

Rethinking reference-points: Russian Aktionsart as reference-point constructions

Anastasia Makarova

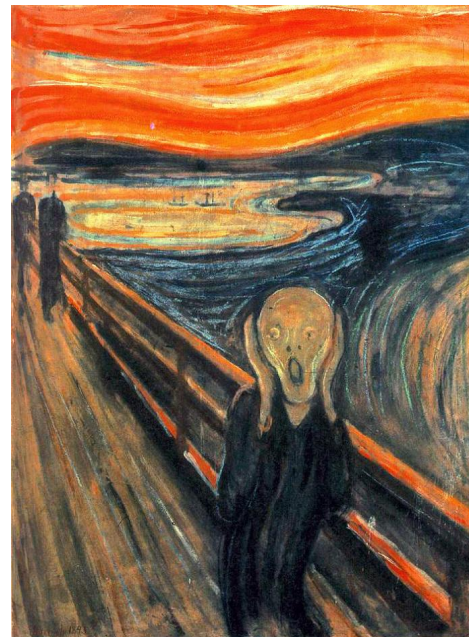
University of Tromsø

CLEAR (Cognitive Linguistics: Empirical Approaches to Russian)

ICLC conference, June 22-28, 2013, Edmonton, Alberta

Russian Aktionsart

- Belong to the intricate aspectual system of Russian
- Aktionsarten modify the meaning of the corresponding base verb, adding quantitative and qualitative characteristics
 - Base verb *kričat* 'shout'
 - Ingressive: *za-kričat* 'start shouting'
 - Delimitative: *po-kričat* 'shout for a while'
 - Intensive: *do-kričat'-sja* 'shout for a long time so that something happens'
 - Diminutive iterative: *po-krik-iva-t'* 'shout from time to time'
- Display high degree of diversity
 - Morphologically
 - Semantically
- Is it possible to provide a unified account?



Proposal: All aktionsarten include comparison to a contextually given reference point, and can be described in terms of metonymy and reference point constructions



Reference point constructions vs. Aktionsart

Traditional RP constructions

- Possessives
- *Dog's tail*
- Target is a concrete physical object (*tail*)
- Reference point is a concrete physical object (*dog*)
- RP is explicit in context
- Tail is part of the dog



Aktionsart

- Delimitatives
- *porisovat'* 'draw for a while'
- Target is not a concrete object (*porisovat'*, action limited in time)
- Reference point is not a concrete object (action not limited in time, *risovat'*)
- RP is explicit (*risovat'*)
- "Drawing for a while" is part of "drawing"

Metaphor:
ACTIONS
ARE OBJECTS



Same metonymical relations between R and T
Aktionsarten are reference point constructions

Aktionsarten: a closer look

- Aktionsarten participate in aspectual relations
- Aspectual relations are metonymic (Janda 2008, Nessel 2009)
- Janda (2008): Russian imperfectives and corresponding Natural Perfectives are related by contact metonymy (Peirsman, Geeraerts 2006):
 - *Ja čital [...], poka ne pročel do konca ètu [...] knigu.*
[Paustovskij. Zolotaja roza (1955)]
'I was reading (IMPF) until I had read (PF) this book to the end'
 - The perfective follows the imperfective immediately:
Contact



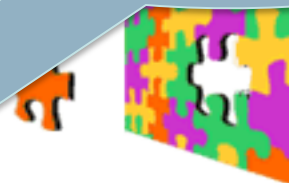
Isačenko (1960):
phasal,
quantitative,
iterative,
distributive

Are all aktionsarten related to the base metonymically, in terms of reference point constructions?

Examples: phasal aktionsarten

- Ingressives, delimitatives:
Starting points and limited periods
zapet 'start singing', *popet* 'sing for a while'
- The whole serves as a reference point
- Evolutives
development of processes
raspogodit'sja 'become nicer (about weather)'
- The initial stage serves as a reference point
- Cumulatives
accumulation of results
napeč' blinov 'bake a lot of pancakes'
- The normal amount of result serves as a reference point

The reference point is not explicit in the context



vs.

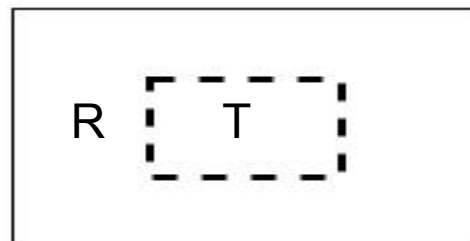
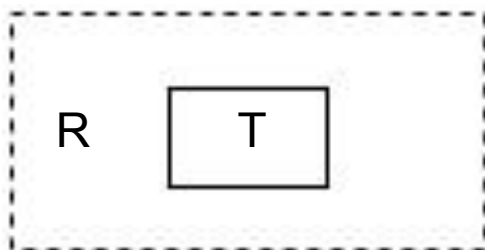


Actions as reference points

Phasal aktionsarten are reference-point constructions

Quantitative aktionsarten

- Semelfactive
selects one bounded episode from
an unbounded activity
čixnut 'sneeze once'
- The whole series of repeated actions serves as a reference
point



- Attenuative
indicates lower intensity of an action, incomplete result,
secondariness
pritixnut 'fade (about sound)'
- The action with normal intensity, the complete result serve
as reference points

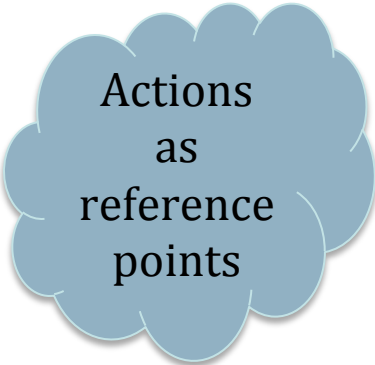


Actions
as
reference
points

Quantitative aktionsarten are reference-point constructions

Iterative and distributive aktionsarten: examples

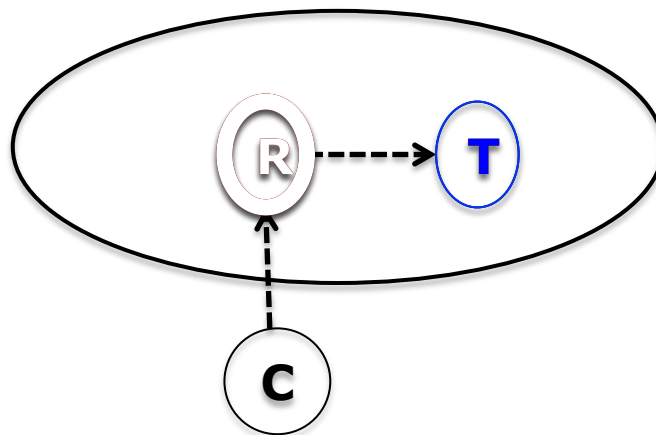
- Iteratives
repeated activities
xažival 'used to go'
- The single event serves as a reference point
- Comitatives
activities running parallel to main activities in the situation
šel i prixramyval 'walked and limped'
- The main activity serves as a reference point
- Distributives
the action affects several objects
pereceloval vse 'kissed everyone'
- The single event serves as a reference point



Actions
as
reference
points

Iteratives and distributives include reference points

Wrapping up



- Russian Aktionsarten can be described as reference point constructions, where
 - **Targets** are actions
 - **Reference points** are actions
- Reference points can be implicit
- Reference points are not limited to concrete objects but extend to actions
- Actions are metaphorical objects