

Cognate intensifiers in Russian

A claim made by Hale & Keyser (2002) regarding the structure of unergative activity verbs, that involves incorporation of a nominal root to the light verb of *do* type, brought this class of verbs closer to transitive ones. Also it was shown in a number of studies that not only transitive, but also unergative verbs can have an object: the latter type of verbs can appear with so-called cognate objects, or unselected objects that share the lexical root with the verb.

Along with the discussion on argumental versus adjunct status of such objects still held in the literature (Pereltsvaig 1999, Sailer 2010, Nakajima 2006 *et al.*), there is the question of which constituents of an argument structure can possibly be cognate to the verb. Can such elements only be found in the verb-internal position? Do all cognate-to-verb elements have nominal status? Which component of the lexical argument structure of an unergative verb triggers the appearance of cognate material? I will try to answer some of these questions looking at an interesting phenomenon in Russian: that of cognate adverbials at the syntax-semantics interface.

Russian unergative activity verbs, apart from “classical” cognate objects, also found in other languages and illustrated in (1), can also take cognate intensifiers, such as those in (2) and (3).

- (1) On ulybnulsja *ščastliv-oj* *ulybk-oj*.
he.NOM smiled happy. INSTR smile. INSTR
‘He smiled (with) a happy smile.’
- (2) Malčik bežit *beg-om* navstreču mame.
boy runs run.INSTR towards mother
‘The boy runs hastily towards his mother.’
- (3) On pjet *za-poj-em* neskol'ko mesjacev.
he.NOM drinks za-drink.INSTR several months
‘He has been drinking heavily for several months.’

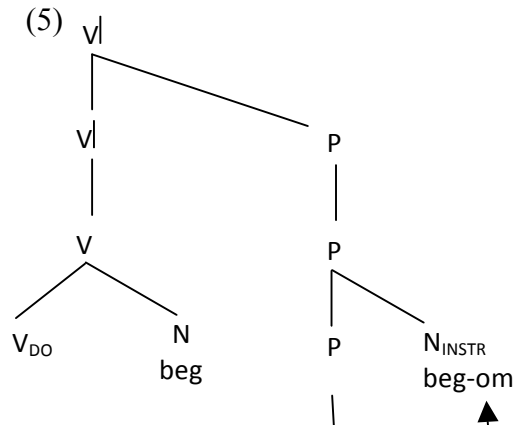
It should be noticed that all cognate elements in (1-3) bear instrumental case, which is indicated by the nominal inflection. The difference is that in (1) *ulybk-oj.INSTR* (‘smile’) is a noun, while *beg-om.INSTR* (‘run’) in (2) and *zapojem.INSTR* (‘za-drink’) in (3) have adverbial status, according to Russian lexicography: they are fossilized instrumental forms and lack all the other forms of the nominal case paradigm. Furthermore, they cannot be modified by an adjective (4), unlike the cognate object in (1).

- (4) Malčik bežit (**bystryj*) *beg-om* navstreču mame.
boy runs fast.INSTR run.INSTR towards mother

In Russian cognate objects can be found not only with unergative, as in (1), but also with transitive and unaccusative verbs. Cognate adverbials can only appear with unergative activity verbs. Nevertheless, this condition is not reversible: not all activity verbs can be modified by a cognate adverbial. Cognate adverbials can appear with either a verb with a matching lexical root (3), or sometimes as a part of an idiomatic expression.

From a syntactic point of view I assume that a nominal root is first incorporated into the light verb of the *do*-type, in such a way that an activity verb is formed. Second, it should be noted that an intense activity is obtained by repeating the already incorporated manner-denoting root. I assume that a P functional projection is adjoined to the verbal projection. This functional projection denotes central coincidence and assigns instrumental case, as it happens

in other non-cognate event modifiers in Russian (Bogatyreva 2011), in some cognate adverbials it surfaces as a prefix (3), and in some of them it is phonologically null (2). The whole structure is adjoined to the verbal projection (5).



From the semantic point of view cognate adverbials do not contribute any independent meaning, except from that already expressed by the verb. They function as event modifiers, by intensifying the meaning of the verb, and that is why they cannot co-occur with other modifiers with an intensifying meaning (6).

- (6) Ja pobezhal begom *(so vseh nog/ izo vseh sil) na stanciju.
 I ran run.INSTR with all legs/ at all forces to station

This intensifying function is quite similar to that performed by the defective clitic *le* in Mexican Spanish (Navarro & Espinal 2012), see (7).

- (7) Iba ya corriendo pero, cuando veo que me iba a alcanzar, entonces le corrí.
 was already running but when see that CL.1P.SG was to reach then le run
 ‘I was already running, but when I realized that (s)he was going to catch up with me,
 then I performed active running.’ (Navarro & Espinal 2012: ex. (3b))

Nevertheless, the group of verbs that admit cognate intensifiers in Russian is much more restricted than the one admitting the intensifying clitic *le* in Mexican Spanish. Navarro & Espinal (2012) argue that all dynamic verbs that involve a gradable scale allow for forming a *le*-predicate (activities, gradable achievements, accomplishments and locatum verbs). In Russian only activity verbs denoting *manner* allow modification by what I name to be *cognate intensifiers*.

Cognate intensifiers share some syntactic and semantic properties with pseudo-incorporated nouns: they do not introduce a discourse referent, do not allow modification but nevertheless they are case-marked for INSTR case. The polemic point is that Russian cognate intensifiers are not arguments of the verb but rather complements of a preposition.

References

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