

# Temporality in Russian: Tense, Aspect, and Aktionsart A Comparative Analysis with English

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## I . Introduction

Aspect is one of grammatical categories of verbs with tense and mood. Tense is closely related to the relationship between the time of situation (henceforth, TSit) denoted by lexical contents and the moment of utterance. (Lyons 1968: 275-81; Comrie 1976: 1-6). Aspect and tense both indicate the temporal characteristics of 'state of affairs' expressed by a proposition. The major difference between the two categories is in that tense is concerned with 'situation-external time', while aspect is associated with 'situation-internal time'. That is, tense is 'a deictic category', whereas aspect is 'a non-deictic category' (Comrie 1976: 5). Already in 19C and early 20C, a study of aspectuality<sup>1)</sup> in natural languages started from that of the Slavic aspectual system. From this point of view, the Slavic aspectual system played an important role in defining aspectuality. The Slavic aspectual system has traditionally been investigated by a dichotomous approach, i.e., perfective vs. imperfective. According to Comrie (1976:4), the major distinction between the two is that 'the perfective looks at the situation from outside', while 'the imperfective aspect looks at the situation from inside.' This traditional way of the analysis is regarded as so-called morphologically marked forms of aspect

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1) Aspectuality (аспектуальность) is used as a term, which encompasses both viewpoint aspect and lexical aspect, i.e., Aktionsart.

- perfective and imperfective, or viewpoint approach. This kind of approach mainly conceptualizes the Slavic verbal aspect as a completed or uncompleted action. In contrast to the Slavic analysis on aspectuality, English aspectuality has mainly been analyzed by the inherent temporal characteristics of verbs. This is called 'time-schema approach', which originated from the term 'time schemata' by Vendler (1957: 143). This approach is based on the semantics of a lexical item, so that it is termed as lexical aspect, which encompasses the term aktionsart<sup>2)</sup>, i.e., 'way of action', 'action types', 'manner of action' literally. Lexical aspect can also be called intrinsic verb meaning, Aristotelian aspect, and situation aspect (Smith 1997), etc. As a contrasting term to (viewpoint) aspect, in this paper, the term 'lexical aspect' is replaced by aktionsart in a broad sense. Aktionsart will be used as a term, which covers the narrow meaning of aktionsart<sup>3)</sup> in Russian, so-called procedural (Forsyth 1970: 20). The reason is that the use of aktionsart can avoid the confusion caused by the two terms viewpoint aspect and lexical aspect. Moreover, another reason is that the term aktionsart emphasizes on the semantic properties of lexical items.

Aspectuality must be explored by two different perspectives: aspect and aktionsart. However, the Russian tradition has overlooked the importance of the semantics of lexical items and tried to account for aspectuality only in a perspective of viewpoint aspect. This research will examine the Russian temporality, i.e., the interrelationship, among tense, aspect, and aktionsart, and analyze the distinctions between aspect and aktionsart, focusing on inherent meanings of verbs. The investigation of the Russian aktionsart will be compared with that of the English

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2) Aktionsart originated from German term, whose meaning is 'way of action'. To avoid the complexity caused by the translation of the term, the term in German Aktionsrat remains in its use for this article.

3) The Russian Aktionsart can be called: mode of action, manner of action, action type, sub-lexical, and procedural.

aspectual system, where lexical aspect, i.e., aktionsart, is predominant rather than viewpoint aspect. This research on the Russian temporality deserves to be performed further, since the study on the Russian aspectuality cannot be perfected without the study on the Russian aktionsart. This study will be performed with special attention to the interactions among tense, aspect, and aktionsart in a typological perspective. These three notions are all independent from one another and function as 3-dimensional parameters to analyze a verb or a verbal phrase.

In section II-1 aspectuality will be introduced in details with comparison to tense. In II-2 the difference between aspect and Aktionsart will be mentioned in both the English and the Russian systems. In III the English aktionsart will be explored along with examples, while in IV the Russian aktionsart will be scrutinized with regard to affixations, i.e., prefixation and suffixation.

## **II. Theoretical Background**

### **1. Tense vs. Aspectuality**

Tense is a grammatical category, which conveys temporal information of a proposition. Temporal information can be expressed by adverbials or morphological markings, such as -ed for English or -л for Russian respectively. According to the strict linguistic theory, tense must be marked by grammar, i.e., morphology (Comrie 1985; Smith 1997) Russian and English both have special morphemes to mark time expression grammatically and therefore they are both tensed languages in a strict sense.

With regard to the study on aspectuality, tense must not be ignored or

overlooked. Aspectuality cannot be analyzed without understanding tense, since these three notions, i.e., tense, aspect, and aktionsart, are closely related to one another as an independent criterion within the same domain of VP (Verb Phrase). The concept of tense will be introduced briefly so that one can distinguish aspectuality from tense. Let us take a look at the following examples.

- (1) a. Charles was dead.  
       b. Charles died.  
       c. Charles was dying.

As shown in (1) the sentences are used in the past tense. That is, the event, expressed by the lexical contents of 'Charles's being dead/dying', occurred before the time of speaking, i.e., Time of Utterance (henceforth, TU). However, (1a) is different from (1b) and (1c) by its verb denoting state. (1b) and (1c) with activity verbs 'die' have different aspectuality. (1a) denotes the unchanged 'state of affairs', while (1b) and (1c) indicate the changed 'state of affairs'. In other words, the verb in (1a) is 'stative', whereas the verbs in (1b) and (1c) are 'dynamic'. The difference between (1a) and (1b-c) comes from the different lexical items. The parameter distinguishing (1a) and (1b-c) is Aktionsart associated with the meanings of lexical contents. Furthermore, there is still a difference between (1b) and (1c) in how to look at the action of 'dying'. The parameter Aspect distinguishes (1b) from (1c). The details of aspectuality will be discussed in a separate section later.

- (2)   a. is                   E simul S  
       b. was                E before S  
       c. will be           E after S                   (Comrie 1985: 123)  
       ( E - Time of Event<sup>4</sup>, S - Time of Utternace )

4) Comrie's (1976) term 'Time of Event' is correspondent to 'Time of Situation(TSit)' of Klein (1994)

As represented in (2) above, the concept of tense is deictically related to TU. Tense locates the time of an event or a situation (TSit) relative to TU. Russian has also the same grammatical system of tense as English. There seem to be three temporal distinctions in both languages: past, present, and future as the notions in (2) above. However, these temporal distinctions are not correspondent to the grammatical notions of tense, which must be marked by morphology. At least in the tense system of Russian and English, there are only two tenses, i.e., past and non-past as in example (2). As seen in (2a and c), the forms of the BE verb *is* and the auxiliary verb *will* both are in the present, while in (2b) the form of BE-verb *is* is in the past, i.e., *was*. The future tense in English is expressed by modal verbs, e.g., *will*, *shall*, *can*, *may*, and *must* etc. How does this temporal dichotomy apply to the Russian tense system? First, let us take some examples into consideration below.

- (3) a. Саша читал книгу дома.  
 b. Саша читает книгу дома.  
 c. Саша будет читать книгу дома.  
 d. Саша прочитает книгу дома.

Example (3) displays that the Russian tense system has the same binary system. The past tense morpheme *-л* indicates the relationship of 'E before S', while the non-past morpheme *-ет*, i.e., 3 person present singular of the imperfective verb, denotes the relationship of 'E simul S'. Even though the meanings of (3c) and (3d) are all in the future, their grammatical morphemes are all in the present, i.e., non-past tense. To make the future tense in Russian, there are two ways: conjugated present forms of perfective verbs, i.e., simple future, and conjugated present forms of *БЫТЬ* plus infinitives of imperfective, i.e., periphrastic future. The following table will visualize the concept of the future tense in Russian. Conjugated forms of perfective in the present cannot express the present meaning. It conveys future tense only, i.e., simple future in contrast to

periphrastic future.

(4) The Russian Tense System

|              | Past | Non-Past |                  |
|--------------|------|----------|------------------|
|              |      | Present  | Future           |
| Imperfective | ✓    | ✓        | ✓ (periphrastic) |
| Perfective   | ✓    | n/a      | ✓ (simple)       |

On the basis of these notions of tense, aspect, and aktionsart, a further investigation will be carried out in the following sections. The Russian traditional approach to aspect is made from viewpoint aspect. This research will focus on the interactions of these three temporal properties, i.e., tense, aspect, aktionsart, and how effectively these factors can be utilized for vocabulary and the chosen lexical items will be analyzed in a 3-dimensional way so that one can clearly understand the complex interactions of these three temporal factors one another.

## 2. Aktionsart versus Aspect

As mentioned in the previous section, aspectuality can be defined by the two distinct notions of aspect and aktionsart. Aspect ‘concerns the different perspectives, which a speaker can take and express with regard to the temporal course of some event, action, process, etc.: the speaker may view it as completed, as on-going, as imminent, and possibly in other ways.’ (Klein 1994: 16) This view is not associated with the time which the event, action, process, etc. occupies on the axis of time. Aktionsart is closely related to the lexical meanings of verbs, which differ in the temporal characteristics of their lexical contents (Comrie 1976; Авилова 1976; Гловинская 1982; Klein 1994: 16; Smith 1997). Aktionsart can be defined by types of verbal meanings, such as durativity, inchoative, iterativity, stativity, etc. The term aktionsart is originally introduced by

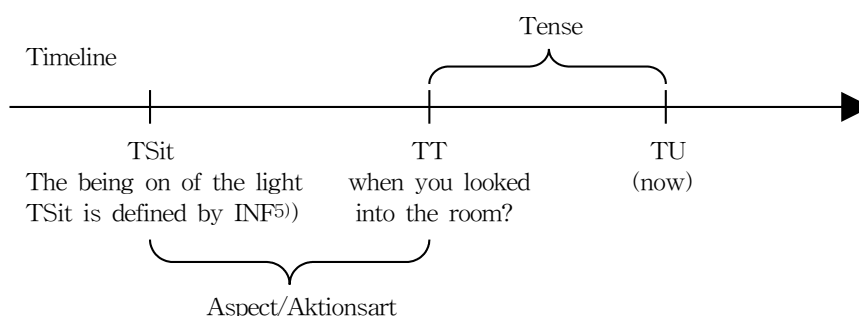
Agrell (1908), who first adopted the notions of action types for his study of Polish verbs as an additional notion to aspect. It is Agrell who first distinguished aktionsart from aspect in Slavic. The three-way distinction, initiated by Agrell, is the way to study the temporality not only in Slavic, but also in other natural languages these days.

According to Klein (1994; 1995), tense is associated with the relationship between Topic Time (henceforth, TT) and TU, while aspect concerns the relationship between TT and TSit (Time of Situation), which is the same notion as Time of Event by Comrie (1985). To help the better understanding of TT, TSit, and TU, let us take the following examples.

- (5) The light was on. (Klein 1994: 2)  
 (6) What did you notice when you looked into the room? (Ibid: 4)

In relation to the utterance (5), there can be two types of time: TT and TSit. TT is the time for which such a claim is made. TSit is the time at which the light was on. TT can be clarified with the answer to the question like (6), which specifies the exact time regardless of TU. TU is always in the present. (see Klein 1994)

(7) The Interrelationship among Tense, Aspect, and Aktionsart  
 (in case of (5))



5) INF means an infinite form which does not have any information of tense marking and a series of phi-features, e.g., person, number, gender, case, etc.. (cf. finite form)

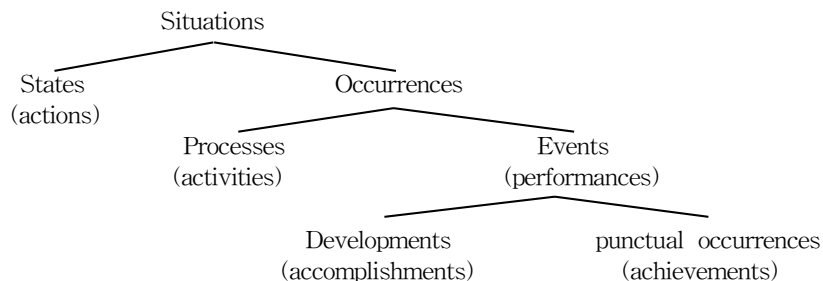
In addition, aktionsart is based on the lexical meaning of a verb, not in a grammatical way, i.e., by inflection, derivation, affixation, and by adding particles, etc. The four types of verbs classified by Vendler (1957) are well-known as work on aktionsart. He subcategorizes all types of verbs into four groups: i) state, ii) activity, iii) accomplishment, and iv) achievement.

(8) Vendler's verbal classification

- a. *Stative* : be dead, be tall, love, live, possess, know contain, resemble
- b. *Activity* : run, drink, walk, write, dance, talk, work, sing
- c. *Accomplishment* : create, cover, destroy, eat an apple, draw a circle
- d. *Achievement* : die, reach the top, leave, recognize, win the race, ,

State verbs are those which indicate the constant state of the verbal meanings. Activity verbs are those which denote actions. Activity verbs have the part-whole relation of events. "Activities go on in time in a homogeneous way; any part of the process is of the same nature as the whole" (Vendler 1967: 133). "Accomplishments have successive stages in which the process advances to its natural final endpoint. They result in a new state" (Smith 1997: 26). Achievement verbs conceptualize a single-event, detached from any associated process. This kind of verbs does not exhibit whole-part entailment and have no preliminary steps to the final endpoint (Smith 1997: 30). Mourelatos (1978: 423) develops Vendler's classification as follows:

(9) Mourelatos' verb classification



Smith (1997) added semelfactive<sup>6)</sup> to Vendler's four types of verbal lexical meanings. Semelfactive is a single-stage event with no result or outcome. She also suggested three parameters, which distinguish the basic situation types. The three parameters – dynamism, telicity, and duration – define the temporal properties of verbal lexical contents. The first parameter, i.e., dynamism, distinguishes stative verbs from the other verbal types, i.e., activities, accomplishments, and achievements. The second parameter, i.e., telicity, distinguishes activities from performances, i.e., accomplishments and achievements. The third parameter, i.e., duration, distinguishes accomplishments from achievements. The following table summarizes Smith's lexical types, i.e., Aktionsart in binary features.

(10) Temporal features of the situation type

| Situations     | Static | Durative | Telic |
|----------------|--------|----------|-------|
| States         | [+]    | [+]      | [-]   |
| Activity       | [-]    | [+]      | [-]   |
| Accomplishment | [-]    | [+]      | [+]   |
| Semelfactive   | [-]    | [-]      | [-]   |
| Achievement    | [-]    | [-]      | [+]   |

(Smith 1997: 20)

Hitherto, the concept of aktionsart has been introduced from a theoretical point of view. Now it is about time to understand the theoretical basis of aspect well-known as viewpoint aspect. 'Viewpoint aspect is expressed by a grammatical morpheme associated with the main verb of a sentence' (Smith 1997: 66).

As the general definition of aspect familiar with Slavic languages, Comrie (1976: 3) mentioned that 'aspects are different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation'. The following examples help understand better.

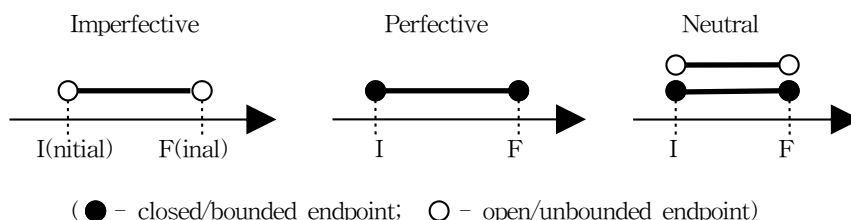
6) Prefix *semel-* of semelfactive means 'once' in Latin (Comrie 1976: 42)

- (11) a. Anton was reading when I entered. (English)  
       b. АНТОН ЧИТАЛ, КОГДА Я ВОШЁЛ. (Russian)
- (12) a. Anton wakes up at 7 every day. (English)  
       b. Каждый день Антон просыпается в семь часов (Russian)
- (13) a. Anton studied for the exam all day long. (English)  
       b. Антон готовился к экзамену весь день. (Russian)
- (14) What did you do yesterday?  
       a. I did my homework at home. (English)  
       b. Я делал домашнее задание дома. (Russian)

As in (11) the main verb represents the background to an event described by the subordinate clause, while the subordinate verb introduces that event itself. That is, the action of *'my entering'* occurs inside the period of the action of *'Anton's reading'*. As the Russian version of (11b), the background of the event is expressed by an imperfective verb *ЧИТАЛ*, while the event itself is represented by the perfective verb *ВОШЁЛ*. Examples (12)–(14) conceptualize the Russian aspect in brief. Example (12) shows that repeated or habitual actions are expressed by imperfectives, while (13) exhibits a certain period of time of actions denoted by the verb of *'study' / ГОТОВИТЬСЯ (к экзамену)*. This can be understood in a par with the feature of durative. Imperfective verbs also can indicate 'general statement' as in (14), the action of *'my doing of homework'*. To sum up, aspect is a non-deictic category, which means that aspect does not relate TSit to any other time-point. The general characteristic of imperfectivity is closely related to the internal temporal structure of a situation, while perfectivity is characteristic of viewing an event as a totality. According to Smith (1997: 62), aspectual viewpoints are associated with the whole or part of a situation. What is in focus has a special status, which is called 'visibility'. Only what is visible is asserted. The main semantic difference among aspectual viewpoints is in how much of a situation they make visible. Perfective focuses a situation in its entirety, including endpoints,

while imperfective focuses an interval that excludes endpoints. Smith (1997) added another concept of ‘neutral viewpoints’ to the Slavic tradition of aspect, i.e., either perfective or imperfective. ‘Neutral viewpoints include the initial point and at least one stage of a situation’ (Smith 1997: 62). “Neutral viewpoints allow readings that either both closed or open” (Smith 1997: 65). Aspectual viewpoints are summarized as follows:

(15) Aspectual Viewpoints



Diagrams of (15) conceptualize aspectual viewpoints. Imperfective viewpoint does not have bounded endpoints, while perfective viewpoint does have bounded endpoints. Neutral viewpoint has one initial endpoint and at least one stage of a situation. The above-mentioned examples (11)–(14) can be explained on the basis of these diagrams. In (11) English progressives must be interpreted as in imperfective, because they do not have any endpoints and focus only on the current time, i.e., TU. No matter what tense they are used in, they must be utilized in Russian with imperfective. In contrast to imperfective aspect of the main verb in (11), the verb of the subordinate clause visualizes its use as an entire activity within the background expressed by the main verb. As in (12) the imperfective indicates the unbounded activity, which can be repeated before, now, and even future as a habitual action. In (13) the activity of ‘studying all day’ is limited in time within the period of a 24-hour day, but the activity is looked on in an intrinsic way, focusing on internal parts of the action. In (14) the imperfective verb conveys the meaning of general statement of the activity ‘doing homework’ as an answer to the

question ‘what did you do yesterday?’ Imperfective viewpoint focuses on the activity itself, but not its result, which is focused on by perfective.

In this section, aspectuality, i.e., aspect and aktionsart, is defined as a grammatical category of verbs. There are some things different and common between the two. Aspect is regarded as viewpoint aspect, while aktionsart is considered lexical aspect, or situation types of verbs. Aspect is marked by a grammatical morpheme, while aktionsart is expressed by the semantics of lexical contents (ГЛОВИНСКАЯ 1982). Consequently, the former is an overt category, whereas the latter is a covert category, because it can only be construed by the semantics of lexical items. Situation types of verbs, i.e., aktionsart, are defined by verbs (V) or verb phrases (VP). That is, external and internal arguments affect situation types of the activity; for example, drink a cup of coffee and drink coffee. The former has a telic interpretation, while the latter has atelic interpretation. As a result, here in this example, the quantified complement a cup of coffee altered the situation type of the sentence. The following table represents all the differences between aspect and aktionsart.

(16) Differences between aspect and aktionsart

| <b>Aspect</b>            | <b>Aktionsart</b>           |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Grammatical category     | Lexical category            |
| Grammatical morpheme (V) | Verbal constellation (V/VP) |
| Perspective              | Situation type              |
| Overt category           | Covert categories           |
| Subjective               | objective                   |
| Binary                   | Non-binary                  |

### III. Aspectuality in English<sup>o</sup>

#### 1. Aktionsart in English

English VPs convey information of time and aspectuality. Unlike Slavic languages where aspectuality is expressed by a grammatical morpheme, English aspectuality is expressed by periphrastic verbal forms. According to Vendler (1957), there are four types of verbs in English: stative, activity, accomplishment, and achievement. Let us take the following examples.

(17) Four types of verbs in English

|             |                                                            |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Stative     | love, be dead. Resemble, know                              |
| Activity    | drink, eat, run, write                                     |
| Accomplish  | create, draw a circle, walk a mile, drink a bottle of beer |
| Achievement | die, reach, recognize, win the race                        |

As mentioned before, there are three parameters to distinguish one from another: dynamism, telicity, and duration. These can be encoded in a binary way to convey the meaning of these parameters: [static: +/ -], [telic: +/ -], and [durative: +/ -].

- (18) a. ✓He loves ice cream. [stative: +]  
 b. \*He is loving ice cream.<sup>7)</sup>  
 c. ✓He is loving ice cream more and more. [stative: -]

As in (18) the verb *love* is a stative verb, which has the homogeneous internal structure in contrast to the heterogeneous internal structure of a dynamic verb. That is, stative verbs indicate unchangeable state of affairs, while dynamic verbs reveal changeable state of affairs. For this reason progressive cannot be used with stative verbs in English as (18b).

7) Asterisk(\*) in the beginning of a sentence indicates that the sentence is ungrammatical or not acceptable to native speakers of the language.

However, (18c) is acceptable because the VP has a dynamic interpretation due to the use of the comparative adverbial *more and more*. Basic situation types of lexical aspect are overruled by adverbs or adverbials as in (18c). On the basis of the binary-featured system, four types of verbs are defined as (19).

- (19) a. Peter knows him. (state) [stative: +], [telic: -], [durative: +]  
 b. Peter drinks. (activity) [stative: -], [telic: -], [durative: +]  
 c. Peter drinks a bottle of beer. (accomplishment)  
     [stative: -], [telic: +], [durative: +]  
 d. Peter died. (achievement) [stative: -], [telic: +], [durative: -]

Feature [stative: +/-] distinguishes stative verbs from other verbal types. Feature [telic: +/-] distinguishes stative and activity verbs from others, such as accomplishment verbs and achievement verbs. Achievement types are distinguished from accomplishment by feature [durative: +/-]. Situation types of verbs are defined by verbal constellations, i.e., the whole VPs. Examples (19b) and (19c) have the same predicate-verb, but their verbal types are different, since (19c) has an internal argument, which switches an activity verb into an accomplishment verb. Furthermore, quantification is also important in that countable internal arguments make the whole VPs telic, while uncountable internal arguments make atelic interpretations.

- (20) a. Jane drinks beer.  
 b. Jane drinks a (bottle of) beer.

In (20a) uncountable mass noun *beer* is used as an internal complement of the verb *drink*. The internal argument *beer* cannot change the meaning of the activity verb *drink*. However, countable argument makes telic interpretation of the VP. In this vein, singularity/plurality also changes the verbal type as in (21). Singular form makes telic interpretation, but plural form - atelic interpretation as in (21).

- (21) a. Jane eats an apple.  
b. Jane eats apples.

As one of situation types, semelfactive is suggested by Comrie (1976) and Smith (1997). Semelfactive verb constellations cannot appear in basic-level sentences with the progressive viewpoint. The progressive triggers a multiple-event interpretation. This fact is closely related to Russian semelfactive, which lacks its imperfective counterparts.

- (22) a. She tapped his shoulder.  
b. She began tapping his shoulder.

Semelfactive with features [stative: -]/[telic: -]/[durative: -] is good with punctual adverbs, e.g., at noon, in an hour, etc., and the lexical item indicating inceptive begin conveys the meaning of repetition of the activity with the semelfactive as in (22). The reason is that semelfactive does not have clear result or outcome of the event.

- (23) a. John was knocking at the door. (semelfactive)  
b. John was winning the race. (achievement)

As shown above in (23), the progressives give the marked interpretations of each verbal type. Semelfactive is interpreted as multiple-events, while achievement is conceived as a preliminary stage of the event in the progressive form.

## 2. Aspect in English

Strictly speaking, aspect is marked either by a morpheme or by periphrastic combinations of 'have + p.p.' or 'be + ~ing'. In case of English, aspect can be expressed by periphrastic ways. English aspect can be divided into two subgroups: perfect and progressive. Each aspectual form can have tense: past, present, and future. Tense is also a grammatical category, which must be marked by morphology like aspect.

## (24) Perfect &amp; Progressive Aspect

## I) Perfect

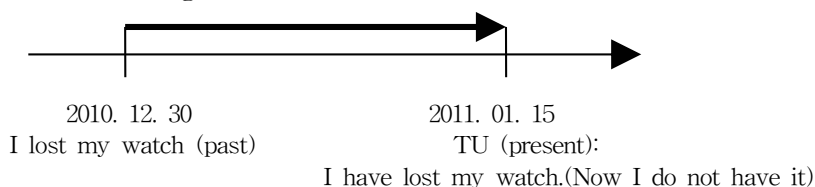
- a. Past: had + p.p.
- b. Present: have/has + p.p.
- c. Future: will have + p.p.

## ii) Progressive

- a. Past: was + ~ing
- b. Present: am/are/is + ~ing
- c. Future: will be + ~ing

The perfect in English is rather different from perfective of viewpoint aspect, which represents the internal temporal constitution of a situation. The perfect does not tell anything 'directly about the situation itself, rather relates some state to a preceding situation'(Comrie 1976: 52) English perfect has the characteristic of two time-points. For instance, present perfect has two time-points, i.e., present and past. Present perfect is used to express the event, which occurred at some point in the past and still has a relationship in the present.

## (25) Perfect in English



As represented in (25), the English perfect has two time-points: present and past for present perfect, past and pluperfect (prior to past) for past perfect, and present and future for future perfect. The perfect has a linear meaning between the two time-points, while simple present, past, or future has a point-like meaning. That is, the English perfect must be understood like a line connecting two time-points, while simple present, past, and future is perceived as a point on the time line. The perfect in English can be summarized as follows:

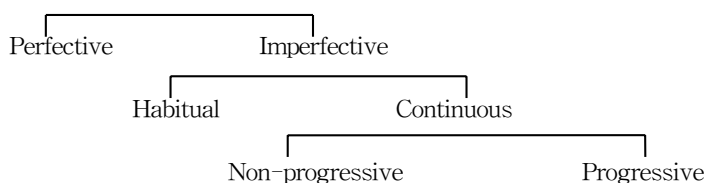
- (26) a. Result e.g. The pizza has all been eaten.  
 b. Experience e.g. Peter has been to Moravia twice.  
 c. Persistent situation e.g. Sarah has lived in Moscow since he  
 was a boy. Sasha has played the piano  
 ever since he was a boy.  
 d. Recent past e.g. Eugene has already finished his homework.  
 (Comrie 1976: 56–65)

The following examples can explain why perfect cannot be used with adverbs indicating the exact point of time.

- (27) a. They moved into a new apartment yesterday.  
 b. \*They have moved into a new apartment yesterday.

Another periphrastic marking for aspect in English is progressive, i.e., ‘be + ~ing’. The progressive denotes on-going activity of state of affairs between initial and final endpoints, which are not bounded. That is, information about the endpoints is not known at all and the on-going action is only focused in the progressive. As mentioned in the previous section, the progressive can represent some marked uses with achievement and semelfactive types of verb: a preliminary stage and multiple-events. Comrie (1976: 25) summarized the aspectual system as follows:

- (28) Comrie’s binary system of aspect



The progressive cannot be formed with stative verbs, so that the possibility to make the progressive form is a tool to distinguish stative types from dynamic types. Furthermore, temporary state or temporary habits can be expressed by the progressive in English as in (29a) and (30a).

- (29) a. I am living in London.  
b. I live in London.

- (30) a. The professor is typing his own letters while his secretary is ill.  
b. The professor types his own letters.

In contrast, example (29b) and (30b) exhibits the persistent state of the actions or habits, which is unmarked in English. The English aspectual system can be diagramed as follows:

(31) The English Aspectual System

| Perfect<br>(have + p.p.)                                    | Progressive<br>(be + ~ing) | Unmarked<br>simple forms              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Result<br>Experience<br>Persistent situation<br>Recent past | Progressive                | Repeated actions<br>Habits<br>Generic |

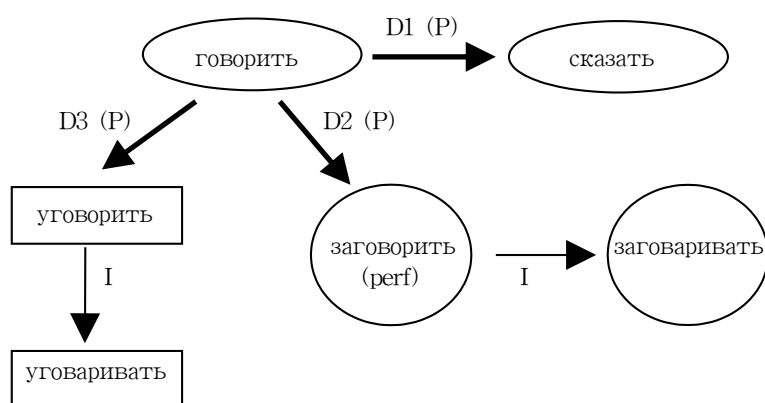
## IV. Aspectuality in Russian

### 1. Aktionsart in Russian

Aspectuality in Russian is marked by a morpheme and consequently the verbal form and its aspect are closely related to each other. However, it is hard to recognize aspect of a verb from its form, since some verbs of different aspect have the same stem and identical structure, e.g., *сходи́ть* 'descend' and *сходи́ть* 'go and come back'; *дро́гнет* 'shiver, be chilled' and *дро́гнет* 'shake, waver' etc. Verbs with new meanings and nuances can be derived from original verbs with a basic meaning in Russian by means of affixation. Affixation can be narrowed into prefixation and suffixation, which are in the process of derivational morphology. Affixation derives new verbal forms and aspects from

original verbs as follows.

(32)



(cf. D stands for derivation; P - perfectivization; I - imperfectivization)

There are three kinds of derivation, which alters each aspect. D1 is associated with the formation of minimal aspectual pair, where a lexical meaning is the same except for aspect. That is, perfective and imperfective do not have any semantic differences. The only difference is aspect. D2 is concerned with adding new information or nuance to the basic verb. D2 creates a prefixed perfective, which has the nuance of how the action evolves with no alteration of the meaning. For instance, говорить 'speak' à заговорить 'begin to speak' and ходить 'walk' à походить 'walk about for a certain time. This kind of affixed verbs, whether prefixed or suffixed, is called *aktionsart*, which is termed as procedurals by Forsyth (1970: 17-31), action types by Smith (1997), and способы действия by Russian linguists. The German term *aktionsart* keeps being used in this paper. D3 is the perfectivization, which creates a new verb different from that denoted by the original verb, for example, ходить 'walk about' à приходить 'come', брать 'take' à выбирать 'choose', and говорить 'speak' à уговорить 'persuade', etc. D3 is not called *aktionsart*, since it creates a semantically different verb.

The study of aktionsart in Russian is of great significance in the study of aspect. The boundaries between these two are blurred, but it deserves to be examined from a point of view of affixation. On the basis of the comprehensive survey by Isačenko (1962: 385-418), Forsyth(1970: 20-31) summarizes types of actions, i.e., aktionsart in Russian. He emphasized that prefixation and suffixation were the ways to make Russian aktionsart.

(33) Russian Aktionsart

**i ) Aktionsart by Prefixation**

- |                                                                                                           |                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a. Inceptives (beginning of action):                                                                      | заговорить, побежать              |
| b. Absorptives (state of complete absorption):                                                            | заговориться, заглядеться         |
| c. Attenuatives                                                                                           |                                   |
| (development of action to a limited extent):                                                              | позаниматься, поесть              |
| (slight degree of development of the action):                                                             | приоткрыть, подтормозить          |
|                                                                                                           | надлюмить                         |
| d. Terminatives (termination of action):                                                                  | дочитать, отработать              |
| e. Totalising (total degree of performance):                                                              | прослушать, спеть, набрать(грибы) |
| f. Resultatives (achievement of desired result or Performance of action to an undesirable/absurd degree): | дозвониться, доиграться(до слёз)  |
| Performance of action to an exhaustive degree:                                                            | иззябнуть, исписать               |
| Performance to saturation point:                                                                          | напиться, выпасться               |
| g. Duratives (development of action in time):                                                             | поспать, поплакать                |
|                                                                                                           | проговорить (полчаса)             |
| h. Comitatives (accompaniment to another or in response to another):                                      | подпрыгивать, пристукивать        |
| Intermittent action:                                                                                      | покашивать, посматривать          |

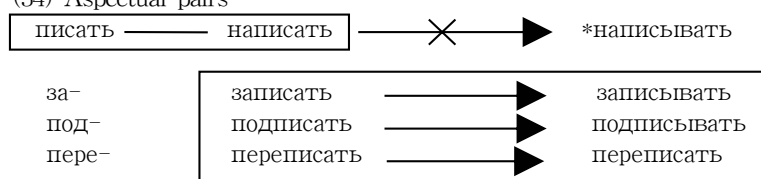
**ii ) Aktionsart by suffixation**

- |                                                  |                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. Semelfactive(performance of a single action): | стукнуть, крикнуть, прыгнуть     |
| b. Frequentatives(iterative; habitual actions):  | едать, пивать, ,бирать, сиживать |

As shown so far, Russian aktionsart is derived from an original basic verb by adding a prefix or a suffix. Prefixed forms of aktionsart are mainly perfectives, which must be distinguished from imperfective counterparts as an aspectual pair. There are no clear-cut boundaries between the two, but there are two major ways to validate aspectual

pairs. One of them is a test via the secondary imperfectivization. If a prefix derives a perfective form of a verb different from the basic form in lexical meaning (that is, it is a semantically new verb), then the derived perfective form of the verb should be imperfectivizable again. The imperfectivized verb from the prefixed perfective form forms an aspectual pair with the perfective counterpart. The other test is associated with whether perfective forms can have imperfective counterparts or not. If the derived perfective verb cannot be imperfectivized, then it means that the perfective form is already the aspectual counterpart of the corresponding imperfective form. Let us look at the following illustrations.

(34) Aspectual pairs



In addition to these tests, it is Маслов who suggested the well-known objective test for the validity of aspectual pairs (Маслов 1948: 307). His method is transposition. He asserted that if a series of events described by the perfective past forms could be translated directly into the imperfective present forms for the historic present narrative without the addition of new lexical meanings, the corresponding verbs form a valid aspectual pair. Refer to the following examples.

- (35) а. Он встал<sub>P</sub>, пошёл<sub>P</sub> к окну и открыл<sub>P</sub> его.  
 б. Он встаёт<sub>I</sub>, идёт<sub>I</sub> к окну и открывает<sub>I</sub> его.

As shown above, the narration of (35a) in the perfective past forms can be switched into the narration of (35b) in the imperfective present forms without any semantic distinctions. It means that those aspectual pairs are all valid.

With regard to minimal aspectual pairs of aktionsart, Исаченко (1962: 385-418) claims that aktionsart is usually used only in one aspect, e.g., говорить ‘speak’ à заговорить ‘begin to speak’. However, Виноградов (1947: 477-93) noticed that the distinction of a variety of situation types of aktionsart from viewpoint aspect is needed in the binary system of perfective and imperfective by demonstrating situation types of кричать: кричать imperfective, крикивать, iterative, покричать perfective, and крикнуть semelfactive. In other words, aktionsart is grammatically defined within the binary frame of viewpoint aspect. The following table by Forsyth (1970: 30) helps to understand the interrelationship between aktionsart and aspect.

(36)

| Elements of meaning        | <i>ПОЧИТАТЬ</i> | <i>КРИКНУТЬ</i> | <i>ВЫПИВАТЬ</i> |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Lexical                 | ‘read’          | ‘shout’         | ‘drink up’      |
| 2. Grammatical: procedural | attenuative     | semelfactive    | iterative       |
| 3. Grammatical: aspect     | perfective      | perfective      | imperfective    |

(Forsyth 1970: 30)

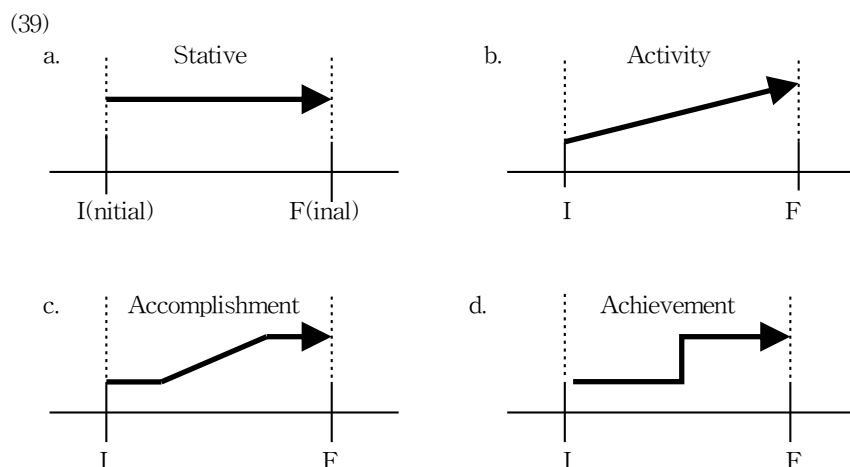
As illustrated in (36), a Russian verb is analyzed by lexical meaning, aktionsart, and aspect. For example, the basic verb читать ‘read’ can be defined as activity type and imperfective. Let us further the interrelationship among lexical meaning, aktionsart, and aspect.

(37) Basic verb

- a. читать (intransitive, activity, atelic)  $\xrightarrow{\times}$  \*прочитать  
(instead, почитать)
- b. читать книгу (transitive, accomplishment, telic)  $\longrightarrow$  прочитать книгу

(38) любить (transitive, stative, atelic)  $\xrightarrow{\times}$  \*полюбить  
(ungrammatical as a minimal aspectual pair)

Imperfective verbs denoting state or activity cannot create their aspectual counterparts, since the natural lexical meaning of atelicity cannot presuppose the completeness of on-going action or state. For this reason lots of Russian activity or stative verbs lack their perfective counterparts as demonstrated by Forsyth (1970: 34). Several types of Russian aktionsart can be derived from the basis of Vendler's four types of verbs, which are diagrammed as below.



To sum up what has been examined on Russian aktionsart, Russian aktionsart can be classified into a lot of action types by affixation, mainly, prefixation. The derived verbs from the original basic verbs are usually perfective and they cannot be imperfectivized in the same meaning. Inceptives, absorptive, and attenuatives, etc., are derived mainly from activity verbs, which belong to intransitive verb group as in (39b). Russian aktionsart can give part of explanation about the lack of aspectual pairs of some verbs as in (37) and (38). Most of all, the interrelationship among lexical meaning, aktionsart, and aspect should be considered to understand the Russian aspectual system. Each verb should be analyzed from a point of view of semantics, aktionsart, and aspect.

## 2. Aspect in Russian

As a well-known fact, Russian aspect is concerned with how the process of verbal actions is viewed: from outside or from inside (Виноградов 1947; Forsyth 1970; Бондарко 1971; Comrie 1976; Черткова 1996; Smith 1997; Зализняк and Шмелев 2000). This is the reason why Russian aspect is termed as viewpoint aspect. Verbal aspect in Russian is dichotomized into either perfective or imperfective. Neutral viewpoint, whose initial or final endpoints are both bounded(/closed) or open, is determined by its boundedness: either perfective or imperfective in Russian (Smith 1997). Perfective views a situation as its entirety from outside, while imperfective views a situation as an interval or process from inside. In this respect, Russian aspect is different from English tense. Aspect is conceptualized by the relationship between Tsit and TT, while tense is construed by the relationship between TT and TU, which is always in the present tense. For this reason, perfective as a counterpart of imperfective is different from perfect. The perfect is used when “the past situation has current relevance, i.e., relevance at the present moment” (Leech 1971: 30-35; Comrie 1985: 25). Givon (2001) classified perfect into another grammatical category as follows.

(40) The Grammatical categorization by Givon

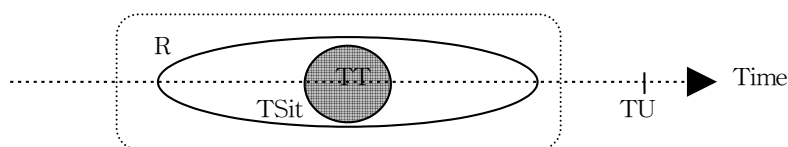
- a. Perfective
- b. Imperfective
  - Progressive-Durative-Continuous
  - Habitual-Repetitive
- c. Perfect

(Givon 2001)

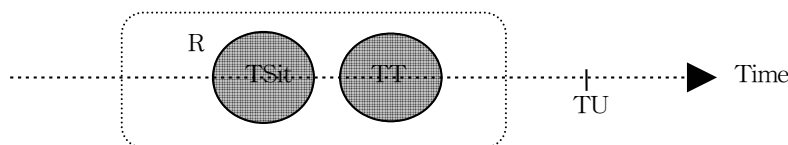
The fact that aspect is concerned with the relationship between Tsit and TT can be visualized as the following examples. In (41)-(44) the main clauses indicate Tsit and the subordinate clauses - TT. TU is always in the present. Shaded circles denote perfective aspect and long ovals stand for imperfective aspect. The rectangles represent the relationship between

TSit and TT, which is shortened into R.

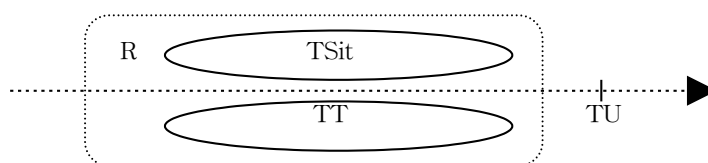
- (41) Он **читал**<sup>P</sup> газету когда я **вошёл**<sup>I</sup> в комнату.



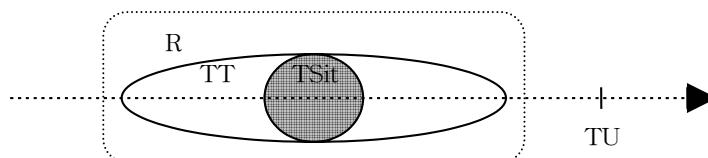
- (42) Он **прочитал**<sup>P</sup> газету когда я **вошёл**<sup>P</sup> в комнату.



- (43) Он **читал**<sup>I</sup> газету когда я **готовил**<sup>I</sup> обед.



- (44) Он **прочитал**<sup>P</sup> газету когда я **готовил**<sup>I</sup> обед.



In Russian aspect, irrespective of whether TT or TSit, imperfective includes perfective, since imperfective is used as a background, while perfective is utilized as an event. The use of imperfective verbs in the clauses of TT and TSit means that the two events are going on at the same time as in (43). In contrast, the use of perfective verbs in the same given environment represents that the actions expressed by the two perfectives occur one after another as in (42). If R, the relationship

between Tsit and TT, occurs prior to TU, it is the past tense. If R occurs posterior to TU, it is the future tense. If R is connected to TU, it is the present tense. However, simple future, i.e., a conjugated perfective form, cannot be compatible to the present tense, because it has the future meaning. Aktionsart is different from aspect in many aspects. However, aktionsart is systematically marked within the binary aspectual frame of perfective and imperfective. That is, aktionsart is a subset of aspect in the grammatical system.

## V. Conclusion

Temporality in Russian has been examined in a typological perspective. Temporality can be expressed by aspect, aktionsart, and tense. Aspectuality can be defined as viewpoint aspect and situation aspect. The former is formed by grammatical morphemes, while the latter is due to the lexical contents of verbs. However, aktionsart as well as aspect in Russian is formed by affixation, which makes all forms belong to either perfective or imperfective. Aspect is conceptualized by the relationship between TSit and TT, while tense is construed by the relationship between TT and TU. Tense in Russian is determined by what temporal point this relationship between Tsit and TT is hooked at on the time line. English aspect is defined only by progressive and perfect, which is different from Russian perfective of viewpoint aspect. These temporal contents, i.e., tense, aspect, and aktionsart, are employed as parameters to determine verbal temporality. Verbal forms must be understood from the point of view of these parameters. These 3-dimensional parameters can analyze verbal lexical items in details. As a parameter, aktionsart can explain some problems: privative aspectual pairs, e.g., the lack of perfective counterpart in imperfectives or vice versa, and the reason why transitive verbs in the perfective form are required to have internal

arguments, which is closely related to telicity. Aspect also demonstrates that it is not concerned with TU and it is associated with how the event is viewed: either from outside or from inside. The interactions between perfective and imperfective are visualized in (41)–(44) without regard to TU. Tense in Russian is determined by when the relationship between perfective and imperfective occurs: prior to TU, concurrent at TU, or posterior to TU.

In spite of this research on the temporality in Russian, the boundary between aspect and aktionsart is still not clear-cut. Moreover, aktionsart must also fit the binary system of perfective and imperfective, which triggers difficulties to distinguish one from another. It seemed that this kind of difficulties must be solved in the near future and the perfect 3-dimensional parameters will be able to function to analyze verbal temporality in Russian in the future.

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Abstract

**Временность в русском языке:  
Время, Вид, и Способы действия  
Сравнительное теоритическое исследование  
с английским языком**

Хёнсоп Ким

Главной целью данной работы является то, чтобы понять соотношение между временем, видом, и способами действия в русском языке. Эти три понятия функционируют в качестве параметров, которые тесно относятся к семантическому и грамматическому свойствам временности. В этой статье временность анализируется с помощью трёх параметров в типологической перспективе.

Время как грамматическая категория изображает временную информацию. Время должно быть маркировано морфологией. Аспектуальность воспринимается двумя понятиями: видом и способами действия. Вид связывается с тем, как наблюдается процесс действия: извне или изнутри. Способы действия связываются с лексическими свойствами глаголов или целых глагольных групп. Время привязывает время ситуации к времени темы, а способы действия - время ситуации к времени высказывания. Время воспринимается понятием внешнего-дейктического времени, а аспектуальность - понятием внутреннего - недейктического времени. Вид является выраженно-эксплицитной категорией, а способы действия - невыраженно-имплицитной категорией.

С точки зрения строгой лингвистической теории время делится на прошедшее и не прошедшее в естественных языках. Притом не исключаются ни русский ни английский языки. Время маркир

уется морфемой. В английском языке существуют два способа выражать вид: перфект и прогрессивная форма. Перфект употребляется когда событие прошедшее в прошедшем времени имеет относимость к настоящему времени. Прогрессивная форма используется, когда происходящий процесс события фокусируется во время высказывания или предназначенное время. Аспектуальность русского языка анализируется в бинарной системе: совершенный и несовершенный вид. Совершенный вид наблюдает ситуацию как совокупность извне, а несовершенный вид наблюдает ситуацию как интервал или процесс изнутри. Русские способы действия выражаются или совершенным или несовершенным видами. Способы действия воспринимаются лексическими свойствами глаголов, которые распределяются по двойным категориям: совершенный или несовершенный вид. Важно, как визуализировать соотношение между совершенным и несовершенным видами в русском языке. Несовершенный вид служит как фон, в котором событие выражается совершенным видом как совокупность. Совершенный вид не может выражать два события, которые происходят одновременно. Два последовательных события, выраженные совершенными видами, происходят одно за другим. Два последовательных события, выраженные несовершенными видами, показывают одновременность двух событий.

Как упомянутое до сих пор, три временных понятия функционируют в качестве параметров, которые способствуют систематическому исследованию русского глагола и глагольной группы. Этого рода подход к русскому глаголу даёт возможности избегать повторений ошибок игнорировать важность лексического свойства глагола в русском языке.

**Key-words:** Tense(시제), Aspect(상성), Aktionsart(동작태), Telicity(불완료상), Perfective(완료상)

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