

Chapter X

VARIETIES OF EXPRESSIONS OF EXCESS

This dissertation opened with an assumption (numbered 1) which is characteristic of the traditional framework: "the semantic realization of a given submeaning is equivalent for all instantiations of all prefixes which include it in their semantic make-up." Data on the compatibility of verbs with the prefixes *za-*, *pere-*, *do-*, and *ot-* in their <excess> submeaning, as well as a questionnaire given to native speakers, showed this assumption to be false. Each prefix indeed expresses <excess> in its own way, a phenomenon which has no place in traditional descriptions. This finding in turn initiated a search for an approach to prefixal semantics which would bring the interprefixal differences between similar submeanings into relief. This chapter presents a brief discussion of how such differences are accounted for in the modified structuralist model.

10.1 <EXCESS> AND THE CONFIGURATIONS AND MAPPING PATTERNS

The prototypical notion of <excess> has, of course, its own semantic composition, which various instantiations match more or less closely. Coleman and Kay's (1981) analysis of *lie* serves as an appropriate model for approaching the varieties of <excess> expressed by

prefixes. They (Coleman and Kay 1981:28) defined the prototypical *lie* as follows:

- a) the proposition is false
- b) the speaker believes the proposition to be false
- c) in uttering the proposition, the speaker intends to deceive the addressee.

Actual instantiations of *lie* may involve one or more of these elements and, contrary to the preference of lexicographers for a), c) was found to be the most important, if not crucial, ingredient of *lie*.

<Excess> can similarly be broken down into components which together give an outline of its prototype. Webster's (20th century Unabridged, 1977) defines *excess* thus:

1. action or conduct that goes beyond the usual, reasonable, or lawful limit
2. intemperance; immoderation; overindulgence

Compare this with Ožegov's definition of *sliškom* 'too much':

Svyže mery, žeresčur, vyxodit za predely dopustimogo.

Beyond normal, too much, going beyond the bounds of what is allowable.

From these definitions two properties emerge:

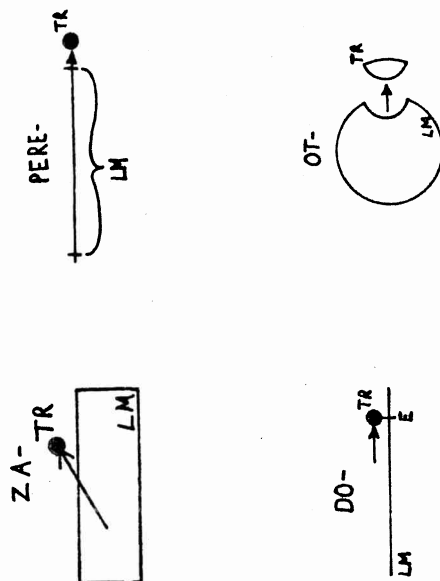
- a) transgression of a boundary
- b) negatively evaluated result.

The properties correspond roughly to Webster's 1. and 2. respectively, whereas in the Russian a) represents *svyže* 'beyond' and *vyxodit za predely* 'going beyond the bounds', and b) represents

the complement of *very* 'normal', *dopusti/mogo* 'what is allowable'. Curiously enough, as we shall see, property a), which is more salient in the dictionary definitions is, like property a) of *lie*, of lesser consequence in determining membership to the category *excess* than b).

The configurations which caption <excess> submeanings of the four prefixes are reproduced below for reference.

Figure 18: Configurations of <Excess>



How do these various configurations of <excess> match up with the prototype properties a) and b)? Each configuration is different, motivating a different realization of <excess>. Yet in all cases the resulting situation is undesirable or abnormal, thus fulfilling property b). Patients of *za-* suffer ruined health, disposition, or death; those of *pere-* are spoiled by overexposure to actions which are normally limited; those of *do-* have through carelessness wound up in trouble; and with *ot-*, limbs are made unresponsive to the bodies that they are members of. All of these results are negatively evaluated. Only two of the configurations, however, entail the transgression of a boundary: those of the prefixes *za-* and *pere-*. In *za-*, the trajectory transgresses a lateral boundary of a two-dimensional landmark, whereas in *pere-* it crosses the end point of a one-dimensional landmark. This property (a) is altogether absent in the configurations of *do-* and *ot-*. Thus already on the basis of matching the submeanings and their configurations with the prototypical properties of <excess>, it is possible to divide the prefixes into two groups: *za-* and *pere-*, having both properties a) and b) on the one hand, and *do-* and *ot-*, having only b) on the other. What remains is to identify among the two pairs of prefixes the differences in configuration as they relate to differences in expression of <excess>.

A review of the mapping patterns of configurational elements in <excess> submeanings both supports this initial grouping and suggests further subdivisions. The mapping patterns for <excess> are reproduced below:

ZA-

PATTERN A POSSIBLE REFERENTS:

intrans subj
-or- = TR beings, objects,
DO newness

PP
-or- = EX exhaustion, death,
inc. in verb undesirable states

(LM is complement of EX)

PERE-

PATTERN A POSSIBLE REFERENTS:

intrans subj
-or- = TR food, animals, people
DO (objects needing preparation
or maintenance)

inc. in verb = LM acts (normative completion
of action named in simplex)

DO-

PATTERN A POSSIBLE REFERENTS:

intrans subj = TR human beings, personified
animals

inc. in verb = LM activities that are harmful
if pursued carelessly

PP/inc. in verb = E undesirable state

OT-

PATTERN A POSSIBLE REFERENTS:

DO = TR body parts

complement of = LM bodies (usually of human
TR beings)

All four <excess> submeanings use pattern A, yet *za-* and *pere-* both may use either transitive or intransitive verbs with this pattern, but *do-* is restricted to intransitive verbs, and *ot-* to transitive verbs. The following two sections will discuss how details in the structures of the configurations, together with the various referents of the configurational elements correspond to differences between the <excess> submeanings of the members of the pairs *pere-/za-* and *do-/ot-*, respectively.

10.2 DO- VERSUS OT-

As noted above, *do-* <excess> is specific to intransitive verbs, but *ot-* <excess> uses exclusively transitive verbs. The items listed under "possible referents" indicate further differences between these submeanings. *Ot-* <excess> is very limited since it can only refer to body parts. This specification is mutually exclusive with *do-*'s "human beings, personified animals." *Do-* requires that its trajector recognize and regret the resultant state, a role which an arm, a leg or any other disembodied member cannot fill. Due to the tight constraints on the referents of the trajector of *do-* and especially *ot-*, the scope of these <excess> submeanings in terms of the base verbs which may combine with them is strictly limited: *ot-* is quite marginal, combining with only fourteen simplexes, and *do-*, though 100 different base verbs may be prefixed by it in this submeaning, is also restricted to a relatively small sector of the lexicon (cf. *za-* <excess> which combines with 166 base verbs and *pere-* <excess> which combines with 141). Certain generalizations can be made about the types of verbs involved. Verbs prefixed by *ot-* <excess> generally refer to positions or actions in which one body part may be disadvantaged with respect to the whole, such as *sidet'* 'sit', *ležat'* 'lie', *tjanut'* 'pull'. Verbs prefixed by *do-* <excess>, on the contrary, refer to actions performed carelessly in which people can get carried away and thereby cause themselves harm. Therefore typical *do-* <excess> verbs describe lighthearted activities, such as *žutit'* 'joke', *smejat'sja* 'laugh', *pet'* 'sing'. Verbs that have inanimate

subjects (like *kristallizovat'sja* 'crystallize') and those with end points not subject to human will, like *rodit'sja* 'be born', *žit'* 'live', *umeret'* 'die', do not combine with *do-* in this submeaning.

10.3 ZA- VERSUS PERE-

Although the differences between *za-* <excess> and *pere-* <excess> are subtler than those discussed above for *do-* and *ot-*, they are apparent and can be, at least in part, derived from differences in their respective configurations. These configurational differences are three:

- 1) Dimensionality -- the landmark of *pere-* <excess> is one-dimensional, as opposed to the two-dimensional landmark of *za-*, which establishes an extradomain as its complement
- 2) Involvement -- due to the difference in dimensionality, the trajector of *za-* is necessarily more involved in the domain and extradomain than that of *pere-* which merely skips over its landmark
- 3) Orientation -- the diagonal orientation of *za-*'s trajectory suggests inherent deviance in comparison with *pere-*'s trajectory, which aims toward normal completion but overshoots it.

The differences in the configurations correspond to different characteristics which typify the individual expressions of <excess> of these two prefixes, as summarized in Table 12.

Table 12: Configurational and Semantic Differences

Configurational Differences	ZA- <excess>	PERE- <excess>
Dimensionality	-no measured standard; band of normalcy	-canonical act is simple, well-defined
Involvement	-patient suffers some torture	(no statement abt whether patient suffers)
	-<excess> is result of relatively prolonged activity	-<excess> may be reached suddenly
	-final state is relatively irreversible	-final state not necessarily permanent
Orientation	-activity is pursued in a deviant fashion	-activity is pursued in a normal fashion
	-volition is often a factor in producing this deviance	(no statement about volition, end result likely accidental)

Table 12 outlines the semantic trends of *za-* and *pere-*, respectively: a given instantiation may lack some characteristics, but this pattern is quite consistent, allowing little, if any, overlap. *Pere-*'s version of <excess>, being one-dimensional and differing little from normal completion, is much simpler and more straightforward than that of *za*. The trajector of *pere-* typically requires a measured application of the activity named by the base verb, as specified by recipe, standard practice, or some other norm. This standard is simply overreached. Deviance, volition, and suffering, though largely absent from *pere-*, are the hallmarks of *za-* <excess>. The fact that *za-*'s patients suffer from torturous exposure to a given activity, for example, explains *za-*'s preference for animate beings (inanimate objects have at best a minimal capacity for suffering). These differences also translate into differences in the types of base verbs which the two prefixes combine with (see Chapter 1 for partial lists): *za-* base verbs tend to denote torturous or potentially torturous activities, *pere-* base verbs tend to denote preparation or maintenance of inanimate objects or animals. The following examples contrast *pere-* and *za-*, illustrating their differences.

175) Mat' *perekormila* (*pere*- 'feed') rebenka.

Mother gave the child too much to eat.

176) Mat' *zakormila* (*za*- 'feed') rebenka.

Mother overfed the child (fattened him).

175 speaks of a specific occasion on which the child was given too big a meal, perhaps the mother put more formula in the bottle than the doctor had recommended. The result is temporary indigestion. The child in 176, however, suffers a more serious and lasting outcome: through persistent overfeeding he has become obese and lethargic.

177) Professor skazal, što Corky Park lučše, žem Vojna i mir -- on *perexvalil* (*pere*- 'praise') knigu.

The professor said that Corky Park is better than *War and Peace* -- he *praised* the book too *highly*.

178) Professora *zaxvalili* (*za*- 'praise') studenta, i on stal lenivym.

The professors *gave* the student too *much praise*, and he became lazy.

This pair of examples, as well as the one that follows, shows the correlation of inanimate patients with *pere*- and of animate patients (particularly human beings) with *za*-. Again, the student in 178 is more involved in the process described, suffering a changed psychological state, characteristics that are absent in 177.

179) Frukty *peresideli* (*pere*- 'sit') na solnce.

The fruit *sat out* in the sun too *long*.

180) Svoj talant inženera ja *zasidel* (*za*- 'sit') v kancelarijax.

I *whiled away* my engineering talents in administrative positions.

The characteristic referred to above as deviance, typical of many *za*- <excess> verbs, is quite salient here. An engineer is usually expected upon graduation to use and develop his talents by working in his field. The narrator of 180, however, deviated from this expected path by devoting his efforts to administration rather than engineering. The fruit in 179 was placed in the sun to dry, an action which is not in and of itself deviant. *Pere*- merely invokes the interpretation that it was left out too long.

181) *Perepoit'* (*pere*- 'give to drink') ložad'.

To *give* a horse too *much water*.

182) Skazyvajut, što v starinu monaxi, vladčestvovavšie v Bavarii, sistematičeski *zapaivali* (*za*- 'give to drink') narod krepkim, gustym pivom, kotoroe deržalo ego v besprestanom poxmeli'e.

They say that in olden times the monks who held dominion in Bavaria used to regularly *intoxicate* the people with strong, thick beer, which kept them continually drunk.

These last two examples illustrate in particular the presence of volition, which is more prevalent with *za*- than with *pere*-. The excess water given to the horse in 181 is most likely the result of an oversight and certainly not indicative of any cruel intent. The cunning monks in 182 intentionally made the people drunk in order to guarantee their submission.

10.4 SUMMARY OF <EXCESS>

Given the regularity and the clarity of the differences between the individual expressions of <excess> of the four prefixes, the consistency with which consultants responded to the questionnaire in Chapter 1 is understandable. Each prefix has a unique expression of <excess>, allowing only minimal overlap with others. Since these differences are derivable either directly from the configurations or indirectly through the mapping patterns and referents of the configurational elements, they form an integral part of the modified structuralist analysis of the prefixes. If the system of Russian verbal prefixes as a whole were subjected to such an analysis, I suspect that all apparent cases of submeanings being shared by two or more prefixes (such as, for example, the <inchoative> submeaning that *po-* and *za-* allegedly share) could be shown to involve systematic differences resulting from configurational variation (cf. Flier 1975).

Chapter XI A REMARK ON ASPECT

The word is to reality what a map is to the world.

--Bull

With the exception of a few dozen inherently perfective simplex verbs (e.g., *rešit'* 'decide', *kupit'* 'buy') and the suffix *-nu-*, which forms approximately 300 nonprefixed perfectives, perfectivization is the exclusive domain of the verbal prefixes. Given this fact, it stands to reason that the meanings of the verbal prefixes should contain a clue to the meaning of the term "perfective." This chapter will very briefly outline the search for a definition of perfective, present an interpretation of this term, and conclude with a word about Aktionsart. This chapter does not contain definitive solutions to these issues: such complex matters are far beyond the range of a single dissertation. Rather, the intention here is to give the reader a taste, albeit a somewhat impressionistic one, of how such issues might be viewed in a modified structuralist framework. Note also that the contributions of suffixes (*-nu-*, *-yvaj-*, etc.) to aspect and Aktionsart will not be discussed since the focus of this dissertation is on prefixes.

11.1 DEFINITIONS OF THE TERM PERFECTIVE

The definition of perfective remains one of the thornier problems of Slavic linguistics, one that has been subjected to the earnest efforts of some of the field's best scholars. Definitions range from lists of characteristics (e.g., Bondarko and Bulanin 1967, Karcevski 1962) to integrated but abstract descriptions (e.g., Isačenko's (1960) definition of perfective and imperfective as viewed action-externally and action-internally, respectively). As is commonly noted (by, for example, Forsyth (1970), Bondarko and Bulanin (1967), and Maslov (1962)), any characteristic given in a definition of perfective is subject to counterexample. Perhaps the most satisfactory treatment of this subject is that of Comrie (1976:3-4) who, in a statement reminiscent of Isačenko, asserts that "perfective presents the totality of the situation referred to...: a single unanalyzable whole, with beginning, middle, and end rolled up into one" and that "imperfective makes explicit reference to the internal constituency of the situation." To use Bull's apt terminology, then, the term perfective refers to an event. It is this definition which will serve as the basis for the following discussion of aspect.

11.2 THE LEXICO-GRAMMATICAL DICHOTOMY

The introduction to this chapter contains a claim that prefixal semantics could provide a clue to the meaning of perfective. This claim is made on the assumption that the category of aspect has some semantic component, an assumption which is not held unanimously by Slavic linguists. There are two extremes and a spectrum of intermediate opinions available on this issue. On one side are those (in particular Avilova (1959)) who adhere to what might be termed the "lexico-grammatical dichotomy" and thus claim to draw a distinct line between what is lexical and what is grammatical, relegating aspect exclusively to the latter domain. At the opposite end are scholars (cf. Isačenko (1960) and Timberlake (1982)) who recognize interaction between the lexicon and grammar in the category of aspect. According to Isačenko (1960:220), "perfectivity is not a grammatical category, but a phenomenon on the boundary between lexical word formation and grammatical flexion." Most of the remaining scholars hold to the essential doctrine of the lexico-grammatical dichotomy, but admit some small admixture of lexical or semantic influence in aspect. Forsyth (1970:15,16), for example, clearly presents aspect as a purely grammatical phenomenon, yet on the following page mentions (unfortunately with no further elaboration) that "although lexical meaning is clearly of a different order from grammatical meaning, it nevertheless interacts with aspect to a certain extent." Bondarko and Bulanin (1967:12,47,49) similarly identify aspect as "a grammatical category... not lexico-grammatical or grammaticalized." In the same

book they define Aktionsart as a purely lexical category and state that aspect and Aktionsart are realizations of a single phenomenon, components of a meta-category which they label *aspektual'nost'* 'aspectuality'. This interpretation suggests that lexical semantics are important ingredients at least in "aspectuality," if not in aspect proper. Both Maslov (1958) and Karcevski (1962) accept the lexico-grammatical dichotomy with respect to aspect, yet treat aspect as a by-product of word formation, again hinting that lexicon may indeed be involved.

Thus, although many Slavists recognize a lexico-grammatical dichotomy in their definitions of aspect, this dichotomy is for most not absolute, and there are some who prefer to view aspect as a dynamic interaction between lexicon and grammar. The fact that even adherents to the dichotomy admit that it can break down, suggests that it may be somewhat artificial to draw a firm boundary between lexicon and grammar when dealing with aspect. The interpretation below assumes that lexical semantics do indeed play a role in producing perfectivity.

11.3 ASPECT AND PREFIXES IN THE MODIFIED STRUCTURALIST MODEL

In the modified structuralist model, the roles of the prefix and base verb in composing the prefixed perfective are clear. As illustrated in the configurations which caption the meaning of the prefix, the prefix acts as a semantic organizer in a verb; it sets the stage and gives a

general plot to the verbal activity. The semantics of the base verb identify the actors, specify the type of action involved and fill in further details of setting, working in conjunction with the context of the utterance as a whole. The configuration depicts the contribution of the prefix: the landmark set in cognitive space is the stage, the trajector the main character, and the trajectory is the plot. Each verb which can combine with the prefix will designate the referents of the landmark and of cognitive space and assign the role of trajector to an appropriate person, object, or whatever. Thus the play outlined by a prefix can be endlessly rehearsed, its variations limited only by the available base verbs. By assigning a plot, prefixes take what are for the most part activity and state terms and give them the outlines of accomplishment and achievement terms. In other words, the relatively raw, undifferentiated activity referenced by the base verb is shaped into an "event," in Bull's sense of the word, by the prefix. I suspect that it is this organization of what is largely undifferentiated activity into actual events that is at work in the perfectivizing property of prefixes. All configurations are consistent with Comrie's definition of perfective and it is this characteristic of prefixal meaning which accounts for the association of prefixes with perfectivization.

11.4 AKTIONSART

Bondarko (1967) notes that "in the last ten years, Slavists have gone to a lot of trouble trying to draw the line between aspect and Aktionsart," and, as we have seen above, he and Bulanin lump the two together in the "functional-semantic category" of *aspektual'nost'*. Isačenko (1960:216-217) gives perhaps the clearest characterization of what Aktionsart is: a phenomenon of some prefixed and suffixed verbs which are unpaired aspectually and which exhibit salient semantic modification of the corresponding base verbs, i.e., "one time," "inchoative," etc. Some scholars (cf. Netteberg 1962, Bondarko and Bulanin 1967) extend this definition to include paired verbs, obscuring the supposed distinction between aspect and Aktionsart. Maslov (1962:13) asserts that "aspect and Aktionsart are intermeshed and occasionally collide." Faced with this disagreement on what constitutes Aktionsart, Isačenko (1960:219-220) points out the questionable status of Aktionsart in the traditional framework of Russian grammar, although he himself does not totally reject it.

What place does the phenomenon known as Aktionsart have in the modified structuralist model? Semantic modification by a prefix is a regular and constant procedure which, according to the present model, always accompanies prefixation. (Only a model which allows for empty prefixes and therefore for relatively strong and weak contributions of the prefix to the perfective verb could distinguish groups of prefixed perfectives according to the presence/absence of semantic modification). This is a phenomenon which is always

present, and not specific to certain verbs. In fact, an examination of the characterizations of various instantiations of Aktionsart (e.g., Bondarko and Bulanin (1967:14-20) "inchoative," "change of state," etc.) reveals that these characterizations are in many cases remarkably similar to the submeanings of the prefixes. The stipulation that Aktionsart verbs are aspectually unpaired is, as noted above, often sidestepped by Slavists. According to the present model, unpairedness is an artifact of the specific semantics of the verb and prefix and their real-world referents, being always idiosyncratic and random from any other point of view. The production of these gaps is accidental and of marginal linguistic interest.

From the standpoint of modified structuralism, therefore, we can say either that Aktionsart is a regular and mandatory phenomenon of prefixation, or that it does not exist. It is impossible to distinguish from the whole any subgroup of prefixed perfectives using the criteria traditionally ascribed to Aktionsart.