Russian aspect without AspP
Jonathan E. MacDonald – University of Cyprus

In this paper, I propose an account of Russian lexical perfective prefixes that does not make use of an AspP projection in the syntax in contrast to many proposals (Babko-Malaya 1996, Borer 2005, Szucsich 2002 among others). I argue that event features that indicate whether the event described by the predicate has a beginning or an end can handle the basic facts, and that, furthermore, they provide a simple extension to superlexical prefixes.

A well-known fact about Russian lexical perfectives is that they cannot appear as the complement of so-called phase verbs (Borik 2002). Observe that the imperfective is fine as the complement of a *perestala* 'stop' (1a), while the perfective is ungrammatical (1b).

(1) a. Mary perestala **pit'** pivo. b.*Mary perestala **vypit'** pivo.
 Mary stopped **drink-imp** beer Mary stopped **drink-perf.** the beer
 'Mary stopped drinking the beer. 'Mary stopped drinking the beer.

However, contrary to what is widely assumed, there is a construction in which the imperfective is ungrammatical and the perfective is grammatical (2).

(2) a. *Mary nužno 10 minut čtoby **pit'** pivo.
 Mary needs 10 minutes that **drink-imp** the beer
 b. Mary nužno 10 minut čtoby **vypit'** pivo.
 Mary needs 10 minutes that **drink-perf** the beer
 "Mary needs to minutes to drink the beer.

If phase verbs target part of the event, *perestala* 'stop' targets the beginning of the event such that after the event begins, it stops; and *nužno* 'needs' targets the end of the event such that a certain amount of time needs to elapse before the event ends. Consider another event structure modifier often discussed in studies on non-Slavic aspect (Dowty 1979 among others): *počti* 'almost'. Observe that *počti* elicits a counterfactual interpretation with imperfectives such that the bottle of wine was not started (3a); while with perfectives (3b), an incompletive interpretation is elicited in which the bottle was started, but not finished.

(3) a. Ja **počti** pil butylku vina. b. Ja **počti** vypil butylku vina.
 I almost drank-imp. a-bottle of-wine I almost drank-imp. a-bottle of-wine
 'I almost drank a bottle of wine.' 'I almost drank a bottle of wine.'

Only the beginning of the event can be modified with imperfectives. The *počti* facts in (3a) makes sense; what almost happened was the beginning of a bottle-of-wine-drinking event. Only the end of the event can be modified in perfectives. The *počti* facts of (3b) also make sense; what almost happened was the end of the bottle-of-wine-drinking event.

I propose that the beginning and end of the events described by imperfectives and perfectives of Russian can be accounted for through the use of certain lexically autonomous properties of events: event features. Event features merge into syntax from the lexicon with certain predicate heads and express whether the event described by the predicate has a beginning and/or an end. I assume that only predicates that describe events with a beginning and an end are interpreted as telic; all else is interpreted as atelic. Thus, a Russian imperfective has the aspectual-syntactic structure in (4).

(4) ...$[_{vP}$ v $[_{VP<ie>}$ V-$_{<ie>}$ ([XP])]]

There is an $<ie>$ feature that is merged onto big V. The presence of $<ie>$ (initial event feature) indicates that the event described by the predicate has a beginning. Since there is no end, the predicate is atelic. Additionally, note that the event feature projects to the VP level. Since it projects to VP, I assume that VP becomes a target for Agree with *počti*. When *počti* Agrees with VP$<ie>$, it modifies the beginning of the event, resulting in a counterfactual interpretation; likewise, *perestala* only Agrees with VP $<ie>$, and as such, is only grammatical with imperfectives. Russian lexical perfectives have the structure in (5).

(5)   … …[$_{vP}$ v [$_{VP<fe>}$ V-$<fe>_{[<fe>-<ie>]}$ [DP]]]

There is an event feature compound on the head of big V consisting of both $<fe>$ (final event feature) and $<ie>$. This compound is formed in the lexicon and $<fe>$ is the projecting member of the compound. Since only $<fe>$ projects in the feature compound, when the event feature is merged with the lexical item on big V, only $<fe>$ projects to VP level. Thus, *počti* can only Agree with VP$<fe>$ and only modify the end of the event, resulting in a incompletive interpretation; likewise, *nužno* only Agrees with VP$<fe>$, and as such, is only grammatical with perfectives. Because $<ie>$ is the non-projecting member of the event feature compound, it is invisible to syntactic operations; however, it is still available for semantic interpretation; thus, both $<ie>$ an $<fe>$ enter into aspectual interpretation and the predicate is interpreted as telic. This event feature compounding is on a par with English word compound formation as in (6) in which only one member of the compound projects, and consequently only that member is visible to syntactic operations, such as tense lowering (6b). Moreover, the non-projecting member, although invisible to syntactic operations, still contributes to interpretation, as dropkicking a ball is a distinct action from kicking the ball.

(6)   a. John dropkicked the ball.   b.*John dropp**ed**kick the ball

Under the present analysis of Russian lexical prefixes, there is no AspP projection; yet the basic facts of Russian are accounted for. Under a hypothesis in which AspP is responsible for the ability of the internal argument to affect the telicity of a predicate (Borer 2005, Thompson 2006) the well-known facts in (7) in which an imperfective verb is atelic (ignoring habitual interpretations) independently of the *quantized* nature (Krifk 1989) of the internal argument (7a), and in which the perfective verb is telic independently of the *cumulative* nature of the internal argument (7b), suggest that Russian simply does not have AspP in its syntax.

(7) a. Ja **pil**   butylku vina/vino   *za čas/v tečeniji časa.
        I **drank-imp.** a-bottle of-wine/wine *in hour/during hour
    b. Ja **vypil**   butylku vina/vino   za čas/*v tečeniji časa.
        I **drank-perf**. a-bottle of-wine/win   in hour/*during hour
        'I drank a bottle of wine/wine in an hour/for an hour.'

This analysis extends quite naturally to superlexical prefixes if we assume, as others have, that superlexical prefixes merge outside vP. Svenonius (2005) argues that idioms are contained with the phase. (9) shows that telicity is important to idiomatic interpretation.

(9) a. John cooled the soup for/in an hour.   b. John cooled his heels   for/*in an hour.

Degree achievements are ambiguous between an atelic and a telic interpretation, as such both the time span adverbial and the durative phrase (9a) are compatible. However, the same verb on an idiomatic interpretation of waiting (9b) is compatible only with the durative phrase, suggesting that telicity is contained within the phase. Considering the facts in (9) in light of Svenonius's observation, it follows that if superlexical prefixes are above vP, they cannot contribute to the telicity of the predicate, even if they bear an $<fe>$ feature. Superlexical prefixes do not elicit a telic interpretation of the predicates, as is well-known (Borik 2002). Moreover, if duratives adjoin to a VP $<ie>$, they should be compatible with predicates with superlexical prefixes as $<ie>$ freely projects to VP.

Selected References: Borik, O. 2002. *Aspect and Reference Time*. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Utrecht. **MacDonald, J.E.** 2006. *The Syntax of Inner Aspect*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Stony Brook University. **Szucsich, L. 2002.** 'Case Licensing and Nominal Adverbs in Slavic.' In J. Toman (ed.) *Workshop on Formal Approaches to Slavic Linguistics: The Ann Arbor Meeting 2001*, 249-270. Ann Arbor: Michigan Slavic Publications. **Svenonius, P. 2005.** 'Extending the Extension Condition to Discontinuous Idioms.' Online at http://ling.auf.net/lingBuzz/000191. Thompson, E. 2006. 'The Structure of Bounded Events.' *Linguistic Inquiry* 37.2:211-228.