

### The presuppositional imperfective passive in Russian

We present a corpus study and analysis of Russian imperfective (IPF) past passive participles (PPPs), which are commonly assumed not to occur in regular periphrastic passive constructions (e.g. Schoorlemmer 1995, Dickey 2000, Paslawska & von Stechow 2003). This is so because the generally accepted semantics for PPPs is formulated in terms of a consequent state attributed to a subject of a passive sentence, and completed events (with consequent states) are normally described by the perfective (PF) in Russian. We show that IPF PPPs do occur productively in passives, and we propose that they arise in contexts where the completion of the event is not at issue (not part of the asserted meaning) but rather presupposed, so that the IPF shifts the focus on another aspect of the event, instead of the consequent state.

There is a wideheld assumption that Russian PPPs are regularly derived only from PF verbs, and that the few IPF ones that one finds are part of fixed/idiomatic expressions, possibly frozen forms that function like genuine adjectives, but certainly not found in regular passive constructions. The Academy Grammar (Švedova 1980), for instance, states that IPF PPPs are rarely used and difficult to distinguish from adjectives, and it lists a number of IPF verbs that do not form PPPs at all, including secondary imperfectives (SIs, i.e. IPFs with IPF marked by a suffix and added to a (commonly) prefixed verb, which would be PF without the suffix). A more nuanced view is found in Knjazev (2007), who also notes that IPF PPPs are used a lot less often and attributes this to the fact that PPPs cannot refer to an event in process, one of the main functions of the IPF. However, he observes that in cases we do find IPF PPPs (in regular opposition to PF ones) they express one of the “retrospective” IPF meanings, such as repeatability or the so-called general-factual meaning (Maslov 1959; see below).

In this talk, we will discuss the data found in the Russian national corpus ([ruscorpora.ru](http://ruscorpora.ru)) where IPF PPPs appear in predicative position. For practical reasons, the search was restricted to IMP PPPs directly preceding or following a finite form of *byt* ‘be’. Our purpose is to investigate the following questions: (A) Are IPF PPPs limited to fixed or idiomatic expressions and should the PPP in question be viewed as a genuine adjective instead? (B) Do only particular verb classes or certain IPF forms derive PPPs, e.g. are SIs excluded? (C) If we find non-idiomatic IPF PPPs in clear passive constructions, what are the particular features of these contexts? (D) What would be a general semantic-pragmatic characterization of an IPF PPP, and what kind of account captures these? Our findings are as follows.

Concerning (A), we certainly found examples that could be treated as idiomatic (e.g. *lykom šit* lit. ‘sewn with bast fiber’, meaning ‘simple, ordinary’), fixed expressions (e.g. *byl rožden/kreščěn* ‘was born/baptized’) or as PPPs used as genuine predicative adjectives, such as *viden*, lit. ‘seen’ but rather meaning ‘visible’, and similar such forms related to perception verbs (e.g. *slyšan* ‘heard, audible’). On the other hand, we also found many cases of IPF PPPs used productively in passive constructions, such as those in (1) and (2).

- (1) Recepty im pisany byli i na drugoe imja [...]  
prescriptions he.INSTR written.IPF were and on other name  
‘The prescriptions were written by him for different names as well.’
- (2) Znamenitij pokojnik nesen byl do mogily na rukax [...]  
Famous deceased.NOM carried.IPF was until grave on arms  
‘The famous deceased was carried in arms until the grave.’

IPF PPPs that function as true passive participles in passive constructions give rise to both a stative (in (3)) and an eventive (in (4)), as witnessed by the modifiers) passive, hence do not behave as genuine adjectives, but have typical features of a participle.

- (3) Kryt byl dom solomoj [...]  
covered.IPF was house hay.INSTR  
‘The house was covered with hay.’
- (4) Pisano èto bylo Dostoevskim v 1871 godu, pri Pii IX [...]  
written.IPF it was Dostoevskij.INSTR in 1871 year at Pius.GEN IX  
‘This was written by Dostoevskij in 1871 during (the rule of) Pius IX.’

As for (B), the general impression is that we find many verbs of saying and incremental verbs of creation (*write, sew, publish, make* etc.), though not exclusively (cf. *carry* in (2)). Nevertheless, we did not attest a lot of different PPPs in our search, they were mostly the same forms appearing in many different contexts. This suggests that there might still be lexical restrictions. The productivity of those IPF PPPs that we found corroborates their transparent (compositional) semantics. Finally, we encountered few SI PPPs in passives, and since all the attested examples are archaic (i.e. from biblical texts or texts from the 18<sup>th</sup> century or before) we conclude that they are not productive. We speculate that the lack of SI PPPs is also due to the fact that SI morphologically mark both a consequent state (commonly by a prefix) as well as one of the two canonical IPF meanings (progressive, repeatability), and none of these meaning components are prominent or even present in general-factivals (cf. Gehrke 2002).

Concerning (C), we could confirm Knjazev's (2007) observations: passive IPF PPPs are found in non-progressive IPF contexts, e.g. in clearly habitual context as in (5).

- (5) [Vjačeslav ...] kormlen byl skupo, sderžanno [...]  
 Vjačeslav fed was sparingly reservedly  
 'Vjačeslav was fed little.'

However, in most, if not all cases we found the general-factual reading of the IPF at play, i.e. a traditionally well-described non-canonical use of the IPF to refer to a completed event and report the sheer fact that it happened. In particular, as an answer to (D), we argue that we are dealing with Grønn's (2004) presuppositional factual IPFs (see also Mueller-Reichau 2013), as in (6).

- (6) a. Stroeno bylo èto ploxo, xromo, ščeljasto.  
 built was that badly lamely with.holes  
 'It was built/constructed badly, defectively, with holes.'  
 b. Zapiski byli pisany ne dlja pečati [...]  
 notes were written not for print  
 'The notes were written not to be printed.'

In these examples, the event's completion is backgrounded and presupposed, whereas in the foreground we find an expression (a modifier) specifying the manner (in the broadest sense) or the quality of the event. This is furthermore reflected by the non-canonical (or at least marked) word order with the PPP in sentence-initial topic position and the foregrounded information expressed by the modifier appearing after *be*, in focus.

As for (D), we assume Grønn's (2006) DRT account of the presuppositional factual IPF, illustrated in (7a), along the lines of (7b) and (7c) (with the VP embedded under Aspect).

- (7) a. V ètoj porternoj ja napisal pervoe ljubovnoe pis'mo. Pisal [karandašom]F.  
 In this tavern I wrote.PF first love letter wrote.IPF pencil.INSTR  
 'In this tavern, I wrote my first love letter. I wrote it [in pencil]F.'  
 b. [VP]:  $\lambda e[x \mid \text{Instrument}(e, x), \text{pencil}(x)]_{[\text{write}(e)]}$   
 c. [AspectP]:  $\lambda t[x \mid \text{Instrument}(e, x), \text{pencil}(x)]_{[e \mid \text{write}(e), e \subseteq t]}$

In this notation, the subscripted part introduces presupposed information into the DRS, here the writing event itself. We propose that this account can be extended to the cases of passive IPF PPPs, such as those in (1), (2), (4), (6), and probably also (5).

Thus, as an answer to the more general question concerning what kind of consequent state an IPF PPP could possibly refer to, we propose that since the event's completion is only presupposed, the IPF shifts the focus on another aspect of the event, instead of the consequent state. Here, depending on the lexical properties of the verb, we get different results, but mostly it is about some circumstance of the event, be it its manner/quality or purpose.

Selected references: GEHRKE (2002) *Systemhafte Unterschiede im Aspektgebrauch zwischen dem Russischen und dem Tschechischen*. M.A. thesis, HU Berlin • GRØNN (2006) Information structure and aspectual composition. *LoLa 9* • KNJAZEV (2007) *Grammatičeskaja Semantika*. Jazyki Slavjanskix Kul'tur • MUELLER-REICHAU (2013) Pseudo-incorporation in Russian? Aspectual composition and bare singular interpretation. *The Syntax and Semantics of Pseudo-Incorporation*. Brill.