

IMPERFECTIVE OF NEGATION IN RUSSIAN

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1. “TRANSFORMATIONAL” APPROACH TO IMPERFECTIVE OF NEGATION

I deal with intuitively paired affirmative and negative sentences where a negative sentence is a pragmatically sensible negation of an affirmative one. Let’s take an affirmative sentence with the verb in the Pfv. The question is: what will be the aspect of this verb in the corresponding negative sentence. Three variants easily come to one’s mind.

• Substitution of Ipfv for Pfv is **optional**:

- (1.1) a. Ivan *vzjal* [Pfv] s soboj plašč ili kurtku
‘John *took* a cloak or a jacket’
b. Ivan ni plašča ni kurtki s soboj *ne bral* [Ipfv]
‘John *took* neither a cloak nor a jacket’
c. Ivan ni plašča ni kurtki s soboj *ne vzjal* [Pfv]
‘John *took* neither a cloak nor a jacket’

• Substitution of Ipfv for Pfv is **obligatory**:

- (1.2) a. Nado *ujti* [Pfv] ‘You should *go*’
b. Ne nado *uxodit’* [Ipfv] ‘You shouldn’t *go*’
c. *Ne nado *ujti* [Pfv]

• Substitution of Ipfv for Pfv is **impossible**:

- (1.3) Vjatskij gubernator *ne prinjal* [Pfv] menja <, a velel skazat’, čtob ja javilsja k nemu na drugoj den’ v desjat’ časov. > (A.Gercen)
‘Vjatka’s governor *didn’t receive* me and made me being told that I may come the next day at 10’

Sentence (1.4) cannot be paraphrased as (1.4#):

- (1.4) On tri dnja *ne sadilsja* [Ipfv] za stol
‘He *didn’t sit down* at the table for three days’
(1.4#) Neverno, čto on tri dnja *sadilsja* [Ipfv] za stol

‘It is not true that he *was in the process of sitting* at the table for three days’

In fact, sentence (1.4) is not a pragmatically sensible negation of any affirmative one; (1.4) is not TOTALLY negative semantically (not “semanticheski obshcheotricatel’noe”, Paducheva 1974: 151; NB: total negation ≠ sentential negation).

If the verb is in the future tense then both Pfv and Ipfv aspect are possible:

- (1.6) a. My s vami dolgo *ne uvidimsja* ‘We *won’t see* [Pfv] each other for a long time’;
b. My s vami dolgo *ne budem videt’sja* ‘We *won’t see* [Ipfv] each other for a long time’.

Thus, the conclusion of section 1: there are two types of preverbal negation: total (= paraphrasable by IT IS NOT TRUE THAT) and non-total (= non-paraphrasable) [total ≠ sentential]

In what follows only singular (i.e. not iterative or habitual) meanings of the Ipfv are considered.

2. IMPERFECTIVE OF NEGATION: RETROSPECTIVE VIEWPOINT

There are two major sources of aspectual meaning.

1. Position of the observer (viewpoint; perspective; point of reference) as the basis of grammatical semantics of the Slavic aspect (Padučeva 1986, 1996, 2004):

- (2.1) a. Ivan *vstal* [Pfv] ‘John stood up’
[Pfv *vstal* refers to the situation as a whole, from a **retrospective** viewpoint]
b. Ivan *vstaet* [Ipfv] ‘John is standing up’
[Ipfv *vstaet* presents **the same situation** in a **synchronous** perspective]

2. Aspectual class: ACCOMPLISHMENTS (≈ telic verbs) and ACHIEVEMENTS (≈ momentary verbs).

TWO-COMPONENT THEORY OF ASPECT (Smith 1991):

lexical aspect and viewpoint aspect

For a Pfv form the viewpoint is fixed as a retrospective one. For the Ipvf synchronous perspective is preferable but it is not unique:

- (2.2) a. Kogda ja vošel, John *otkryval* [Ipfv] okno
‘When I came in John *was opening* the window’
[**synchronous** meaning of Ipvf = progressive]
b. Kto *otkryval* [Ipfv] okno? ‘Who *opened* the window?’
[**retrospective** meaning of Ipvf = obščefaktičeskoe]

Only ACCOMPLISHMENTS (like *otkryt* ‘open’ in (2.2)) may have synchronous meaning of Ipvf; ACHIEVEMENTS have none:

- (2.3) a. *Prixodil* [Ipfv] počtal'on ‘The postman *came* <and went>’
[ACHIEVEMENT; **retrospective** meaning of Ipvf]
b. **Smotri*, k nam *prixodit* [Ipfv] počtal'on (example from Maslov 1948)
‘Look, there is the postman *coming*’

For a **negated** Ipvf synchronous viewpoint is possible only when coerced by a highly specific context; in neutral contexts negated Ipvf presupposes retrospective viewpoint:

- (2.4) a. ??Ja *ne čital* [Ipfv] tvoju stat'ju, kogda ty pozvonil
‘I *was not reading* your article when you called’
b. ?V tot* moment ja *ne čital* [Ipfv] ★ tvoju stat'ju [NB prosody]
‘At that moment I *was not reading* your article’
c. Ja *ne čital* [Ipfv] tvoju stat'ju ‘I *haven't read* your article’
[Ipfv of retrospection; **eventive** meaning]

The conclusion of section 2: Ipvf of negation resembles Pfv in that both are retrospective.

3. EXCEPTIONS: NEGATED IPFV WITH A SYNCHRONOUS VIEWPOINT

Negated Ipvf may have a contextually bounded **stative** meaning of **non-occurrence** of event (as in example (1.4) and in (1.6) with *dolgo*):

- (3.1) a. Ja *ne bral* [Ipfv, Past] den'gi mesjac
‘I *didn't take* the money for a month’
b. Ja *ne beru* [Ipfv, Present] den'gi uže mesjac
‘I *don't take* the money for a month’

- (3.1#) *Ja ne bral* den'gi mesjac =
‘It isn't true that at some moment – within a month – I took the money’

Pfv is impossible in the context of a time of duration adverbial, see (3.2); but it is possible in the context of some MARKERS OF STATE; in (3.3) it is *vse ešče* and in (3.4) it is *poka* –

- (3.2) *Ja *ne vzjal* [Pfv] den'gi mesjac
‘I *didn't take* the money for a month’

(3.3) Ja vse eshche ne bral [Ipfv] /ne v^zjal [Pfv] den'gi
'I *didn't take* the money yet'

(3.4) Ja poka ne bral [Ipfv] /ne v^zjal [Pfv] den'gi
'I *didn't take* the money yet'

Though not in (3.5) with *vsě*:

(3.5) Otec vsě ne priezhal [Ipfv] /*ne priexal [Pfv]
'The father *hasn't yet come*'

Ipfv has a stative meaning in (3.6) (namely, the meaning of a TENDENCY); but it is not the imperfective of negation – in fact, Ipfv is used in the affirmative sentence and with the same meaning:

(3.6) a. Teper' ja uže ne popadaju [Ipfv] na koncert
'Now I *am not getting* to the concert in time'

= 'I am in such a state that if it lasts I won't get to the concert'

b. Teper' ja popadaju [Ipfv] na koncert 'Now I *am getting* to the concert in time'

In section 3 I discussed the exception: negative Ipfv with a **synchronous** viewpoint. Now about the norm – namely, about negative Imperfectives with a **retrospective** viewpoint.

4. GENERAL LAWS OF INTERACTION BETWEEN NEGATION AND ASPECT. RETROSPECTIVE VIEWPOINT

Here again the two verb classes are to be distinguished – accomplishments and achievements.

4.1. Accomplishments (= telic verbs = ordinary actions)

A pattern of semantic decomposition of an agentive verb in the Pfv (cf. *Natural Logic* formulas in Dowty 1979: 124):

- I. (a) X was doing something with a Goal in mind [ACTIVITY COMPONENT]
(b) this caused:
(c) the result came into existence, corresponding to the Goal [RESULT COMPONENT]

An example of (incomplete) decomposition of a perfective form of the verb *otkryt* 'open':

II. X *opened* Y =

X was doing something with a Goal in mind: acted upon Y or its vicinity

this caused

the result came into existence, corresponding to the Goal: Y changed its state

4.1.a. Conatives: *ne*+Pfv ≠ *ne*+Ipfv

CONATIVES constitute a subclass of ordinary actions. In the Pfv they have a presupposition connected with the activity component: activity is conceived as an ATTEMPT to reach the result. In fact, in the semantics of the Pfv the activity component is **presupposed** and, thus, it is not negated, see (4.1b); in the semantics of the Ipfv the activity is in the focus of attention and is negated, see (4.1c). Thus, negated Ipfv of a conative cannot have the **resultative meaning** in the context of singularity; example from Apresjan 1980 p. 64:

(4.1) a. Vanja *rešil* [Pfv] *zadaču* =

'Vanja tried to solve the problem and succeeded'

b. Vanja *ne rešil* [Pfv] *zadaču* =

'Vanja tried to solve the problem but didn't succeed'

c. Vanja *ne rešal* *zadaču* 'Vanja didn't try to solve the problem'

In fact, activity is a **precondition** of attaining the result, and if even this precondition is not fulfilled the result is out of the question.

- (4.2) *On ne sdal* [Pfv] èkzamen ‘He didn’t pass the exam’
 ≠ *On ne sdaval* [Ipfv] èkzamen ‘He didn’t intend to pass he exam’
- (4.2') *ne ob"jasnil* [Pfv] ‘didn’t explain’
 ≠ *ne ob"jasnjaj* [Ipfv] ‘didn’t try to explain’
- (4.2'') *ne ugovoril* [Pfv] ‘didn’t persuade’
 ≠ *ne ugovarival* [Ipfv] ‘didn’t try to persuade’

4.1.b. Ordinary actions non-conatives: *ne+Pfv* ≈ *ne+Ipfv*

In the context of retrospection ordinary non-conative actions may have resultative meaning, see (4.3a); thus, Imperfectives of conative and non-conative accomplishments have different meaning, see (4.3b):

- (4.3) a. *Kto stroil* [Ipfv] ètu dorogu? ‘Who *has built* this road?’
 [non-conative; implicature of result]
- b. *Kto rešal* [Ipfv] ètu zadaču? ‘Who was trying to solve this problem?’
 [conative, non-resultative]

In the class of ordinary non-conative actions the difference between *Ipfv*s and *Pfv*s – as concerns result – tends to disappear, both in retrospective and under negation:

- (4.4) a. *Ja ne pročitaj* [Pfv] vašu stat'ju ‘I *haven't read* your article’ ≈
 b. *Ja ne čital* [Ipfv] vašu stat'ju ‘I *haven't read* your article’.

The same quasi-synonymy manifests itself in non-negative contexts:

- (4.4') a. *Ja pročitaj* [Pfv] vašu stat'ju ‘I *have read* your article’ ≈
 b. *Ja čital* [Ipfv] vašu stat'ju ‘I *have read* your article’.

In example from Smith 1997: 256) there is a non-negligible semantic difference between *Pfv* and *Ipfv*:

- (4.5) a. *Sportsmen ešče ne otdoxnul* [Pfv]
 ‘The athlete *didn't have a rest* yet’
- b. *Sportsmen ešče ne otdyxal* [Ipfv]
 ‘The athlete *didn't begin having rest* yet’

The verb *otdoxnut* ‘have a rest’ is not a conative. But it is not an ordinary accomplishment either; in fact, it resembles delimitatives, at least in its combinability with adverbials of duration, cf.

- a. *otdoxnut* nedel'ku ‘to have a rest for a week’;
 b. *poputeshestvovat* nedel'ku ‘to travel for a week’.

A negative sentence may have two interpretations – depending on conative or non-conative meaning of the verb in the *Pfv*:

- (4.6) *Ivan ne prodal* daču =
 a. ‘tried to but didn’t succeed’ [conative];
 b. ‘decided not to sell’ [ordinary action].

Yet the border between conatives and non-conatives is difficult to establish.

4.2. Achievements (= momentary verbs)

In the semantics of achievements there is no activity component that could have been salient within a synchronous viewpoint – **momentary verbs have no progressive**:

- (4.7) a. **On sečas naxodit* [Ipfv] svoi očki [**synchronous** viewpoint is excluded for achievements]
 b. *Kto-nibud' naxodil* [Ipfv] moi očki? ‘Did anybody find my glasses?’
 [retrospective viewpoint, resultative meaning]

Thus, Ipfv of a momentary verb has no interpretation within the synchronous viewpoint and within the retrospective viewpoint it inevitably has the resultative meaning.

The difference between Pfv and retrospective Ipfv of a momentary verb may only concern PERIPHERY components in the semantics of Perfective. Periphery components were not mentioned in the abbreviated semantic decomposition given above in I. Here is a detailed description.

Semantic components of the Pfv aspect (Padučeva 1996, p. 54):

- 1) activity [**principal** component],
- 2) achievement of result [**principal** component],
- 3) relevance of the resulting state – as in Present Perfect [periphery component],
- 4) singularity of event [periphery component],
- 5) temporal definiteness, see Glovinskaja 1982 [periphery component].

In particular, Pfv implies relevance of the resulting state at the moment of observation (point of reference); Ipfv does not:

- (4.8) a. Mne *predložili* [Pfv] napisat' recenziju na ètu knigu
'They *suggested* that I write a review of this book'
b. Mne *predlagali* [Ipfv] napisat' recenziju na ètu knigu
'They *suggested* that I write a review of this book'
[the suggestion is no longer valid]

Pfv implies temporal definiteness, while Ipfv does not:

- (4.9) a. Ja tebjā *predupredil* [Pfv] 'I *warned* you'
[temporal definiteness]
b. Ja tebjā *preduprzhdal* [Ipfv] 'I *warned* you'
[no temporal definiteness]

The same difference between Pfv and Ipfv is revealed in negative contexts:

- (4.10) a. Ja *ne polučil* [Pfv] zarplatu 'I *haven't got* my salary'
[temporal definiteness]
b. Ja *ne polučal* [Ipfv] zarplatu
[no temporal definiteness].

In Partee 1973 it is said about (4.11), when uttered, e.g., while driving a car, that the sentence clearly refers to a particular time:

(4.11) I didn't turn off the stove.

In fact, this is the case of deictic reference. In Russian you may have two different translations:

- a. Ja *ne vyključila* [Pfv] plitu = 'at the moment when I was supposed to' [I forgot to turn it off];
- b. Ja *ne vyključala* [Ipfv] plitu [existential quantification over moments of time] [as an intended action].

The difference in periphery components can be demonstrated for all verbs of example (4.12) in corresponding contexts:

- (4.12) a. ne pokazal [Pfv] – ne pokazывal [Ipfv] 'didn't show';
b. ne poslal [Pfv] – ne posylal [Ipfv] 'didn't send';
c. ne dal [Pfv] – ne daval [Ipfv] 'didn't give';
d. ne govoril [Pfv] – ne skazal [Ipfv] 'didn't say';
e. ne vyzval [Pfv] – ne vyzывal taksi [Ipfv] 'didn't call the taxi'.

Momentary verbs with the Ipfv denoting a **perfective state** lack retrospective resultative meaning; hence, no Ipfv of negation:

(4.13) <Ty *ponjal?* ‘Have you understood?’>

a. Net, ja *ne ponjal* [Pfv] ‘No, I haven’t understood’

b. *Net, ja *ne ponimal* [Ipfv] ‘*No, I didn’t understand’

For an ordinary momentary verb, like *vzjat’* ‘take’, Pfv and Ipfv retrospective are quasi-synonymous:

(4.14) – Ty *vzjal* [Pfv] *moju palku?* ‘Have you taken my stick?’

– Net, ja *ne bral* [Ipfv] ‘No, I haven’t’.

NON-AGENTIVE verbs have no retrospective resultative Ipfv; hence, no Ipfv of negation:

(4.15) *Uragan ne razrušil* (**ne razrušal*) *krepost’* ‘Hurricane didn’t destroy [Pfv] the fortress’

5. BACK TO EXAMPLES FROM SECTION 1

Example (1). Sentences (1.1b) and (1.1c) are synonymous: *vzjat’* ‘take’ is an achievement and the context doesn’t allow to identify any significant difference concerning peripheral components in the semantics of Pfv.

Example (2). Negation of deontic modality marker requires Ipfv, which has the activity component in the focus of attention. Pfv has the main emphasis on result. Meanwhile, it is the activity that can be permitted or prohibited, cf. Rappaport 1985.

Example (3). Temporal definiteness, which is important for the Pfv *prinjal* ‘receive’ in this context, blocks semantic similarity of Pfv and Ipfv. Temporal definiteness is relevant for the structure of discourse, see Plungian 2004; in fact, sentence *Vjatskij gubernator ne prinimal* [Ipfv] *menja* is OK by itself, but it is excluded in the context of (1.3).

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