

Title: Constructions Define Aspectual Pairs in Russian
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This paper introduces a new approach to the problem of establishing an aspectual pair in Russian. Previously such problems were solved by posing a set of syntactic criteria (e.g., Maslov’s criterion (1984)). Nowadays electronic corpora allow us to take a new approach to this old puzzle. Many problems with syntactic criteria for establishing aspectual pairs are related to the assumption that a verb shows rather unified behavior. However, if we turn to corpus examples we quickly realize that each verb participates in several different constructions. In this paper I reformulate the criteria for establishing aspectual pairs in terms of constructions (defined in Construction Grammar theory, see Goldberg 1995). I measure the number of shared constructions (intersection rate) for perfective and imperfective verbs in a sample of 100 random corpus examples of each.

Table 1 uses the pair *kričat’/prokričat’* ‘shout’ as example. It contains only the constructions that are found in five or more examples for each verb. For each construction and each verb the table shows an example of a verb used in a construction and the number of similar examples found in the random samples of 100. The last column for each construction shows the smaller number of attested examples for the two verbs. For the construction $NP_{\text{NOM}} V \llbracket CL \rrbracket$ this minimum is 60 (the number of examples for the imperfective verb). For the construction $NP_{\text{NOM}} V$ the minimum number of attested examples is five (the number of examples for the perfective verb). The intersection rate for this pair is thus $60+5=65$.

	IPFV		PFV		Min
CONSTRPATTERN	EXAMPLE	# Ex.	EXAMPLE	# Ex.	
$NP_{\text{NOM}} V \llbracket CL \rrbracket$	“ <i>Sjuda!</i> ” - <i>kričal čelovek.</i> “Here” - shouted a man.	60	<i>Čej-to golos prokričal: «Bratcy!»</i> Someone’s voice shouted: “Brothers!”	69	60
$NP_{\text{NOM}} V NP_{\text{ACC}}$	-	-	<i>Poslednie slova ja prokričala.</i> I shouted the last words.	10	-
$NP_{\text{NOM}} V$	<i>Kto-to kričit.</i> Someone is shouting.	23	<i>Ptica prokričala i smolkla</i> The bird cried out and fell silent.	5	5
Intersection rate:					65

Table 1. Distribution of examples of the pair *kričat’/prokričat’* ‘shout’.

This measure is based on a corpus sample and gives us a usage-based metric of the interchangeability between the two verbs. In addition, I show that the set of syntactic constructions available to a verb is strongly affected by the semantics of the prefix used to form a perfective, and as a result the interchangeability of a given pair correlates with how well the meaning of the base imperfective intersects with the meaning of the prefix of the prefixed perfective (see the Overlap Hypothesis in van Schooneveld 1958).

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