

There is no neutral aspect



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WHAT IS NEUTRAL ASPECT ?

- ‘Neutral aspect’ is a term that was introduced by Carlota Smith (Smith 1994) to describe aspectual forms that appear to have semantic qualities of both the perfective and imperfective aspect.
- Can be morphologically realized as forms that have traditionally been labeled as ‘imperfective’ or ‘perfective’.
- Plays a crucial role in many analyses of aspect (see, e.g. Schilder 1995; 1997, Iatridou *et al.* 2001, Giorgi & Pianesi 2001, Pancheva 2003, Deo 2006: 104, Chi-Fung 2006: 24, Chen 2008, Boneh & Doron 2008, Dahl 2010: §1.2, Travis 2010); see Csirmaz 2004 for more discussion.



DAHL 2010

“...there is evidence that the neutral aspect can be shown to represent an aspectual type which behaves differently than the imperfective, the perfective and the anterior aspect” (*ibid*: 88).

- ▶ Cf. Three-way aspectual distinction in Comrie 1976



DAHL's (2010) SUMMARY

“Past neutral forms of telic verbs are compatible with both a progressive past and a completive-sequential reading.” (*ibid*: 88)

“...indicates that the neutral aspect is distinct from the perfective as well as from the imperfective aspect. Specifically, perfective forms of telic predicates are generally incompatible with progressive-processual interpretation, whereas corresponding imperfective forms tend to be incompatible with a completive-sequential reading...” (*ibid*: 88-89)



ASPECT IN RUSSIAN

- ▶ Traditional claim: 2-way distinction between **perfective and imperfective**
- ▶ Two types of imperfective: base form and derived with the suffix *-γva*
- ▶ Easy test: can the infinitival form combine with *budet* ('will')? If yes: imperfective; If no: perfective
- ▶ Dahl's reasoning leads us to the conclusion that Russian has a 2-way distinction between **perfective and neutral aspect**



NEUTRAL ASPECT IN RUSSIAN

Progressive interpretation with the ???-form.

- (1) *O, bud'te uvereny, čto Kolumb by-l sčastliv ne togda kogda otkry-l Ameriku, a kogda then when PFV.open-PST.3S America but when otrkr-yva-l ee.*
open-???-PST.3S it

‘Oh, rest assured that Columbus was happy not when he discovered America, but while he was discovering it’ (Dostoevskij, *Idiot*; quoted by Vinogradov 1972 and cited in Rassudova 1984, 15).



NEUTRAL ASPECT IN RUSSIAN

One infers that the described event was completed with both the perfective and the ???-form.

- (2) *Ja otrkry-l okno.*
I PFV.open-PST.1S window
'I (have) opened the window.'

- (3) *Ja otrkr-yva-l okno.*
I **open-???-PST.1S** window
'I (have) opened the window.'



NEUTRAL ASPECT IN RUSSIAN

- ▶ By Dahl's criteria, the Russian ???-form is a neutral aspect
- ▶ Other observations by Pancheva (2003) & Smith (1994) about neutral aspect also apply...



PANCHEVA's (2003) GENERALIZATION #1

With neutral aspect, ‘completion’ of the event is not entailed.

- (4) *Ja odnaždy čita-l Krepost'.*
I once **read.???-PST.3S** Fortress
‘I have read *The Fortress* once.’

“contingent on there not being a disclaimer of the finishing in an appended remark” (Leinonen 1982)

- (5) *Xotja ja ne do-čita-l do konca.*
Even.though I he PFV-read-PST.3S until end
‘Even though I did not finish it.’



PANCHEVA's (2003) GENERALIZATION #2

Neutral aspect is compatible with ‘for’ adverbials

- (6) *Ja odnaždy čita-l Krepost' desjat' minut.*
I once read.???-PST.3S Fortress ten minutes
'I have once read *The Fortress* for ten minutes.'



SMITH'S (1994) GENERALIZATION

Neutral aspect of achievement VPs does not lead to coercion, i.e. into durative VPs.

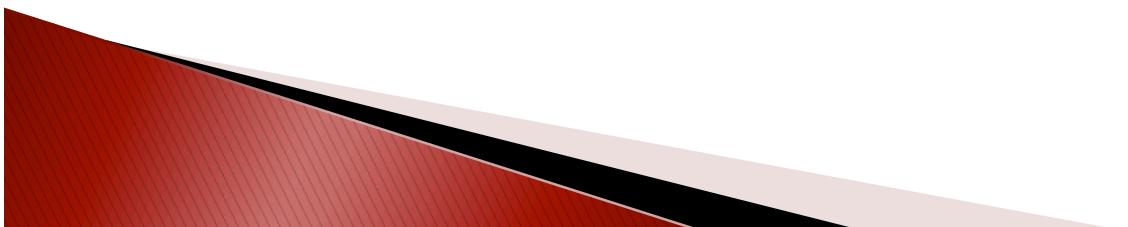
- (7) *K nam priez̄a-l otec domoj*
 To us **arrive.???-PST.3S** father house
 (#*no on ne smog najti naš dom*).
 but he not able find our house
‘Father came/had come to our house,
(#but was unable to found our house).’

- (8) #*Vot smotri---on priez̄a-et*
 look he **arrive.???-PRS.3S**
“Take a look--he arrives!”



CROSS-LINGUISTIC WORK ON PERFECTIVE

- ▶ Slavic is the only language family (to the best of my knowledge) in which a ‘neutral’ form has been traditionally analyzed as imperfective
- ▶ Arguments for ‘neutral aspect’ typically involve forms that have been analyzed as the perfective
- ▶ Notions like “non-completive perfective” and “semi-perfective” have subsequently been introduced in addition to “neutral perfective” (see e.g. ter Meulen 1995, Koenig & Muansuwan 2000)



CROSS-LINGUISTIC WORK ON PERFECTIVE

- ▶ Many languages have a “non-completive”, as opposed to a “completive”, perfective marker.
- ▶ SENĆOTEN (Kiyota 2008); Japanese (Ikegami 1985); Karachay-Balkar (Tatevosov 2007); Malagasy (Travis 2000); Mandarin (Teng 1972, Soh & Kuo 2005, Koenig & Chief 2008); Punjabi (Raja 2003); St’át’imcets and Skwxwúmesh (Bar-el Davis & Matthewson 2005); Tagalog (Dell 1987); Tamil (Pederson 2007); Thai (Koenig & Muansuwan 2000), among many others.



HINDI

- Hindi has two forms which have typically been called ‘perfective’: simple verbal forms (SV) and complex verbal forms (CV).
- The CV form always takes the form of “Verb₁ Verb₂”, where Verb₁ is a bare root form describing an eventuality, while Verb₂ is a light verb that bears inflectional morphology and has lost its independent meaning; it only contributes aspectual content (Hook 1974, 1976 and Butt 2003).
- Both CV and SV lead to a “completion” inference (Singh 1998), though only the SV form has been claimed to be neutral.



HINDI SV AND CV FORMS

- (9) *maayaa-ne* *biskuT-ko* *khaa-yaa* **SV FORM**
Maya-ERG cookie-ACC eat-???
‘Maya ate the cookie’ (Arunachalam & Kothari 2010: 1)
- (10) *maayaa-ne* *biskuT-ko* *khaa li-yaa* **CV FORM**
Maya-ERG cookie-ACC eat take-???
‘Maya ate the cookie’ (Arunachalam & Kothari 2010: 1)



NEUTRAL ASPECT IN HINDI: PANCHEVA'S GENERALIZATION 1

The culmination inferred by SV but not CV perfective can be cancelled

- (11) *maayaa-ne* *biskuT-ko* *khaa-yaa*
Maya-ERG cookie-ACC eat-???
- par* *use* *puuraa nahiin khaa-yaa*
but it-ACC finish not eat-???

‘Maya ate the cookie but not completely (Arunachalam & Kothari 2010:1)

- (12) #*maayaa-ne* *biskuT-ko* *khaa li-yaa*
Maya-ERG cookie-ACC eat take-???
- par* *use* *puuraa nahiin khaa-yaa*
but it-ACC finish not eat-???

‘Maya ate the cookie but not completely (Arunachalam & Kothari 2010:1)



NEUTRAL ASPECT IN HINDI: PANCHEVA'S GENERALIZATION 2

SV forms can be modified by both durational and time-span adverbials, while CV forms can only be modified by time span-adverbials.

- (14) *us-ne seb dus minut mein/ke-liye khaa-yaa*
He/she-ERG apple ten minutes in/for **eat-???**
'He/she ate the apple in/for ten minutes' (Kothari 2008).
- (15) *us-ne seb dus minut mein/*ke-liye khaa li-yaa*
He/she-ERG apple ten minutes in/*for **eat take-???**
'He/she ate the apple in/*for ten minutes' (Kothari 2008).



NEUTRAL ASPECT IN HINDI: SMITH'S GENERALIZATION

SV of achievement VPs does not lead to coercion, i.e. into durative VPs.

- (13) *mere pitaajii hamaare ghar aa-e*
my father our house come-???
- ‘My father came to our house.

#*lekin hamaaraa ghar nahiiN DhoonD sake*
but our house not find could
but was unable to find our house’ (Rajesh Bhatt, p.c.)

- Many other examples of achievements in Singh 1998
- e.g. *res jiitii* (‘win the race’); *pyaalaa toR* (‘break a cup’)

SINGH 1998

“...the class of instantaneous predicates, neither the affectedness of the patient nor its independent existence seem to matter for the partitive reading of SVs. Both SVs and CVs in the perfective aspect indicate that the described action was completed” (*ibid*: 183).



SUMMARY

Russian and Hindi have aspectual forms whose semantic properties are characteristic of both the *perfective* and the *imperfective*. They seem to provide evidence for a distinct aspectual category: **neutral aspect**.

- ▶ Presupposes that we know what *perfective* and *imperfective* are like.



ON DECK...

- ▶ No need for the category *neutral aspect* if we distinguish *telicity* from *boundedness* (Verkuyl 1993, Depreter 1995, Klein 1995, Borik 2006, Borik & Reinhart 2004)



ON DECK...

- ▶ Both perfective and imperfective forms can be telic—
has to do with the form describing an event's
culmination (Parsons 1990)
- ▶ Whether an imperfective form has the ability to
describe an event's culmination has to do with whether
it requires proper event parts in the extension of the
VP that it combines with.



ON DECK...

- ▶ All and only perfective forms impose a boundedness requirement—has to do with the form describing an event’s ‘completion’
- ▶ Culmination is a sufficient but not necessary condition for completion: an event must **either have culminated or not have developed any further** (cf. Krifka 1989, Koenig & Muansuwan 2000)



EXPLAINING CULMINATION ENTAILMENT WITH RUSSIAN AND HINDI ???-FORMS

- (a) Achievement VPs denote a set of events with no proper parts; accomplishment VPs denote a set of events with proper parts.
- (b) Russian and Hindi have partitive operators, IPF_{RUSS} and PFV_{SV} which combine with VP meanings and return a set of VP-event parts
- (c) When the base-VP is an achievement, IPF_{RUSS} and PFV_{SV} lead to an entailment that the described event culminated because the only event-part that could satisfy its truth-conditions is the VP-event.



DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PROG, IPF_{RUSS} AND PFV_{SV}

The progressive operator, PROG, is also taken to be a partitive operator (see e.g. Landman 1992, Bonomi 1997, Portner 1998, Condoravdi 2009), but it does not give rise to the culmination inference with achievement VPs; PROG of an achievement VP leads to coercion (Moens & Steedman 1988; de Swart 1998; 2000).

- *John was arriving*, does not entail that John arrived
(cf. *John arrived*)

How do we account for the difference between IPF_{RUSS} and PFV_{SV} on the one hand, and PROG on the other?



DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PROG, IPF_{RUSS} AND PFV_{SV}

- (a) Achievement VPs denote a set of events with no proper parts; accomplishment VPs denote a set of events with proper parts.
- (b) English has a partitive operator, PROG, which combines with VP meanings and returns a set of VP-event parts.
- (c) When the base-VP is an achievement, PROG lead to coercion because its truth-conditions **require proper VP-event-parts**.
 - e.g. insertion of a coercion operator in the sense of de Swart 1998; 2000
 - see also Rothstein 2004 for a type shifting rule



A LANDMAN-TYPE-ANALYSIS

(16) $\text{IPF}_{\text{RUSS}}/\text{PFV}_{\text{SV}} \rightsquigarrow \lambda P \lambda e' \exists e \exists w [\text{STAGE}^*(e', e, w^*, w, P)]$

$[[\text{STAGE}^*(e', e, w^*, w, P)]]^{\mathcal{M}}, g = 1$ iff (i)-(iv) holds:

- (i) the history of $g(w)$ is the same as the history of $g(w^*)$ up to and including $\tau(g(e'))$
- (ii) $g(w)$ is a reasonable option for $g(e')$ in $g(w^*)$
- (iii) $[[P]]^{\mathcal{M}}, g(e, w) = 1$
- (iv) $g(e') \sqsubseteq g(e)$

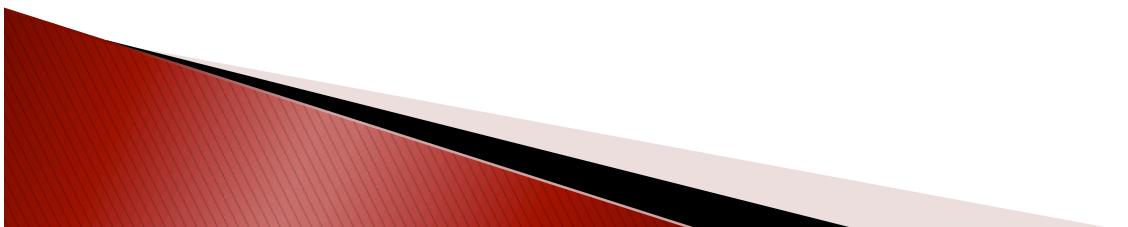


A LANDMAN-TYPE-ANALYSIS

(17) PROG $\rightsquigarrow \lambda P \lambda e' \exists e \exists w [\text{STAGE}(e', e, w^*, w, P)]$

$[[\text{STAGE}(e', e, w^*, w, P)]]^{\mathcal{M}}, g = 1$ iff (i)-(iv) holds:

- (i) the history of $g(w)$ is the same as the history of $g(w^*)$ up to and including $\tau(g(e'))$
- (ii) $g(w)$ is a reasonable option for $g(e')$ in $g(w^*)$
- (iii) $[[P]]^{\mathcal{M}}, g(e, w) = 1$
- (iv) $g(e') \sqsubset g(e)$



SUMMARY

<i>Partitive operators</i>	<i>Require proper VP-event part?</i>
Op (Hindi SV perfective; Russian imperfective)	No
PROG (English progressive)	Yes

Fig. 1: Typology of partitive operators (to be revised)



CONSEQUENCES FOR COERCION

- ▶ Progressive of an achievement VP → clash
- ▶ *Coercion* is resolution of a clash that comes about via function application/type mismatch.



QUESTION ABOUT COERCION

- ▶ Is imperfective of an achievement ever coerced?
 - Answer must be: “no” on current definition of *coercion*
- ▶ What about:

(1) *O, bud'te uvereny, čto Kolumb by-l sčastliv ne*
O rest assured that Columbus be.IPF-PST.2S happy not
togda kogda otkry-l Ameriku, a kogda
then when PFV.open-PST.3S America but when
otrkr-yva-l ee.

open-IPF-PST.3S it

‘Oh, rest assured that Columbus was happy not when he discovered America, but while he was discovering it’ (Dostoevskij, *Idiot*; quoted by Vinogradov 1972 and cited in Rassudova 1984, 15).



UNDERSPECIFICATION VS. COERCION

- ▶ *otkryl Ameriku* (opened^{PFV} America) + -yva (IPF) => *otkryval Ameriku* (opened^{IPF} America)
- ▶ Hypothesis: the meaning of *otkryl Ameriku* is compatible with both achievement and accomplishment meanings (“a set of opening events which have one or more parts that culminate”).
- ▶ It’s pragmatic enrichment, not coercion that triggers the progressive interpretation of *otkryval Ameriku*
- ▶ Distinguish between specified forms like on *priezžat’* (arrive^{IPF}) and underspecified forms like *otkryvat’* (open^{IPF})
 - cf. *smotri-vot on *priezžaet/otkryvaet okno*



Imperfective achievements in Russian

All imperfective achievements in Russian are secondary imperfectives.

- (1) *priežšal* ('arrived by vehicle')
- (2) *prixodil* ('arrived by foot')
- (3) *zaxodil* ('come in by foot')
- (4) *doxodil* ('reached by foot')
- (5) *priletal* ('arrive by plane')

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Imperfective achievements in Russian

- ▶ Shows that base imperfective forms don't describe culminations (otherwise we'd expect there to be culmination entailments with base forms)
- ▶ It's the (perfective?) prefixes that describe an event's culmination, and the (secondary) imperfective is compatible with this; it merely returns *some* VP-event part



FURTHER QUESTION ABOUT COERCION

- ▶ What about the habitual interpretation?

(7) *K nam (často) priezža-l otec*
To us often **arrive.IPF-PST.3S** father
'Father {often came/had often come} to visit us.'

- ▶ If *priezžat'* is an achievement, what triggers the insertion of, e.g. a generic/habitual/iterative operator?
- ▶ Can't be coercion, i.e. clash from function application, on the current story.



Possible Avenue: Ferriera 2005

- ▶ An episodic interpretation involves quantification over a singular event, the habitual interpretation involves quantification over plural events.
- ▶ VP-denotations combine with one of three specialized versions of IPF: (i) IPF_{sg} , which selects sets of singular events, (ii) IPF_{pl} , which selects sets of plural events and (iii) IPF , which selects sets of (singular or plural) events (cf. work in the nominal domain with determiner like *some*, *every* and *many*).
- ▶ Russian IPF selects sets of singular or plural events; underspecified for this distinction (Kagan 2008, cf. Filip 2009).



OTHER QUESTIONS

Question 1: What the difference between IPF_{RUSS} and PFV_{SV} ?

Question 2: How do we account for the cancelable culmination inference often associated with IPF_{RUSS} and PFV_{SV} ?



A NOTE ON QUESTION 1

Russian has a perfective-imperfective contrast.

- The imperfective is used for the progressive interpretation in Russian.

Hindi has a progressive vs. imperfective vs. CV perfective vs. SV perfective vs. perfect contrast.

- The SV perfective is infelicitous in contexts which force a progressive or a perfect interpretation



RESTATING QUESTION 1

How do we account for the fact one partitive operator can lead to a progressive and a perfect interpretation and the other never does?

- ▶ Not answered by analysis proposed thus far; difference is neutralized with, e.g. accomplishment VPs



PART OF THE ANSWER: DISCOURSE PROPERTIES

- ▶ Relating an eventuality relative to a reference time
- ▶ Kamp & Rohrer 1983, Moens & Steedman 1988, Webber 1988, Kamp & Reyle 1993, Klein 1993, von Stechow 1995, Kratzer 1998, de Swart 1998; 2007, Bary 2009, Altshuler 2012, among many others.



A TELLING CONTRAST

- (18) *Ja e-l tort*
I eat.IPF-PST.1S cake

no ego ne s'-e-l
but it not PFV-eat-PST.1S
'I ate cake, but did not finish it.'

- (19) *Ja e-l tort*
I eat.IPF-PST.1S cake
i sejčas prodolžaju ego est'
and now continue it eat.INF
'I ate cake and now I am still eating it.'



A TELLING CONTRAST

- (20) *maayaa-ne biskuT-ko khaa-yaa ghu*
Maya-ERG cookie-ACC eat-PFV
par use puuraa nahiin khaa-yaa
but it-ACC finish not eat-PFV
'Maya ate (some of) the cookie, but did not finish it' (Arunachalam & Kothari 2010: 1).
- (21) *#maayaa-ne biskuT-ko khaa-yaa*
Maya-ERG cookie-ACC eat-PFV
aur use ab-tak khaa rabii hai
and it still eat PROG be.PRS
Intended: 'Maya ate (some of) the cookie, and is still eating it'



EXTENDING THE ANALYSIS

(16) $\text{Hindi}_{\text{SV}} \rightsquigarrow \lambda P \lambda e' \exists e \exists w [\text{BOUNDSTAGE}^*(e', e, w^*, w, P)]$

$[[\text{BOUNDSTAGE}^*(e', e, w^*, w, P)]]^{\mathcal{M}, g} = 1$ iff (i)-(v) holds:

(i) the history of $g(w)$ is the same as the history of
 $g(w^*)$ up to and including $\tau(g(e'))$

(ii) $g(w)$ is a reasonable option for $g(e')$ in $g(w^*)$

(iii) $[[P]]^{\mathcal{M}, g}(e, w) = 1$

(iv) $g(e') \sqsubseteq g(e)$

(v) $\forall e''[(g(e') \sqsubset e'' \wedge e'' \sqsubseteq g(e)) \rightarrow [[P]]^{\mathcal{M}, g}(e'', w^*) = 0]$



SUMMARY

Partitive operators	Proper VP-event part?	Bounded requirement?
PFV_{SV}	NO	YES
IPF_{RUSS}	NO	NO
PROG	YES	NO
???	YES	YES

- cf. ‘to stop arriving’

DATA FROM KARACHAY-BALKAR (TURKIC)

- (22) *Kerim ešik-ni ac-xan-d̤t, alaj boša-ma-**X**an-d̤t*
Kerim door-ACC open-PFCT but finish-NEG-PFCT-3SG
Literal: ‘Kerim opened the door, but did not finish’ (Tatevosov 2007, 396)
- (23) *Men kel-gen-de kerim (on minut-xa)*
I COME-PFCT-TEMP Kerim ten minute-DAT
ešik-ni ac-xan-d̤t
door-ACC open-PFCT
‘When I came, Kerim opened (#was opening) the door.’ (Tatevosov 2007, 396)

FAILED ATTEMPT

(24) *fatima eki minut xalt-n̩t z̩rt-xan-d̩t*

Fatima two minute thread-ACC tear-PFCT-3S

(Tatevosov 2007, 397)

Failed Attempt Interpretation (POSSIBLE)

‘For two minutes, Fatima was trying to tear a thread, but the thread was so firm that she was unable to tear it.’

Partial Success Interpretation (IMPOSSIBLE)

‘For two minutes, Fatima was tearing a thread, so when she stopped, the thread was partly torn.’



FAILED ATTEMPT AND PARTIAL SUCCESS

- (25) *išci eki kün ijj-nü oj-**ban-dt'***
worker two day house-ACC demolish-PFCT-3S
(Tatevosov 2007, 398)

Failed Attempt Interpretation (POSSIBLE)

'For two days, the worker was trying to take down the house, but the house was so firm that he gave up, not being able to remove a single brick.'

Partial Success Interpretation (POSSIBLE)

'For two minutes, the worker was taking down the house; he removed the roof and one of the walls, but then was asked to stop.



FAILED ATTEMPT AND PARTIAL SUCCESS

Verbs with only a Failed Attempt Interpretation

ac ('open'); *ij* 'untie, release'; *ujat* 'wake up'; *sindir* 'break'

Verbs with a Failed Attempt and a Partial Success Interpretation

buz ('spoil'); *quj* 'pour out'; *soz* 'stretch'; *tazala* 'clean', *tög* 'spill out'

- ▶ Tatevosov 2007, pg. 398



TATEVOSOV'S ANALYSIS IN A NUT-SHELL

- ▶ Complex lexical semantics for accomplishment VPs; they describe three event parts: (i) activity, (ii) process, (iii) result state
- ▶ *ac* ('open'); *ij* 'untie, release'; *ujat* 'wake up'; *sindir* 'break' describe (i) in the actual world; (ii) and (iii) in some possible world. Hence only failed result is possible.
- ▶ *buz* ('spoil'); *quj* 'pour out'; *soz* 'stretch'; *tazala* 'clean', *tög* 'spill out' can also describe (i) and (ii) in the actual world; (iii) in some possible world. Hence partial success also possible.



Possible Re-analysis

Achievement verbs (only Failed Attempt Interpretation)

ac ('open'); *ij* 'untie, release'; *ujat* 'wake up'; *sindir* 'break'

Accomplishment verbs (Failed Attempt & Partial Success Interpretation)

buz ('spoil'); *quj* 'pour out'; *soz* 'stretch'; *tazala* 'clean', *tög* 'spill out'



Possible Re-analysis

- (a) Karachay-Balkar has a partitive operator, PFCT_{KB} which combines with VP meanings and return a set of VP-event parts
- (b) When the base-VP is an achievement, PFCT_{KB} leads to coercion because its truth-conditions **require proper VP-event-parts**, viz. PROG. The coerced interpretation is the failed attempt.
- (c) When the base-VP is an accomplishment, any one of the VP-event parts could satisfy its truth conditions; both failed attempt and partial success interpretation is available
- (d) Like PFV_{SV} , PFCT_{KB} imposes the boundedness requirement



SUMMARY

Partitive operators	Proper VP-event part?	Bounded requirement?
$\mathbf{PFV_{SV}}$	NO	YES
$\mathbf{PFV_{RUSS}}$	NO	NO
\mathbf{PROG}	YES	NO
$\mathbf{PFCT_{KB}}$	YES	YES

TURNING TO QUESTION 2

Question 2: How do we account for the cancelable culmination inference associated with neutral aspectual markers?



SMITH'S EXPLANATION

Smith's (1994) pragmatic explanation of Russian data (cf. Kothari 2008 for a similar approach to Hindi data)

- ▶ The cancelable culminated event inference results from a pragmatic principle ('convention' in Smith's terms), according to which "a speaker says as much as is needed" (*ibid*).



GRICE'S MAXIM OF QUANTITY

Maxim of Quantity

- a. Make your contribution to the conversation as informative as necessary.
- b. Do not make your contribution to the conversation more informative than necessary.

(26) *Dora has three kids.*

(27) *Dora has exactly three kids.*



APPLYING TO RUSSIAN AND HINDI

- ▶ If we wanted to convey the information that an event of eating a cookie culminated, then we would use the perfective in Russian and CV perfective in Hindi, which would entail this.
- ▶ Since the Russian perfective and the CV perfective in Hindi are not used in (28), we conclude by the Maxim of Quantity that an event of eating a cookie did not culminate.

(28) *I {eat.IPF / eat.PFV_{SV}} a cookie.*

- ▶ This, however, is the opposite of what we want!



IMPLICATURE PUZZLE

- ▶ Why would a imperfective sentence implicate an event's culmination when its 'stronger' perfective counterpart entails it?
- ▶ Why would a sentence with a SV perfective form implicate an event's culmination when its 'stronger' CV perfective counterpart entails it?



TOWARDS A SOLUTION IN RUSSIAN

Indirect strengthening approach (Altshuler 2010)

In contexts where a culminated event interpretation is felicitous but the perfective cannot be used, strengthen the truth-conditions of an imperfective sentence so that a culminated event interpretation follows. In all other contexts, do nothing.



INDIRECT STRENGTHENING APPROACH

- ▶ The imperfective must be used as a response to “Why is it so cold in here?” in a context where all the windows are closed. The ruling out of the perfective in this context triggers pragmatic strengthening of the imperfective.

(29) *Ja {#otkryl / OK_{otkr-yva-ł}} okno.*
I PFV-open.PST.3S open-IPF-PST.3S window
'I opened the window.'

Summary: only the Russian perfective could give rise to the result perfect interpretation and this triggers pragmatic strengthening of the imperfective.



INDIRECT STRENGTHENING APPROACH

- ▶ Prediction: pragmatic strengthening does not take place with the imperfective when the sentence is in the future. Such is the case because a result perfect interpretation is not possible with the future tense (Comrie 1976), viz. *I will have spilled coffee.*

(30) *Ja budu otkr-yva-t'* okno.
I will open-IPF-PST.3S window
'I will be opening the window.'



CULMINATION AND DISCOURSE COHERENCE

- (31) *V ètoj porternoj ja na-pisal pervoe ljubovnoe pis'mo k Vere. Pisa-l karandaš-om letter to Vera Write.IPF-PST.1S pencil-INST (xotja konec do-pisa-l ručkoj).*
even.though end PFV-write-PST.1S pen
'In this tavern, I wrote my first love letter to Vera. I wrote it pencil (though the end I wrote up in pen)' (Forsyth 1970).



ONGOING RESEARCH

- ▶ Cross linguistic work on the semantics of the perfective
- ▶ Extending the analysis to incorporate discourse semantics
- ▶ Capturing temporal implicatures generated by partitive perfective operators.

