать его иметь в своем распоряжении; подыскать'. *Нашли, наконец, хорошую дачу.*

III тип видового противопоставления

3. перех.

НСВ 'Размышлять с целью начать иметь в сознании результат, соответствующий определенным требованиям; понять что-л. или придумать'. *Искать смысл жизни. Искать способ получения искусственного волокна.*

Наличные значения:

Многокр. *перез.* Многие ученые искали доказательство теоремы Ферма.

Узуальн. Смысл жизни ищут в земной деятельности, а нужно обратиться к познанию Бога.

Процессн. Химики долго искали способ получения искусственного каучука.

Наст. живописн. (*редк.*).

Ограничения:

Нет акт-длит. (*Он сейчас ищет жизни), многокр. рез., свойства, ОФ рез., ОФ двунапр., наст. предстоящего (*Завтра ищу причину неисправности ЭВМ).

СВ несобст. НАЙТИ 2.2 (см.) 'Размышлять с целью начать иметь в сознании результат, соответствующий определенным требованиям; вследствие этого начать иметь его в сознании'. *Найти оригинальное решение задачи.*

III тип видового противопоставления.

4. неперех., с род. пад.

НСВ 'действовать с целью вызвать желаемую ситуацию, стремиться к чему-л.'. *Искать встречи с кем-л.*

Наличные значения:

Многокр. рез. Он много раз искал ссоры со мной, но я умел уклониться.

Узуальн. Когда его обижали мальчишки, он искал защиты у старшего брата.

Процессн. Вам ведомо, что власти не ищут я (*А. К. Толстой*).

Наст. живописн. Он едет в Петербург и тщетно ищет там встречи с возлюбленной.

Ограничения:

Нет акт-длит. (*Когда я вошел, он как раз искал ссоры с женой), многокр. рез., свойства, ОФ рез., ОФ двунапр., наст. предстоящего.

5. **неперех.**

НСВ 'стремиться к совершенству, к новому в своей работе, как бы искать I истину, идеаль'. *Всю жизнь он работал, творил, искал.*

Наличные значения:

Узуальн. Актеры наши много работают, ищут, пробуют все сделать по-новому.

Процессн. До последних дней он кипел, искал, бросался в работу, жадно интересовался наукою (*В. Вересаев*).

Ограничения:

Нет акт-длит. (*Смотри, как ищет актер!), **многокр.** (*Он много раз искал), **свойства, ОФ рез., ОФ двунапр., наст. предстоящего** (*Завтра репетируем, ищем).