



WAYS OF ATTENUATING AGENCY IN RUSSIAN

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Review

WAYS OF ATTENUATING AGENCY IN RUSSIAN

1. Introduction

This article will focus on one set of patterns which are highly conventionalized in Russian, but less prominent in other Slavic languages, namely grammatical constructions that attenuate or eliminate the expression of agency. Russian has a particularly rich assortment of such constructions, which we will explore in detail. Emphasis will be on the organization of these constructions in larger networks of related personal and impersonal constructions, with impersonal constructions as peripheral members of the system.

The exposition in this article will use the frameworks of Radical Construction Grammar and Cognitive Grammar. Radical Construction Grammar postulates the grammatical construction as the basic unit of language and linguistic analysis: constructions are not derived from their parts, instead, the parts are derived from the constructions and, hence, are construction specific. Cognitive Grammar focuses on differences in construal, i.e. different ways of arranging the elements that make up a complex construction, which signal differences in the relationship between those elements.

In the case of impersonal constructions, we will look at the way a verb’s argument structure is construed and at the use of grammatical case in the argument structure construction. More specifically, we will compare the role of the dative case in impersonal constructions containing a finite verb and an infinitive and will demonstrate that there are two such constructions, which has implications for the concepts of main verb-hood and agentivity.

2. Personal versus impersonal constructions

Russian has a wealth of both personal and impersonal constructions. There is no clear distinction between these two types of constructions, however, for the dividing line between them is gradual and complex: most impersonal constructions are closely related to personal constructions, differing from the latter mainly in that one or more constituents seem to be “missing”. The purpose of the exposition presented below is to show that, although syntactic differences might appear to constitute discrete changes in the number and identity of constituents, i.e. presence vs. absence and various case marking of noun phrases, in fact these transitions are not so discrete: there is often similarity in meaning across constructions that seem to be opposed by discrete units of change. In other words, we will show that the recognition of networks with a center-periphery structure can be as insightful for the investigation of syntax as it is for the analysis of semantics.

2.1 Personal constructions

Personal constructions are constructions in which the finite verb agrees with a nominative subject, not necessarily a human being. Russian has a number of personal constructions that meet this requirement, but the prototypical personal construction in Russian is the personal transitive construction, containing a nominative subject, a finite verb, and an accusative direct object (Janda forthcoming). This construction (which we will call N+V+A, for “nominative + verb + accusative”), illustrated in example (1), instantiates Langacker’s

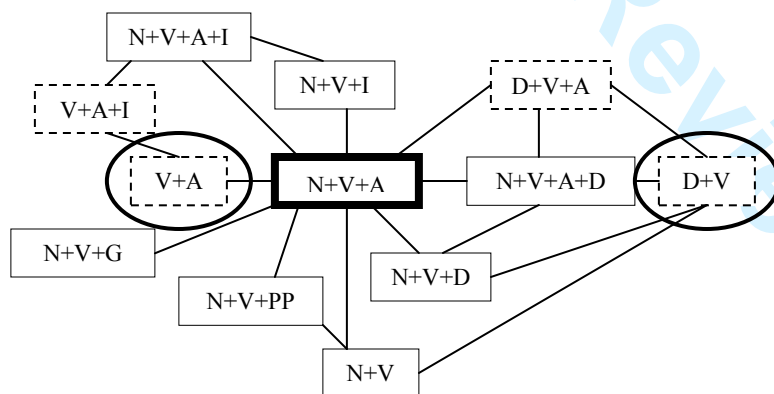
(1991: 285-6) “canonical event model”. It is also closely related to impersonal constructions that lack the nominative noun phrase, as we will see further on.

- (1) Девушка сшила юбку.¹
 Devuška sšila jubku.
 [Girl-N sewed skirt-A.]
 ‘The girl sewed a skirt.’

Langacker (1991: 321), Croft (2001: 136) and Goldberg (1995: 101-119) view the personal transitive construction as a unitary structure and do not discuss syntactic variants on this construction or transitions to other constructions. Taylor (2002: 415-426) is more flexible: he admits that it is often hard to distinguish between participants and circumstances, that construal plays a role, and that participants can sometimes be omitted from the construction. Talmy (2000: 92-3) foregrounds the role of construal in the personal transitive construction, by recognizing that transitivity is dependent upon construal and that similar semantic structures may be encoded differently. Russian offers numerous variations on the personal transitive construction by adding, replacing and deleting items (including the subject participant).

In light of Russian data it is necessary to extend Langacker’s model and to invoke Talmy’s model of construal to see how similar constructions are related. We will trace the relationships among a representative sample of constructions, which together form the following network:

Diagram 1: Network of personal and impersonal constructions in Russian



In the diagram, N=nominative, V=verb, A=accusative, D=dative, I=instrumental, L=locative, PP=prepositional phrase. The prototypical construction is enclosed by a bold line, personal constructions are enclosed by solid lines, and impersonal constructions are

¹ Section 2 uses sentences that are shortened and edited versions of well-attested constructions. For the purpose of comparing a large number of similar constructions, it is advisable to keep the lexical items relatively similar. On the other hand, the sections on the finite + infinitive verb use corpus data as those constructions are less frequently encountered and need proof of attestation.

enclosed by dotted lines. The two constructions that we will focus on most, due to their ability to include an infinitive, are enclosed by ovals: V+A and D+V.

Example (1) above instantiates Langacker’s (1991: 285) “role archetypes” for agent (the girl) and patient (the skirt), where the transitive verb focuses on the transfer of energy from the agent to the patient. However, not all Russian sentences with the N+V+A structure express the prototypical personal transitive meaning, as we see in example (2):

- (2) Девушка шила всю ночь.
Devuška šila vsju noč’.
[Girl-N sewed all night-A.]
‘The girl sewed all night.’

The relationship between the verb and the accusative noun phrase is different in (2), for it does not entail a transfer of energy to an object. In (2), the accusative marks the duration of the action. The use of a time expression in the accusative slot is part of a transition between the personal transitive construction and the personal intransitive construction, which is completed when we look at the next three examples, (3), (4) and (5):

- (3) Девушка спала всю ночь.
Devuška spala vsju noč’.
[Girl-N slept all night-A.]
‘The girl slept all night.’
- (4) Девушка спала.
Devuška spala.
[Girl-N slept.]
‘The girl slept/was sleeping.’
- (5) Девушка шила.
Devuška šila.
[Girl-N sewed.]
‘The girl sewed/was sewing.’

Sentences (1), (2), and (3) all display the same case pattern, but have a different “energy structure”, since (1) is the only one that describes a transfer of energy. Examples (2), (3), (4), and (5) all have the same energy structure, although (2) and (3) have a different syntactic structure than (4) and (5). The transition between transitive and intransitive personal constructions is relatively simple and straightforward. As we shall see, there is a more complex transition to a variety of impersonal constructions. Furthermore, there are constructions that compromise the force of a personal construction even though they meet the syntactic requirements stated above. We will turn to the latter first (section 2.1.1). Throughout this survey we will express the syntactic relationships in terms of “distance” from the prototypical personal transitive constructions, created by adding and replacing constituents.

2.1.1 Adding constituents

The addition of constituents to the prototypical personal transitive construction does not compromise the personal nature of the construction; it can affect transitivity, though, in a way similar to the one we saw above in examples (1) through (5). For example, the addition of a preposition to the finite verb yields an energy structure that is basically the same as in the prototypical transitive construction exemplified in (1), although the transitivity relation is affected, as comparing (6) and (7) reveal:

(6) Любой спортсмен надеется на победу.
Ljuboј sportsmen nadeetsja na pobedu.
[Every athlete-N hopes for victory-A.]
'Every athlete hopes for victory.'

(7) Каждый клуб хочет победу.
Každyj klub xočet pobedu.
[Every club-N wants victory-A.]
'Every club wants victory.'

But if a motion verb is used, we do have reduced transitivity, although the prepositional phrase with an accusative is retained, as (8) shows:

(8) Девушка пошла в школу.
Devuška pošla v školu.
[Girl-N went to school-A.]
'The girl went to school.'

Example (8) has no more transitivity than (9), which contains a prepositional phrase with the locative instead of the accusative:

(9) Девушка работает в кабинете.
Devuška rabotaet v kabinete.
[Girl-N works in office-L.]
'The girl is working in her office.'

Yet, transitivity is not entirely ruled out in sentences containing a prepositional phrase with the locative either, as we see by comparing (10) and (11). Example (10) is grammatically intransitive, yet similar in meaning to (11), which is transitive:

(10) Девушка призналась в убийстве.
Devuška priznalas' v ubijstve.
[Girl-N confessed in murder-L.]
'The girl confessed to murder.'

(11) Девушка признала свою вину.
Devuška priznala svoju vinu.
[Girl-N admitted own guilt-A.]
'The girl admitted her guilt.'

Adding a dative or an instrumental noun phrase likewise does not reduce transitivity in and of itself, but these additions do create constructions that serve as transitions to impersonal constructions. First, let us consider the addition of a dative, as in (12):

- (12) Девушка сшила сестре юбку.
Devuška sšila sestre jubku.
[Girl-N sewed sister-D skirt-A.]
‘The girl sewed a skirt for her sister.’

This construction, containing N+V+A+D (word order is relatively free in Russian), is closely related (via deletion of constituents) to two important types of impersonal constructions, as we will see below.

Example (13) shows the construction that results when an instrumental participant is added:

- (13) Девушка резала рыбу ножом.
Devuška rezala rybu nožom.
[Girl-N cut fish-A knife-I.]
‘The girl cut the fish with a knife.’

This construction, containing N+V+A+I is also a close relative of some important impersonal constructions in Russian that lack the nominative and/or the accusative components.

2.1.2 Replacing constituents

Throughout this section comparisons will be made among similar constructions that differ primarily in their use of case marking. For a more detailed discussion of case meaning in Russian and its influence on constructions, we refer to Janda & Clancy (2002).

Changing the accusative object to a genitive object does not compromise the personal transitive construction, as we see in (14).

- (14) Девушка избегала всяких интервью.
Devuška izbegala vsjakix interv’ju.
[Girl-N avoided all interviews-G.]
‘The girl avoided all interviews.’

There is a group of Russian verbs that can use either the genitive or the accusative in this construction, such as *bojat’sja* (‘be afraid of’) and *iskat’* (‘look for’) (Janda & Clancy 2002:118, 123-4). These verbs clearly demonstrate the close relationship between the N+V+G and N+V+A constructions, as we see in (15a) and (15b):

- (15a) Девушка боялась смерти.
Devuška bojalas’ smerti.
[Girl-N feared death-G.]

(15b) Девушка боялась смерть.
Devuška bojalas’ smert’.

[Girl-N feared death-A.]
 ‘The girl was afraid of death.’

The accusative object can be replaced by a dative object, as we see in (16). The N+V+D construction is arguably transitive, as we see in (16), though it emphasizes the ability of the dative object to react, rather than treating it just as a patient, which is typical for the accusative. The N+V+D construction, along with the N+V+A+D construction in (12), is a near relative of certain impersonal constructions.

- (16) Девушка заплатила адвокату.
 Devuška zaplatila advokatu.
 [Girl-N paid lawyer-D]
 ‘The girl paid the lawyer.’

There are a number of semantically similar verbs that differ in whether their objects are dative or accusative (Janda & Clancy 2002:101-4). Thus, both *soputstvovat’* and *sopровождать* mean ‘accompany’, but the first has a dative object and the second has an accusative object, as in (17a) and (17b). These two semantically similar verbs, which differ only in their case government, make it possible to assert a strong connection between the N+V+A and N+V+D constructions.

- (17a) Успех сопутствовал девушке всюду.
 Uspex soputstvoval devuške vsjudu.
 [Success-N accompanied girl-D everywhere.]
 (17b) Успех сопровождал девушку всюду.
 Uspex soprovoždal devušku vsjudu.
 [Success-N accompanied girl-A everywhere.]
 ‘Success accompanied the girl everywhere.’

Finally, it is also possible to replace the accusative object with an instrumental object. The transitivity of the resulting N+V+I construction varies, from very intransitive, as in (18), through mildly transitive, as in (19), to strongly transitive, as in (20):

- (18) Девушка улетит следующим рейсом.
 Devuška uletit sledujuščim rejsom.
 [Girl-N flies away next flight-I.]
 ‘The girl leaves on the next flight.’
 (19) Девушка махала рукой.
 Devuška maxala rukoj.
 [Girl-N waved hand-I.]
 ‘The girl waved her hand.’
 (20) Девушка командовала солдатами.
 Devuška komandovala soldatami
 [Girl-N commanded soldiers-I.]
 ‘The girl commanded the soldiers.’

As we have seen in comparing N+V+A (1) with N+V+G (14) and N+V+D (16) constructions, there are numerous examples of verbs in the N+V+I construction that are near equivalents to verbs in the N+V+A construction, creating a smooth transition (Janda & Clancy 2002:30-33). The verb *komandovat* ('command'), for example, is semantically related to the verb *vesti* ('lead'), which can use the N+V+A construction, as in (21). The difference is that the N+V+I construction de-emphasizes the impact of the N+V on the object, which, when it appears in the instrumental case, serves merely as a conduit for the action.

- (21) Девушка вела солдат (в бой).
Devuška vela soldat (v boj).
[Girl-N led soldiers-A (into battle-A).]
'The girl led the soldiers (into battle).'

The discussion thus far has centered on the canonical N+V+A transitive construction and constructions related to it via the addition or replacement of constituents, yet staying within the realm of personal constructions. The next section will examine the ways in which these personal constructions are related to impersonal constructions where there is no nominative subject that could be assigned agency.

2.2 Impersonal constructions

The term "impersonal construction" typically refers to any construction in which the nominative slot is not filled up by a noun. According to Švedova and Lopatina (1990: 283-284, §285) "every verb without an acting person or thing [canonically in the nominative – DD and LAJ] can be considered impersonal" and all "3rd (neuter) singular verb forms and infinitives are impersonal forms".

The typical interpretation for impersonal constructions capitalizes on the absence of a grammatical subject encoding the obvious human instigator, and posits "the unknown" (Wierzbicka 1988: 233) that imposes things upon the subject from outside (Israeli 1997: 21). Some things just are beyond our control: every now and then, we find ourselves governed by uncontrollable passions, and confronted with the limits of knowledge and reason we are forced to acknowledge the existence of fate or destiny. In what follows we will see how Russian grammar deals with this insight.

Despite the fact that most of the transitions between the personal and impersonal constructions consist of discrete differences, it is the web of relationships between those constructions that supports the meaning of the individual constructions: discrete variety in the composition of constructions is part of an overall syntactic continuum that encompasses both personal and impersonal constructions. Impersonal constructions themselves show a range of expression: from very mild, where a personal subject is assumed but not specified; through constructions where a subject-like, agentive entity is present, but is assigned reduced agency; to constructions where no subject or agent can be present.

Starting from the N+V+A construction, the simplest transition to an impersonal construction uses a 3pl verb without specifying a subject, as in (22), which could be described as (N)+V+A. Thus, the verb is personal and agrees with a plural subject that is

missing, but could be reconstructed as something with general reference, such as *oni* ('they') or *ljudi* ('people'):

- (22) На юге Москвы искали бомбу.
 Na juge Moskvvy iskali bombu.
 [On south-L Moscow-G searched bomb-A.]
 'In south Moscow they were searching for a bomb.'

This impersonal construction can also be intransitive, as in (23), which has a (N)+V structure:

- (23) Вчера танцевали на столе.
 Včera tancevali na stole.
 [Yesterday danced on table-L.]
 'Yesterday people were dancing on the table.'

Examples (22) and (23) are "mildly" impersonal since they assume the existence of a subject, which is merely left unspecified.

Next in our survey comes a series of impersonal constructions that lack a nominative subject but do have a dative constituent. The dative case emphasizes the idea that the event is something that the dative entity cannot fully control. The dative entity experiences the event as something imposed from the outside, rather than as something that the entity is doing or chooses to do (cf. Dąbrowska 1994 for a similar interpretation of the factors motivating the nominative vs. dative choice in Polish). The meaning of such impersonal constructions without a nominative but with a dative entity is closely related to the meaning of corresponding personal constructions where an entity, similar to the entity encoded by the dative in the impersonal construction, appears in the nominative case. The verb forms present in these dative impersonal constructions include bare infinitives, 3sg neuter forms, and reflexive forms (also 3sg neuter). Section 2.2 below will discuss the use of the infinitive in such constructions in detail. The dative impersonal constructions have the structure D+V+A (24) or D+V (26) or (28), and are thus related via substitution to N+V+A (25) and N+A (27) or (29), and due to the relatively free word order of Russian, also to N+V+D+A (12) and N+V+D (16). A classic example of D+V+A is given in (24):

- (24) Что нам делать?
 Čto nam delat'?'
 [What-A us-D do?]
 'What are we to do?'

Here, the dative entity is presumed to be the subject of a further action, and thus serves as a potential subject. The overall syntactic system suggests a comparison between this and the nearest N+V+A personal equivalent:

- (25) Что мы делаем?
 Čto my delaem?
 [What-A we-N do]
 'What are we doing?'

D+V constructions are commonly used to express how people experience external forces, including passage of time (age) and temperature (Janda & Clancy 2002:91-101), as illustrated in:

- (26) Девушке было трудно/16 лет/холодно.
Devuške bylo trudno/16 let/xolodno.
[Girl-D was difficult/16 years-G/cold.]
‘The girl was having a hard time/16 years old/cold.’

Although these impersonals are not directly comparable to personal expressions, there are near-equivalents, such as:

- (27) Девушка жила трудно/прожила 16 лет/мерзла.
Devuška žila trudno/prožila 16 let/merzla.
[Girl-N lived difficult/lived 16 years-G/was freezing.]
‘The girl lived a hard life/lived 16 years/was cold.’

More obvious transitions are possible with the use of the dative reflexive impersonal construction, as we see when comparing the impersonal in (28) with the personal in (29):

- (28) Девушке не спится.
Devuške ne spitsja.
[Girl-D not sleeps-REFL.]
‘The girl can’t sleep.’
- (29) Девушка не спит.
Devuška ne spit.
[Girl-N not sleep.]
‘The girl is not sleeping.’

Again, the syntactic system suggests this comparison, in which the dative entity in (28) serves as a nominative subject in (29). The difference between the two constructions relates to the amount of control or agency attributed to the girl, and that control is reduced in the dative impersonal construction.

A variant of the dative impersonal construction contains both a 3sg finite verb and an infinitive in the predicate. There is a noun phrase in the dative that serves as the experiencer of the finite verb, but as the subject of the infinitive verb, as is illustrated in (30):

- (30) Девушке надоело шить.
Devuške nadoelo šit’.
[Girl-D bored sew.]
‘The girl got sick of sewing.’

Here the girl is both the experiencer of getting bored, expressed with a 3sg neuter finite verb, and the subject of sewing, expressed with an infinitive. This construction will be the focus of Section 2.2.

The strongest type of impersonal construction contains a verb and either an accusative entity or an instrumental entity, or both: V+A, V+A+I, V+I. These three constructions are related to corresponding constructions beginning with N+. They differ from constructions with the dative in that there is no presumed subject or subject-equivalent. Impersonal constructions with the accusative and/or instrumental are typically used to describe forces of nature beyond human control, often resulting in difficulties and tragedies, as the V+A in (31) does:

- (31) Человека убило.
 Čeloveka ubilo.
 [Person-A killed.]
 ‘A person was killed.’

This V+A construction can be enlarged by adding a means as an instrumental entity, as in:

- (32) Человека убило током.
 Čeloveka ubilo tokom.
 [Person-A killed electrical shock-I.]
 ‘A person was killed by an electrical shock.’

Despite the fact that the instrumental case can be used to mark the agent of a passive event, an agent interpretation is not available in this V+A+I construction. It is not possible to insert an agent into the instrumental slot here, so example (33) is ungrammatical (cf. also Smith 1994):

- (33) *Человека убило солдатом.
 * Čeloveka ubilo soldatom.
 [Person-A killed soldier-I.]
 *‘A person was killed by a soldier.’

In the V+I impersonal construction also the instrumental entity is a means for the action of the verb, not the agent, as in (34):

- (34) В комнате пахнет горячим шоколадом.
 V komnate paхnet gorjačim šokoladom.
 [In room-L smells hot chocolate-I.]
 ‘There is a smell of hot chocolate in the room.’

To summarize, impersonal constructions are related to personal constructions via both discrete transitions (involving adjustments in constituents) and smooth transitions (involving semantically similar constructions). Together, both types of constructions support each other’s meanings in a web of related construction types, by encouraging comparisons and contrasts.

There are three groups of impersonal constructions, which vary in how strongly they express impersonality. The first type has a verb that agrees with a 3pl missing subject, and is thus mildly impersonal. The second type comes with a 3sg verb form, yet lacks a nominative subject; instead, it contains a dative entity. This type of construction expresses medium-level impersonality. The third type also has the 3sg verb form in the absence of a nominative subject, but instead of a dative has an accusative patient, an instrumental means or both. Neither the accusative nor the instrumental can be interpreted as agent, nor can a true agent be inserted into those slots. This type of construction gives the strongest expression of impersonality. The remainder of this article will focus on medium-level and strong impersonals, where the expression of agency is attenuated by the use of the dative.

2.2 Impersonal constructions with Infinitive

In this section we will first present a brief overview of medium level impersonals that are impersonal according to morphological, syntactic and semantic criteria (cf. Siewierska ms.). Then, we will go on to explain the importance of the relations between the elements that make up the construction in construing meaning and rendering meaning differences.

2.2.1 Some examples

The constructions that will be in focus in the remainder of this article contain a finite verb that lacks a full morphological paradigm and occurs only in the 3rd person singular (neuter) form, yet combines with an infinitive. In addition, these defective finite verbs do not open up a nominative slot, and as a consequence, the constructions in which they occur lack a grammatical subject position. Yet, the defective finite verbs allow or even require a dative (or, less frequently, an accusative) to be present. Here are some examples: (35) illustrates an impersonal construction with an accusative-taking defective finite verb and an infinitive to which no nominative slot can be added, whereas (36) contains examples of impersonal constructions with an accusative-taking defective finite verb and an infinitive in which the nominative is not expressed (36a), or refers to something evil that should not be named, yet could be expressed by means of 'what' (see 36b and c). Example (37) is an impersonal construction with dative-taking defective finite verb and infinitive; (38) likewise presents an impersonal construction with dative-taking defective finite verb, yet the infinitive takes on a different role, and this has implications for the function the dative entity fulfills, as we will argue further on.

- (35) Если вы мечтаете о постоянной и интересной работе, если вы любите общаться с людьми, если **вас привлекает работать** с нежными ароматами, если вы хотите раскрыть свой внутренний потенциал, то мы рады вам предложить [...] [www.rochalure.idknet.com/inform.html, last accessed on 09.02.2007]
- Esli vy mečtaete o postojannoj i interesnoj rabote, esli vy ljubite obščat'sja s ljud'mi, esli **vas privlekaet rabotat'** s nežnymi aromatami, esli vy xotite raskryt' svoj vnutrennyj potencial, to my rady vam predložit' [...]
- [If you are dreaming about a permanent and interesting job, if you like to interact with people, if it attracts-IND PRES 3SG you-A to work-INF with delicate fragrances, if (...)]

‘If you are dreaming about a permanent and interesting job, if you like to interact with people, if you are attracted to working with delicate fragrances, if you want to develop your inner potential, then would like to offer you [...]

- (36a) Вид там красивый, — подавленно ответил друг Марата Павел на мой вопрос, **какого черта их дернуло пройти** по пешеходной тропинке под кремлевской стеной. [Рустам Вафин. Просто не стало человека // «Вечерняя Казань», 2003.01.09]

Vid tam krasivyj, -- podavlenno otvetil drug Marata Pavel na moj vopros, **kakogo čerta ix dernulo projtis’** po pešexodnoj tropinke pod kremlevskoj stenoj. [Rustam Vafin. Prosto ne stalo čeloveka // “Večernjaja Kazan’”]

[The view is beautiful there, - answered Marat’s friend Pavel to my question which devil-G possessed-IND PAST 3NSG them-A to take a stroll-INF along the footpath by the Kreml wall.]

‘The view is beautiful there, -- Marat’s friend Pavel responded in a depressed tone to my question about why the heck they took a footpath along the Kremlin wall.’

- (36b) **Что ее дернуло** ему **рассказать**, сразу не сообразишь. [Галина Щербакова. Митина любовь (1996)]

Čto ee dernulo emu **rasskazat’**, srazu ne soobraziš’. [Galina Ščerbakova. Mitina ljubov’ (1996)]

[What possessed-IND PAST 3NSG her-A to tell-INF him-D, immediately not imagine.]

‘It’s hard to imagine what possessed her to tell him.’

- (36c) И **что меня дернуло** **ввязаться** в эту идиотскую беседу?! [Борис Левин. Инородное тело (1965–1994)]

I **čto menja dernulo vvezjat’sja** v ètu idiotskuju besedu?! [Boris Levin. Inorodnoe telo (1965-1994)]

[And what me-A possessed-IND PAST 3NSG to get involved-INF in that idiotic conversation?!]

‘And what possessed me to get involved in that idiotic conversation?!’

- (37) Зачем российской телекомпании, а также американскому и туркменскому **президентам понадобилось** так экзотично **тратить** сотни тысяч долларов, неизвестно. [Борис Устюгов. Карусель в прошлое. Центральный парк культуры и отдыха никогда не станет Диснейлендом // «Известия», 2002.05.26]

Začem rossijskoj telekompanii, a takže amerikanskomu i turkmenskomu prezidentam ponadobilos’ tak èkzotično tratit’ sotni tysjač dollarov, neizvestno. [Boris Ustjugov. Karusel’ v prošloe. Central’nyj park kul’tury i otdyxa nikogda ne stanet Disnejlendom // “Izvestija”, 2002.05.26]

[Why Russian broadcasting company-D, and also American and Turkmen presidents-D became necessary-IND PAST 3NSG so exotically to waste-INF hundreds thousands dollars.]

‘It is unclear why the Russian broadcasting company and the American and Turkmen presidents had to waste hundreds of thousands of dollars in such an exotic fashion.’

- (38) Кроме того, **России надлежит** быстро **наращивать** объем пенсионных накоплений, инвестируемых в приносящие доход активы. [Константин Фрумкин. ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОЕ ЧУДО ОТМЕНЯЕТСЯ // «Независимая газета», 2003.04.01]
 Krome toho, Rossii nadležit bystro naraščivat’ ob’em pensionnyx nakoplenij, investiruemyx v prinosjaščie doxod aktivy. [Konstantin Frumkin. Ėkonomičeskoe čudo otmenjaetsja // “Nezavisimaja gazeta”, 2003.04.01]
 [Beside that, Russia-D is required-IND fast PRES 3SG to increase-INF amount retirement savings invested in income bringing stocks]
 ‘In addition, Russia needs to quickly increase the amount of pension savings invested in income-bearing stocks.’

In the literature, there is sharp disagreement about the structure of the type of construction exemplified in (35) through (38), and in particular on the distinction between (37) and (38), and the function of the components. The disparity of views concerns the structure of the construction as a whole (is it monopartite or bipartite?), the status of the infinitive (does it function as a grammatical subject or not?) and the function of the (accusative or) dative (are they the semantic subject or not?). We will take each of those issues up in turn.

2.2.2 Disparity of views

The disparity of views concerns the status of the construction as a whole and stems from the fact that, within the Russian tradition, sentence structure is typically described in terms of subject-predicate relations. The grammatical or syntactic subject of a sentence, *podležaščee*, has traditionally been described as the main member of a *dvusostavnoe predloženie* (‘two-component sentence’), that dominates the predicate. It is marked nominative and controls the subject-verb agreement in the predicate. It can appear in any position, since word order in Russian is “free” with respect to the grammatical relations, which are determined by case marking.

Although there is consensus on the “impersonality” of sentences like those presented in 2.2.1, some researchers consider these constructions to be *odnosostavnye predloženiya* (‘one-component sentences’) while others analyze them as *dvusostavnye predloženiya* (‘two-component sentences’) (for a brief overview see Bricyn 1990: 73-76). Adherents of the first view (Bogorodickij 1935: 219, RG 1960 §1004, Butler 1967 42, Kubik 1968: 100, Valgina 1978: 173-180, Lekant 1969a: 215, 1969b: 36 and Greenberg 1985: 227) exclude the infinitive from the grammatical subject function since the infinitive lacks a relation with the finite verb; in their view, the infinitive does not initiate morphological subject-verb agreement, hence it cannot dominate the predicate. Apart from the infinitive, there is no element that could qualify as grammatical subject, thus the construction is considered monopartite. Other researchers claim a two-component structure for impersonal constructions, yet this does not imply that they agree on assigning the infinitive the function of grammatical subject. Some researchers (Šachmatov 1941: 145-147, RG 1970: 563-564, Zolotova 1974: 46, Belošapkova 1978: 58, Šmeleva 1978: 358-

360, RG 1980: 269-273) classify the constructions as *glagol'nye nepodležaščno-skazuemostnye predloženiya* ('verbal non-grammatical subject-predicate sentences')²; they claim that the infinitive cannot be the subject of a sentence, a function they reserve for nouns and pronouns. This viewpoint was endorsed by the RG 1980 (2301-2310) and the KG 1990 (§457-458). Other scholars (Greč 1840, Protogenova 1955, Metlina 1960: 130, RG 1960 §447, §670, RG 1970: 558, Ermakova 1974: 231-234, Kokorina 1979: 40, Barsov [1981]: 198-200, Guiraud-Weber 1984: 23-31) contend that infinitives can actually be the syntactic subjects of (certain) finite verbs³: an infinitive can be a substitute for a typical noun or pronoun, yet, it can never express exactly the same meaning because its form differs. Therefore, some researchers (Šachmatov 1941: 134, Peškovskij 1956: 203, Bricyn 1990: 79) suggest a position between grammatical subject and non-grammatical subject: they think the infinitive should be seen as a *zamestitel' podležaščego* ('substitute for the grammatical subject') or it should be assigned a *psevdopodležaščnaja funkcija* ('the function of a pseudo-grammatical subject').

Inextricably linked to the problem of the role of the infinitive is the question of the function of the accusative and dative in the constructions studied. Especially the dative has often been the object of discussion, in which the ever-present problem of terminology *podležaščee* vs. *sub'jekt* added to the disparity of views. The dative has a long history in Russian linguistics and has been labeled non-nominative subject (Preslar 1994) or oblique subject (Istrina 1946), subject of the action/state (Timofeev, 1950), logical subject (Lekant, 1969b), potential subject (Bachman 1980) or "functionally equivalent to a nominative on a different (i.e. semantic) level of representation" (Šachmatov 1941 sec. 6). These stances touch directly upon the core of the problem: the concept 'semantic subject' has been overused to cover insufficiently differentiated contents (cf. Zaiceva 1990). A syntactic treatment of datives as (syntactic) subjects seems to have been ruled out by the absence of the main characteristic of grammatical subjects, i.e. initiation of subject-verb agreement⁴.

A Radical Construction and Cognitive Grammar approach to these mildly impersonal constructions highlights the importance of the relations between the elements that make up the construction in construing meaning and rendering differences in meaning. Studying the relations between the elements that make up the constructions in which the dative and infinitive are used will yield a more precise understanding of the function and meaning of the dative and infinitive. We will argue that looking at impersonal constructions from the point of view of the finite verb and its argument structure makes it possible to present an analysis that reconciles the many different insights that have been put forward in the literature (for an overview see Guiraud-Weber (1984) or Bricyn (1990)). Our construction-based proposal starts from a bipartite sentence structure in which the infinitive can - under certain circumstances - be the subject of the construction and the dative can - under certain circumstances - take on a subject-like, agentive, function. Before proceeding

² For an exhaustive treatment of the classification schemes, used in the RG, see RG 1980 pg. 92-98

³ The word order school orientation of RG 1960 and 1970 accepted infinitives as grammatical subjects if they occupied the first sentence position. Ermakova (1974) intuitively extracts about 30 verbs that can have infinitives as grammatical subjects, without this affecting the meaning of the finite verb. Butler (1967) points out that it is sometimes the infinitive that carries the main semantic load, which goes together with a weakening of the meaning of the finite verb.

⁴ Bachman (1980) and Komar (1999) demonstrate the subject potential of datives in a formal approach to reflexive and infinitive constructions respectively. Guiraud-Weber (1984) covers the whole range of non-nominative subjects.

to the analysis, let us briefly outline how case relates to the expression of agentivity in Russian.

3. Cases in constructions

Russian and its relatives within the Slavic language family have a system of six grammatical cases used to indicate the role of a noun phrase in a clause: nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, locative, and instrumental.⁵ All six cases can be used to express an entity that arguably plays an agentive role and can otherwise be expressed as a grammatical subject, typically coded nominative, either in Russian or in another Slavic language. The use of case plays an essential role in portraying the agentivity of a noun phrase, and is far more nuanced than a distinction between nominative and all other cases. The semantics of case (Janda & Clancy 2002) suggests the following scale of agentivity:

Nominative > Dative > Instrumental > Accusative > Genitive > Locative

The designations in this hierarchy correspond to Langacker's (1991: 236-241) "role archetypes" and their agentivity. Nominative is the case Russian uses to express the "agent" role archetype. In Russian, dative can express an "experiencer" of a mental process. Instrumental can mark agents, but only in passive constructions. Accusative marks the equivalent of Langacker's "patient" (or "absolute patient"), most often the direct object. Langacker excludes the genitive and locative cases from the discussion of role archetypes since they are not directly related to the syntax of verbs in many languages, though in Russian they can be triggered by verbs (cf. Janda & Clancy 2002).

The nominative is the prototypical means for expressing an agent, as in the N+V+A construction:

- (39) Девушка сшила юбку.
Devuška sšila jubku.
[Girl-N sewed skirt-A.]
'The girl sewed a skirt.'

With the nominative, agentivity is expressed most fully and unequivocally. As argued above, the dative case is often defined as the case of the "potential subject" (Bachman 1980, Smith 1993). The dative typically presumes that the entity it marks is capable of experiencing the event and/or serving as the subject of a further event (cf. Dąbrowska 1994 for Polish). Note that (40) is grammatical, but (41) is problematical:

- (40) Девушка сшила сестре юбку.
Devuška sšila sestre jubku.
[Girl-N sewed sister-D skirt-A.]
'The girl sewed her sister a skirt.'

⁵ Macedonian and Bulgarian differ from the remaining Slavic languages because they do not express case on nouns and adjectives, but even they do express case in pronouns. Polish, Czech, Sorbian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, and Serbo-Croatian all have a seventh case, the vocative, but this case serves a pragmatic rather than a grammatical purpose and does not participate in the expression of agentivity.

- (41) *Девушка сшила комнате занавеску.
 *Devuška sšila komnate zavesku.
 [Girl-N sewed room-D curtain-A.]
 *‘The girl sewed the room a curtain.’

The difference between the two examples is that the dative entity in (40) is a human being who can appreciate and use the gift (cf. Janda & Clancy 2002:83-91). The dative entity in (41) will get a similar benefit from the gift, but will not actively appreciate or use it, so the use of the dative is infelicitous. In impersonal constructions, the dative marks an entity that can serve as the subject in closely related constructions. The potential subjecthood of the dative case brings that case closest to the actual subjecthood of the nominative.

Next on our scale is the instrumental, which cannot express an agent or potential subject in impersonal constructions, but can express an agent in passive constructions, such as (42). Thus, the agency of the instrumental is lower than that of the dative, but still fairly strong.

- (42) Юбка была сшита девушкой.
 Jubka byla sšita devuškoj.
 [Skirt-N was sewn girl-I.]
 ‘The skirt was sewn by a girl.’

The accusative ranks below the instrumental, since it cannot express either a potential or a passive agent, but it is used in Russian in constructions that involve entities that are interpreted as logical subjects in other languages, as in

- (43) Меня тошнит.
 Menja tošnit.
 [Me-A nauseates.]
 ‘I feel sick.’

The expression of agency with the genitive case is facilitated by the use of that case to mark possessors as in (44). Because Russian is a BE language, possessors appear in the genitive case in this construction, which is equivalent to the use of a verb meaning ‘have’ with a nominative possessor in a HAVE language.

- (44) У девушки есть юбка.
 U devuški est’ jubka.
 [By girl-G is skirt-N.]
 ‘The girl has a skirt.’

The locative is at the bottom of the scale, lacking uses that express agentivity, even in a sentence like (45), where the locative merely gives us the location, although there is no agentive subject:

- (45) В квартире было холодно.
 V kvartire bylo xolodno.

[In apartment-L was cold.]
'It was cold in the apartment.'

On the basis of these findings, we propose a scale of deactivization or de-agentivization that leads from the typically nominative agent, through a dative experiencer to passive agents or means, patients and other less agentive expressions. In the prototypical personal construction with a true agent there is a finite verb that is the construction kernel and an animate nominative subject that is the agent. In what follows we will argue that, in some constructions with finite verbs and infinitives, the subject of the infinitive event appears in the dative case because the finite verb is morphologically defective and does not open up a nominative slot. As a consequence, the subject of the infinitive event combines nominative and dative semantics and functions as an “agentive experiencer”.

4. Ways to attenuate agentivity

In this section we will look into two non-prototypical types of agents. On the one hand, there are constructions in which the prototypical agent slot, i.e. the nominative case-slot, is filled up with entities that are not prototypically thought of as agents, e.g. infinitives. On the other hand, there are constructions that lack a nominative slot, yet contain elements that qualify as agents; these agents cannot occupy the absent prototypical agent slot, however, and we will argue that they are consequently assigned to the dative slot.

4.1 Non-nominal entities occupying the nominative slot

In assigning subject status to an entity we follow Brown (1987: 166). Subjects are

“those noun phrases with which the verb agrees in person and number (in gender too, for some verb forms). Then we observe that an infinitive construction or a subordinate clause can play the same role as a noun phrase and is mutually exclusive with it; therefore we extend the term “subject” to these infinitive constructions or clauses, and mention in our description the special verb-agreement which they are associated with (3rd singular neuter)”.

Take, for example, the verbs *privlekat* ‘(attract)’ and *nadoest* ‘(bore)’. In Russian, *nadoest* ‘(bore)’ can take as subject a noun (46a), sometimes also a *that*-clause (46b) and even an infinitive (46c). The noun, *that*-clause and infinitive are mutually exclusive as subjects, i.e. they cannot simultaneously occupy the same nominative slot.

- (46a) Вы мотивировали свой уход тем, что **госслужба надоела**. [Светлана Офитова. ГЛАВНАЯ ЗАДАЧА — ОСЛАБЛЕНИЕ ГОСУДАРСТВА // «Независимая газета», 2003.04.09]
Vy motivovali svoj uxod tem, čto **gosslužba nadoela**. [Svetlana Ofitova. GLAVNAJA ZADAČA – OSLABLENIE GOSUDARTSVA // “Nezavisimaja gazeta”, 2003. 04.09]
[You motivated your leaving that, that civil service-N had become boring-IND PAST 3FSG.]

‘You motivated your leaving by (saying) that civil service had become boring.’

- (46b) Генералу надоело, что газеты пишут про него всякие домыслы. [Петр Акопов. Аушев дал клятву не быть президентом // «Известия», 2002.01.24]
 Generalu **nadoelo, čto gazety pišut** pro nego vsjakie domysly. [Petr Akopov. Aušev dal kljativu ne byt’ prezidentom// “Izvestija”, 2002.01.24]
 [It got the general-D on the nerves- IND PAST 3NSG that the papers wrote all kinds of conjectures about him.]
 ‘It annoyed the general that the papers were writing all kinds of conjectures about him.’
- (46c) **Надоело тратить** время и силы, чтобы доказывать очевидные, как представляется, вещи. [Второй съезд // «Спецназ России», 2003.05.15]
 Nadoelo tratit’ vremja i sily, čtoby dokazyvat’ očevidnye, kak predstavljajetsja, veščī. [Vtoroj s’jezd // “Specnaz Rossii”, 2003.05.15]
 [It gets on one’s nerves to waste-INF time and energy to prove the evident.]
 ‘Wasting time and energy to prove obvious things has gotten annoying.’

We find a similar pattern with *privlekat’* (‘attract’) that takes a pronoun in (47a) and an infinitive in (47b). Here too, the noun, *that*-clause and infinitive or the noun and infinitive are mutually exclusive as subjects.

- (47a) Журналисты могут и должны писать **обо всем, что их** интересует, **привлекает**, заботит. [Владимир Шахиджанян. 1001 вопрос про ЭТО (1999)]
 Žurnalisty mogut i dolžny pisat’ obo vsem, čto ix interesuet, privlekaet, zabotit. [Vladimir Šaxidžanjan. 1001 vopros pro ÈTO (1999)]
 [Journalists may and must write about everything that-N interests them, attracts-IND PRES 3SG or worries them-A.]
 ‘Journalists may and must write about everything that interests, attracts or worries them.’
- (47b) Их привлекает работать под началом талантливого маэстро Эдуарда Амбарцумяна, ученика В.Гергиева. [www.aki-ros.ru/default.asp?Edit=1&P=585&AOR=1&Part=4&Region=1&NID=10439&View=1]
 Ix privlekaet rabotat’ pod načalom talantlivogo maèstro Èduarda Ambarcumjana, učenika V. Gergieva.
 [It attracts-IND PRES 3SG them-A’ to work-INF under the mentorship of the talented maestro Eduard Ambarcumjan.]
 ‘Working under the mentorship of the talented maestro Eduard Ambarcumjan is attractive to them.’

The roles of an infinitive vs. noun phrase can be compared by looking at what kinds of questions may be asked using pro-forms such as *čto* ('what')⁶. Consider the following sentences:

- (48) Он планирует поехать в Москву.
On planiruet poexat' v Moskvu.
[He is planning-IND PRES 3SG to travel-INF to Moscow-A]
'He is planning to travel to Moscow.'
- (49) Он планирует поездку в Москву.
On planiruet poezdku v Moskvu.
[He is planning-IND PRES 3SG a trip-A f sg to Moscow-A]
'He is planning a trip to Moscow.'

Support for considering both the infinitive in (48) and the noun in (49) as direct objects of *planirovat'* ('plan') can be found at a more abstract level. Example (50) reveals that, in Russian, both a thing and an atemporal relation (in the sense of Langacker 1987: 249) are possible answers to the question '*What is he planning?*'.

- (50) Что он планирует? Čto on planiruet? [What is he-N is planning-IND PRES 3SG?]
Поездку в Москву. Poezdku v Moskvu. [A trip-A to Moscow.] 'A trip to Moscow.'
Поехать в Москву. Poexat' v Moskvu. [To travel-INF to Moscow.] 'To travel to Moscow.'

Applying this procedure to the infinitives *tratit'* ('waste') in (46c) and *rabotat'* ('work') in (47b) reveals that they fit in the nominative slot occupied by *čto* ('what'), which initiates neuter singular agreement. At the level of event structure this relation between the infinitive event and the placeholder for things in general, *čto* ('what') can be interpreted in terms of reification: the infinitive event is reduced to, treated like any other "thing" that can be the subject of the finite verb event. An interpretation in terms of reification also respects the meaning of the neuter singular form and does not treat it as a default value.

In other words, a finite verb may function as a normal main verb and open up a subject slot into which the infinitive fits. This subject, being inanimate and non-nominal, is not a prototypical subject, yet it still initiates the finite verb event. The accusative slot in (35b) is occupied by a human being, the direct object that is affected by the finite verb event. Interestingly, all constructions that contain accusative slots follow this main-verb pattern. The situation is different with dative-taking finite verbs. The dative slot in (35c) is occupied by a person that fulfills its typical role of experiencer, but we will see in the next

⁶ Working with pro-forms instead of with fully lexicalized elements ensures that the mutual effect of lexical items in a construction is minimized as much as possible (cf. Smessaert et al. 2005): nouns can be replaced by the pro-noun *čto/ěto* ('what/that'), whereas verbs are replaced by the pro-verb *čto/ěto (s)delat'* ('do what/that'). As a result, the acceptability or unacceptability of a particular construction is very unlikely to be influenced by a particular compatibility or incompatibility of words that are not focused on. In order to check whether the impersonal verbs included in this survey (see Appendix) combine with both an infinitive and a pro-noun and to determine how infinitive and pro-noun relate to each other, grammaticality judgments were collected from 15 native speakers of Russian. For a more detailed discussion of the data collection and native speaker survey I refer to Divjak (2004: 19-33).

section that this need not be the case. So far, however, there are no syntactic and semantic aberrations, i.e. all argument structure slots that are typically opened up by the finite verb are present. Yet, the construction as a whole is not typical because the available argument structure slot is not filled in the prototypical way, i.e. with a human agent.

4.2. Absence of a nominative slot

In example (51) with *ponadobit'sja* ('be necessary'), the components of the construction are linked together in a different way.

- (51) Если Вы хотите ощутить себя полноправным партнером врача, Вам необходимо предпринять определенные шаги для установления отношений, основанных на взаимном уважении. Хорошо бы задуматься об этом до того, как **Вам** действительно **понадобится** **показаться** **врачу**.
[www.edem.ru/paper_new/paper.asp?ClassID=0&PaperID=157]
Esli Vy xotite oščutit' sebja polnopravnym partnerom vrača, Vam neobxodimo predprinjat' opredelennye šagi dlja ustanovlenija otnošenij, osnovannyx na vzaimnom uvaženii. Xorošo by zadumat'sja ob ètom do togo, kak Vam dejstvitel'no ponadobitsja pokazat'sja vraču.
[Good would to think about this before that, how you-D really need-IND PRES 3SG to go and show yourself-INF a doctor-D.]
'It would be good to think about this before you really need to go to the doctor.'

In example (51), the infinitive is not merely an argument of the finite verb: *be necessary* does not tolerate the infinitive event *go and see a doctor* in its subject slot, as *go and see a doctor* is not an acceptable answer to the question *what do you need*. Only the question *what do you need to do* elicits the answer *go and see a doctor*. In other words, the subject position is reserved for nouns or pronouns, as the possibility of having *medicine* as nominative subject in (52) shows.

- (52) Сегодня искали по всему городу и с трудом нашли редкое **лекарство** для Нины, но потом сказали, что оно не **понадобится**. [Василий Катанян. Лоскутное одеяло (1943–1999)]
Segodnja iskali po vsemu gorodu i s trudom našli redkoe lekarstvo dlja Niny, no potom skazali, čto ono ne ponadobitsja. [Vasilij Katanjan. Loskutnoe odejalo (1943–1999)]
[Today they searched throughout the whole town and with difficulty found rare medicine for Nina, but then said that it-N not be needed-IND FUT 3SG.]
'Today they searched throughout the whole town and with difficulty found that rare medicine for Nina, but then they said that it wouldn't be needed.'

These constructional differences between (51) with an infinitive and (52) with a noun point in the direction of polysemy: they instantiate two different senses of one polysemous verb and many dictionaries provide two entries for the verb *ponadobit'sja*, i.e. 'be necessary' or 'need' vs. 'need to' or 'have to'. The latter sense is morphologically defective in that it only exists in 3rd person sg.

A similar situation is found with verbs like *nadležit* ‘(be required)’ that do not open up a nominative argument slot at all and are morphologically truly defective finite verbs.

- (53) **Вам надлежит встретить** эту нужду, накормить этих голодных людей! [Антоний (Блум), митрополит Сурожский. Чудо пяти хлебов и двух рыбок (1980)]
 Вам *nadležit vstretit’ ètu nuždu, nakormit’ ètix golodnyx ljudej!* [Antonij (Blum), mitropolit Surožskij. Čudo pjati xlebov i dvux rybok. (1980)]
 [You-D are required-IND PRES 3SG to meet-INF that need, to feed these hungry people!]
 ‘You have to meet that need, feed these hungry people!’

Just like in (51), the infinitive *vstretit’* ‘(meet)’ in (53) does not fit in the nominative slot occupied by *čto* ‘(what)’ (neuter singular) or in a prepositional slot. At the level of event structure this can be interpreted in terms of absence of reification: the infinitive event cannot be reduced to, treated like any other “thing” that can be the subject of a finite verb event. Instead, the finite verb needs the infinitive in order to specify what action is required.

The question then arises: how does the infinitive relate to the other elements in the construction? A finite verb with a defective paradigm does not function as a normal construction kernel: the finite verb cannot pull the infinitive into its argument structure. The infinitive is thus stronger than usual in that it resists conceptual subordination, and the finite verb is weaker because it needs the infinitive to carry the semantic load of the construction. It is very rare for a verb to need another verb. There are 37 impersonal verbs in Russian that display this behavior. Although 37 may seem to be a reasonable number, in the overall perspective this type of verbs still forms a minority: of all Russian verbs (and there are at least 20,000 (Daum & Schenk 1992)) only 2% combine with an infinitive, and about one third of those or maximum 0.625% display this divergent, auxiliary-like behavior (Divjak 2004). In other words, the finite verbs in (51) and (53) are weaker than average: the finite verb event modifies infinite verb event and together finite verb and infinitive form a complex event.

How does this proposal fit in with the traditional grammar, where a distinction is made between main verbs and auxiliary verbs? The defective finite verbs treated here show distributional similarity to modal verbs, in the literature often defined as non-full verbs that merely modify the infinite verb or the proposition as a whole. And this distributional behavior is backed up by semantic coherence: within the group of all finite verbs that fit into this complex pattern, two major subgroups can be distinguished, i.e. a group of non-implicative verbs that expresses modal-like concepts, and a group of implicative verbs that stresses the result obtained. An overview of all these verbs is provided in the Appendix.

1. Modality verbs

- Volition: e.g. *xočetsja* ‘feel like’, *ne terpitsja* ‘not tolerate’, *xvatit* ‘be at one’s limit’ etc.
- Suitability: e.g. *(ne) goditsja* ‘(not) be convenient’, *nadležit* ‘be necessary’, *polagaetsja* ‘be required’, etc.
- Necessity: e.g. *trebuetsja* ‘be necessary’, *predstoit* ‘have to’, *ostalos’* ‘have to’, etc.

2. Result verbs

- Success only e.g. *udalos* 'managed to'
- Success + associated (mis)fortune, e.g. (+) *povezlo* 'was lucky to', *posčastlivilos* 'was lucky to', (-) *podfartilo* 'was lucky to', etc.
- Success + reason for acting (circumstances, chance, higher forces), e.g. *dovelos* 'managed to', *slučilos* 'happened to', *dostalos* 'managed to', etc.

Certain semantically similar groups of Middle English quasi-impersonal verbs have been analyzed in a similar way. Impersonal constructions were prominent in older stages of languages like English. It has been argued (for an overview see Allen 1997: 3) that "[t]he disappearance of the impersonal constructions with a preposed non-nominative Experiencer (...) was largely due to the decline of the case-marking system of English, which often made the preposed Experiencer ambiguous as to case marking and liable to reanalysis as the subject". Allen (1997) provides evidence, however, that some verbs, such as *bihoven*, began to be used impersonally in Early Middle English, i.e. by the time cases had disappeared. According to Allen, "this increase in the use of a non-nominative Experiencer was semantically motivated. It seems plausible that the reason why the verbs of emotions so frequently had non-nominative Experiencers was that this was a useful way of showing that the Experiencer was not in control of the situation, i.e. not agentive. The increase in non-nominative Experiencers in Early Middle English can be explained if we assume that at this time there was a tendency to extend non-nominative case to subjects which were not agents. Thus we get non-nominative subjects with modal verbs (...) which talk about necessity over which the human argument had no control."

If the finite verb and infinitive form a complex, co-referential, event, what does this imply for selection restrictions on elements from argument structure? A weak version of the hypothesis would predict that both verbs impose selection restrictions on the agentive experiencer; a strong version would imply that the infinitive alone imposes restrictions on the agentive experiencer. The events expressed by the infinitive following *nadležit* and *ponadobitsja* do select a nominative subject, as is illustrated in examples (54b) and (55b).

(54a) Хорошо бы задуматься об этом до того, как **вам** действительно **понадобится показаться врачу**.

Xorošo by zadumat'sja ob ètom do togo, kak vam dejstvitel'no ponadobitsja pokazat'sja vraču.

[Good would to think about this before that, how you-D really need-IND PRES 3SG to go and see-INF a doctor-D.]

'It would be good to think about this before you really need to go and see a doctor.'

(54b) Вы показались врачу.

Vy pokazalis' vraču.

[You-N went to see-IND PAST 2PL a doctor-D.]

'You went to see a doctor.'

(55a) Вам **надлежит встретить** эту **нужду**, накормить этих голодных людей!

Vam nadležit vstretit' ètu nuždu, nakormit' ètix golodnyx ljudej!

[http://dl.biblion.realin.ru/text/9_Biblioteka_Blagoveschenie/Knigi/antons9/H138-T.htm]

[You-D are required-IND PRES 3SG to meet-INF that need, to feed these hungry people!]

‘You are required to meet that need, to feed these hungry people!’

(55b) Вы встретили эту нужду и накормили этих голодных людей.

Vy vstretili ètu nuždu, nakormili ètix golodnyx ljudej.

[You-N met-IND PAST 2PL that need and fed-IND PAST 2PL those hungry people.]

‘You met that need and fed those hungry people.’

It thus seems to be the case that the morphologically defective finite verb that is modifying the infinitive blocks the agentive nominative subject that belongs to the infinitive event; that entity then re-appears as a dative. We argue that the dative in constructions like these function as the potential subject of the infinitive event. However, it has to be borne in mind that the nominative case typically encodes the initiator of the finite verb event whereas the dative case prototypically conveys the meaning of “experiencer” of that event. Thus, if we dress the initiator of the event up as an experiencer we get something like an “agentive experiencer” (cf. Pocheptsov 1997: 476 for this type of construction in Middle English). This view on the finite verb as modifier and the dative as agentive experiencer also bridges the gap between this type of impersonal constructions and impersonal constructions with dative and infinitive but without a finite verb, at least in the present tense, recall example (24). The dative in such constructions has typically been analyzed as a syntactic subject precisely because the infinitive action needs a subject to initiate it.

5. Conclusion

An investigation of the relations between the elements in a construction thus illustrates that “(...) while difference of form entails difference in categorization, identity of form does *not* entail identity of categorization” (Croft 2001: 76). Not all “impersonal” verbs are equal: there are finite verbs that function as the construction kernel and finite verbs that merely modify the infinitive. Likewise, not all infinitives are equal: some fulfill the syntactic subject or [prepositional] object requirements, others act as (part of the) construction kernel. And finally, not all datives are equal: some are classified as potential subject, others as indirect object.

Acknowledging the fact that different constructional patterns reveal different semantic structures, we submit that both the one-component approach and the two-component approach to impersonal constructions are justified. If the finite verb’s argument structure does open up a nominative slot, the infinitive can be used to fill up that slot and the dative functions as a typical experiencer. However, if the finite verb’s argument structure does not provide a nominative slot, the infinitive cannot possibly occupy that slot and, if the infinitive does not fulfill the subject or (prepositional) object function either, the infinitive must function as the construction kernel, together with the finite verb, which is reduced to a modifier (cf. Pocheptsov 1997: 476). It is under these circumstances that the dative fulfils a function similar to that of agent, i.e. an agentive experiencer, an agent who

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2
3 carries out the infinitive action, and experiences the finite verb action. In other words, our
4 approach reconciles the different views presented in the literature, and states precisely to
5 which category of finite verbs each of these views applies.
6

7 This analysis has made it possible to tease apart the differences between two
8 constructions that appear identical in structure, containing a noun phrase marked in the
9 dative case and a finite verb followed by an infinitive. A nuanced analysis can be achieved
10 when factors such as case semantics and relationships among constructions are taken into
11 account in assessing how agency is assigned (or avoided) in Russian impersonal
12 constructions.
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APPENDIX

I. The infinitive fits in the nominative slot opened up by the following verbs:

Obligatory accusative:

Влечёт Vlečet (it attracts), забавляет zabavljaet (it amuses), интересуется interesuet (it interests), манит manit (it attracts), (не) привлекает (ne) privlekaet (it (does not) attract(s)), пугает pugaet (it frightens, scares), смущает smuščaet (it confuses, disturbs), соблазняет soblaznjaet (it tempts, seduces), тянет tjanet (it draws, attracts), увлекает uvlekaet (it distracts, fascinates), (не) устраивает (ne) ustraivaet (it (does not) suit(s), is (not) convenient)

Optional dative:

Не (по)мешает ne (po)mešaet (it does not disturb, hinder; it would not be a bad thing to), надоело nadoelo (be tired of, bored with), наскучило naskučilo (bore), опротивело oprotivelo (it became repulsive), опостылело opostylelo (grow hateful, wearisome), осточертелo ostočertelo (be tired of, bored with)

Obligatory dative:

Грозит Grozit (be threatened with), идёт idet (it suits, fits), льстит l'stit (flatter), (не) нравится (ne) nraivitsja (it pleases/does not please), подходит/подойдёт podxodit/podojdet (it suits, fits), полюбится poljubitsja (become attractive), претит pretit (it sickens s.o.), пригодится prigoditsja (prove useful), причитаётся (be due from), (не) светит ((not) to please), (не) улыбается/улыбнется (ne) ulybaetsja/ulybnetsja (it pleases)

Also in this category are passives such as

Запрещается Zapreščaetsja (it is forbidden/prohibited), предполагается predpolagaetsja (it is intended/proposed), предписывается predpisyvaetsja (it is ordered/prescribed), разрешается razrešaetsja (it is allowed) etc.

II. The infinitive fits in the Prepositional slot opened up by the following verbs:

Obligatory accusative:

Дёргает/дёрнуло (на то, чтобы) Dergaet/dernulo (na to, čtoby) (be possessed/urged to), зудит (на то, чтобы/к тому, чтобы) zudit (na to, čtoby/k tomu, čtoby) (it itches s.o. to, I'm itching to), подмывает (на то, чтобы/к тому, чтобы) podmyvaet (na to, čtoby/k tomu, čtoby) (it drives, urges s.o. to), толкает (на то, чтобы) tolkaet (na to, čtoby) (it instigates, incites, puts up s.o. to), угрожает/угрозило (на то, чтобы) ugorazdit/ugorazdilo (na to, čtoby) (it possesses s.o. to)

III. The infinitive does not fit in any argument structure slot opened up by the following verbs:1. The finite verb is used in a morphologically defective sense

Optional dative:

(Не) годится (ne) goditsja (it does not do, one should not), остаётся/останется ostaetsja/ostanetsja (it remains, is left over), (не) повелось (ne) povelos' (it is (not) the custom/done), (не) подобает (ne) podobaet (it (does not) become(s), befit(s), is (not) appropriate), (не) полагается (ne) polagaetsja ((not) be supposed), приходится/придётся/пришлось (prixoditsja/pridetsja/prišlos' (happen to s.o., fall to the lot of), хватит xvatit (be sufficient, enough)

Obligatory dative:

Вздумалось Vzдумалos' (take it into one's head), досталось dostalos' (it came into, fall to one's lot), желается (разг) želaetsja (coll) (desire), надумалось nadumalos' (think up), понадобится ponadobitsja (it is necessary), предстоит predstoit (have, to be in for), приключается priključaetsja (it happened, occurred to s.o.), случается/случится/случилось slučaetsja/slučitsja/slučilos' (happen to s.o.), (не) требуется (ne) trebuetsja (is (not) needed, required), (не) (за-), (пере-) (раз-)

хочется/хотелось (ne) (za-), (pere-) (raz-) хоѹetsja/xotelos' ((not) want), удаѹтся/удастся/удалось
udaetsja/udastsja/udalos' (succeed)

2. The finite verb only exists as a morphologically defective verb

Optional dative:

Надлежит Nadležit (it is necessary, required), (не) пристало (ne) pristalo (it does (not) suit, befit
s.o.), следует sleduet (ought, should), стоит stoit (it is worthwhile)

Obligatory dative:

Вспадѹт/вспало vspadet/vspalo (it occurs to s.o.), выпадет/выпало vpadet/vypalo (it occurs to s.o.,
turns out, befall), (не) выходит/выйдѹт/вышло (ne) vuxodit/vyjdet/vyšlo (it (does not) turn(s) out),
доводится/доведѹтся/довелось dovoditsja/dovedetsja/dovelos' (it happens, to have the occasion,
manage), долженствует (устар) dolženstvuet (arch) (be obliged to), загорелось zagorelos' (have a
violent urge to), (не) по(д)везло/по(д)везѹт (ne) po(d)vezlo/po(d)vezet ((not) be lucky, have the
luck), подфартило podfartilo (have the luck to) посчастливилось posčastlivilos' (have the luck to),
привелось privelos' (it happened), приспееет/приспело prispeet/prispelo (it came, drew nigh,
became ripe), приспичит prispičit (be impatient to, to feel an urge to), не терпится ne terpitsja (be
impatient to)

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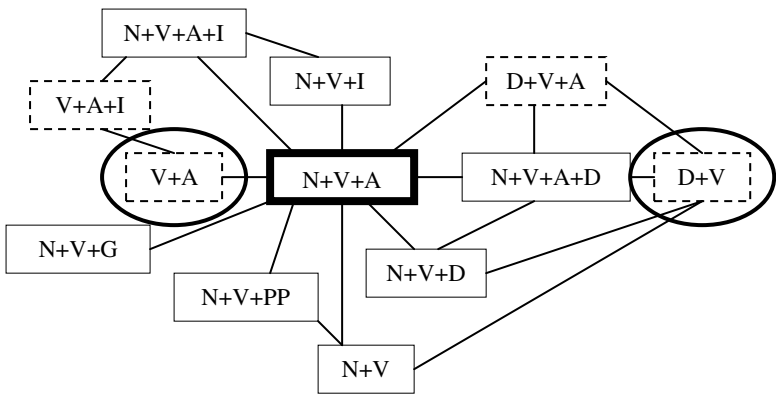


Diagram 1: Network of personal and impersonal constructions in Russian