

“Constructions at work”

Wide-spread point of view

(see discussion in “Cognitive Linguistics” 2009, N 1):

CxG is helpful only in those cases where formal theories fail,

Therefore it is oriented mainly on highly idiomatic constructions like *let alone*

Cases where CxG is considered inapplicable (or hardly applicable):

- those where formal approaches succeed
 - typology
 - “general” constructions, like predicative or attributive
-

Three examples of how it works:

(1) those where formal syntax / formal semantics succeed:

✓ Russian depictives

(*On el ovošči syrymi* 'He ate vegetables raw')

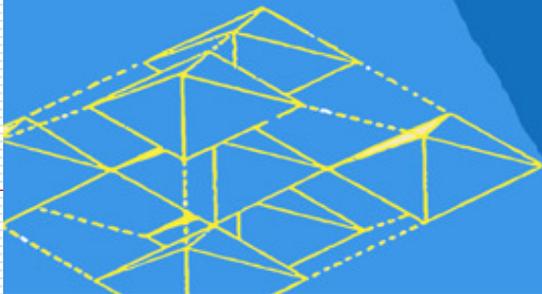
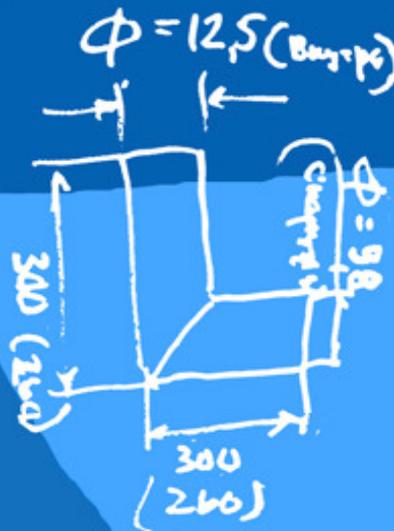
(2) typology:

✓ typology of level-construction (***waist-high pink rock***)

(3) "general" constructions, like predicative or attributive:

✓ semantic processes in standard attributive constructions (*bol' šoj dom* 'big house', *bogatyj chelovek* 'rich person')

ЛИНГВИСТИКА КОНСТРУКЦИЙ



(1)

Russian Depictives as Constructions

Julia Kuznetsova (Tromsö, Norway),
Ekaterina Rakhilina (Moscow, Russia)

see:

Kuznetsova J.; Rakhilina E. 2010. Russian Depictives and Agreeings. In: Gerhild Zybatow et al. (eds.). Formal Studies in Slavic Linguistics. Proceedings of Formal Description of Slavic Languages 7.5. Frankfurt (Main) etc.: Peter Lang.

Depictive VS Agreeing Constructions: Problem of distribution

Formal syntax approach:

Bailyn, J. (2001) The syntax of Slavic predicate Case. ZAS Papers in Linguistics 22:1–26.

Formal semantics approach:

Strigin, A. and Demjanow, A. (2001) Secondary predication in Russian

Filip, H. (2001) The Semantics of Case in Russian Secondary Predication. *Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT) XI*, ed. by Rachel Hastings, Brendan Jackson and Zsofia Zvolenszky. Ithaca: CLC Publications, 192–211.

Examples (1)

Depictive:

<i>Syn</i>	<i>ros</i>	<i>poslušn-ym.</i>
Son-NOM.SG	grew	obedient-INS.SG

'The son was growing obedient.'

Agreeing:

<i>Syn</i>	<i>ros</i>	<i>poslušn-yj.</i>
Son-NOM.SG	grew	obedient-NOM.SG

'The son was growing obedient.'

Examples (2)

Depictive (trans.):

<i>On_i</i>	<i>vstretil</i>	<i>ego_j</i>	<i>pjan-ym_{i,j}</i>
heNOM.SG	met	heACC.SG	drunkINS.SG
'He _i met him _j drunk _{i,j} .'			

Agreeing (trans.):

<i>On_i</i>	<i>vstretil</i>	<i>ego_j</i>	<i>pjan-yj_{i,*j}</i>
he NOM .SG	met	heACC.SG	drunk NOM .SG
'He _i	met	him _j	drunk _{i,*j} .'

<i>On_i</i>	<i>vstretil</i>	<i>ego_j</i>	<i>pjan-ogo_{*i,j}</i>
heNOM.SG	met	he ACC .SG	drunk ACC .SG
'He _i met him _j drunk _{i,*j} .'			

Depictive (DepC):

X_{nom}	V	(Y_{acc})	A_{ins}
<i>On</i>	<i>el</i>	<i>ovošči</i>	<i>syrymi</i>
He	ate	vegetables	raw

Agreeing (AgrC):

X_{nom}	V	(Y_{acc})	$A_{\text{nom/acc}}$
<i>On</i>	<i>el</i>	ovošči	syrye
He	ate	vegetables	raw

Syntactic Approach (Bailyn (2001))

DepC & AgrC = the results of the derivation.

Adj = secondary predications in addition to the primary predication.

(1) <i>Ivan</i>	<i>Ivanovič</i>	<i>prišel</i>	<i>trezv-ym.</i>
Ivan-NOM.SG	Ivanovič-NOM.SG	came	sober-INS.SG
(2) <i>Ivan</i>	<i>Ivanovič</i>	<i>prišel.</i>	
Ivan-NOM.SG	Ivanovič-NOM.SG	came	

(1) <= (2), but:

(3) ... <i>Fel'dsher</i>	<i>kazalsja</i>	<i>ravnodušn-ym.</i>
Paramedic-NOM.SG	seemed	indifferent-INS.SG

(4) * <i>Fel'dšer</i>	<i>kazalsja.</i>
Paramedic-NOM.SG	seemed

Semantic Approach (1)

Nichols 1981, Strigin & Demjanow 2001, Timberlake 2004

- ✓ Stage-level adjectives (*čistyj* 'clean'):
refer to a feature that can be changed => **DepC**
 - ✓ Individual-level adjectives (*železnyj* 'iron'):
refer to permanent feature of the object => **AgrC**
-

Semantic Approach (2): additional tests

Hinterhoelzl (2001): 'not ... yet', 'not ... anymore'

3 levels of boundedness:

- + + => bounded (*bol'noj* 'sick', *p'janyj* 'drunk', *serdityj* 'angry')
- + - => partially non-bounded (*spelyj* 'ripe', *molodoj* 'young')
- - => unbounded (*umnyj* 'intelligent', *glupyj* 'stupid').

Bounded adjectives: allowed DepC, AgrC

Partially bounded adjectives: DepC, *AgrC

Unbounded adjectives: ~~not allowed *DepC, *AgrC~~

Our counterexamples:

нервный ('nervous'):

- **uzhe / *jesche nervnyj* => unbounded?
- expectations: *DepC, *AgrC

Corpus based analysis: both allowed,
cf:

*Ребенок NOM.SG рос нервный (/ нервным) NOM.SG,
просыпался от каждого шороха... [Аркадий Инин 1989]*

'Their child was (growing up) nervous'

The goals of this paper

- 1) to argue that the behavior of the DepC depends on the features of instability and contrast
- 2) to show that the verb is an important element of the construction and must be taken into account
- 3) to investigate how restrictions found for DepC can apply to attributive construction
- 4) to explain why neither the features of the verb nor the features of the adjective can alone explain the distribution.

Depictive Construction

- We suggest that the meaning of the DepC can be described as follows:
- subject (for intransitive verb) or object (for transitive verb) has a temporary unstable feature (expressed by the adjective A), which exists at the time of the action (described by the verb V).
- Instability of the feature can occur because of two reasons.
 - It can contradict the expectations: one event is expected, but another one is observed.
 - Or it is the cancellation which is unexpected:
~~the event observed was cancelled soon.~~

Example

- *Rebenok prišel čist-ym.*
child-NOM.SG arrived clean-INS.SG
'The child arrived clean'

- Two interpretations (= two variants of instability):
 - ***contrast with expectation***: normally the child arrives dirty and the speaker is surprised that this time the child arrived clean,
 - ***contrast with cancellation***: the speaker has seen ~~the child to arrive clean and is surprised that by~~ now he has already become dirty.

Restrictions of instability and contrast

- Explain why DepC has a strong preference for the **stage-level adjectives**, like golyj 'nude', p'anyj 'drunk', zloj 'angry', bol'noj 'sick' (they occur in this construction very often; for crosslinguistic tendencies see Himmelmann, Schultze-Brendt 2005).
- These adjectives denote **features** which can **change easily**, and because of that they fit into the schema of the DepC.
- Semantic restrictions for this construction should affect not only adjectives, but also other elements of this construction.

Restrictions on the verb

- 4 prototypical classes of verbs in DepC:
 - 2 classes of intransitive verbs
 - 2 classes of transitive verbs,

and there is a parallelism between intransitive and transitive subclasses.

- The intransitive subclasses contain verbs with a valence for a feature:
 - change of state verbs (e.g. *stat'* 'become')
 - verbs of tentative perception (e.g. *kazat'sja* 'seem')

Change of state verbs (= мена состояния)

- An obligatory valence for a feature. This feature describes the situation after the change of the state. The verbs oppose a situation before the change and a situation after it. Such semantic restriction correlates with internal schema that we proposed for DepC.

Mešajte, poka
Stir-IMP till

podlivk-a ne stanet odnorodn-oj.
sauce-NOM.SG not become homogenous-INS.SG

'Stir until the sauce will become homogenous'.

Verbs of tentative perception (= оценочное восприятие)

- Difference between the actual situation and its perception. Cf.:
- *Problema, koja koja kažetsja nerazrešim-oj, isčeznet sama <...>*
'Problem that seemed unsolvable will disappear by itself, if you show grit and remain calm'.
- Verbs of tentative perception always have a place for a feature – the feature describes how the object is perceived
- They always express contrast: between the perception and actual situation.
- **Thus** both: change of state & tentative perception express contrast between +feature and -feature

Non-prototypical verbs allowed:

verbs with no obligatory valence for a feature

- In addition to the four classes: verbs which, due to their semantics, have a possible slot for a feature: they contain meaning of change of state (like *načat'* 'begin') or meaning of perception (like *videt'* 'see').

<i>On</i>	<i>načal</i>	<i>etot</i>	<i>roman</i>	<i>molodym.</i>
He-NOM.SG	began	this	novel-ACC.SG	young-INS.SG

<i>Ja</i>	<i>nikogda</i>	<i>ne</i>	<i>videl</i>	<i>otc-a</i>
I-NOM.SG	never	not	saw	father-ACC.SG

smuščenn-ym.
embarrassed-INS.SG

'I have never seen my father embarrassed'

Other verbs are not acceptable

in the DepC because they do not fit into the schema

□ E.g., verbs that include presumption of existence of the object (like *vertet'sja* 'hover' or *žit'* 'live') are not allowed in the DepC:

their subjects are in presupposition =>

no feature can be contrasted as required for the DepC:

*Sobak-a	vertelas'	vokrug	nas	tošč-ej.
dogNOM.SG	hovered	around	us	thinINS.SG

'The dog hovered around us thin.'

An important notice!

- Verbs with a valence for a feature => **any** adjective (including individual-level) are allowed [not obligatory stage-level adjectives], because the contrast of a feature encoded in these verbs is strong enough, cf. (a) and (b):

(a) Change of state verb:

<i>Nosok</i>	<i>vyšel</i>	<i>dlinn-ym.</i>
Sock-NOM.SG	came.out	long-INS.SG

'The sock happened to be long.'

(b) Presumption of existence of the object

<i>*Poezd</i>	<i>prišel</i>	<i>dlinn-ym.</i>
Train-NOM.SG	came	long-INS.SG

'The train came long.'

Some other pairs:

(a) Change of state verb ('be' only in the Past):

Stol byl derevjannym.

'The table was wooden.'

(b) Presumption of existence of the object:

* *On kupil stol derevjannym.*

'He bought the table wooden.'

(a) Verbs of tentative perception:

Dver' vygljadit železnoj.

'The door looks made of iron'

(b) Presumption of existence of the object:

* *On otkryl dver' železnoj.*

'He opened the door iron'

Other verbs: only stage-level adjectives

The contrast encoded in these verbs is not strong enough to reinterpret individual-level adjectives

➤ **(a) stage-level adjective**

On načal ètu rabotu molodym.

'He began this work when he was young.'

➤ **(b) individual-level adjective**

??*On načal etu rabotu ryžim*

'He began this work when he was redheaded.'

➤ **(a) stage-level adjective**

On pilil drova syrymi.

'He sawed the firewood, which was wet.'

➤ **(b) individual-level adjective**

*~~*On pilil drova berezovymi.*~~

'He sawed the firewood, which was birch.'

Agreeing construction (AgrC):

- Our suggestion:
the AgrC means applying a feature to the object.

- Similarity with DepC (reason for similar behaviour):
contrast between having a feature and not having a feature.

- Difference between AgrC & DepC:
 - DepC stresses the fact of the contrast,
 - AgrC creates a connection between an object and a feature.

- The restrictions on the AgrC, both for **adjectives** and for **verbs**, logically follow from its meaning

Adjectives

- Since AgrC is also sensitive to contrast, it has a preference for stage-level adjectives which fit the contrast:

Poezd *prišel* *čistyj* / **novyj* / **dlinnyj*.
'The train arrived clean / *new / *long'

- It is usually claimed that secondary predicates with more specified temporal properties favor the DepC which would mean: **DepC → stage-level adj**, **AgrC → individual-level adj**. (cf.: Nichols 1981, Filip 2001, Strigin, Demjanow 2001).
- Nevertheless, we can see that the AgrC **has the same restrictions** on the adj. **as the DepC**: it allows mostly stage-level adjectives (see AgrC meaning: it is a **new** feature!).

Verbs:

(1) verbs of tentative perception

- These verbs are not allowed in the AgrC (only in DepC):
 - AgrC has no stress on the contrast
 - verbs of tentative perception have strong presupposition of contrast
- => therefore verbs of perception cannot appear in AgrC:
*Dver' vygljadit *železnaja (!železnoj).*
'The door looks as if it is made of iron'
-

Verbs:

(2) verbs of change of state

- They are allowed in the AgrC, if they have no stress on the contrast in the described event:

Tort polučilsja sliškom sladkij.

'The cake was too sweet.'

Derev'ja stojali golye.

'The trees were naked.'

AgrC: the effect of compatibility between verbs and adjectives (cf. DepC)

In the context of a verb with a valence for a feature not only stage-level adjectives, but also individual-level adjectives are allowed:

Nosok vyšel dlinnyj.

'The sock happened to be long.'

**Poezd prišel dlinnyj.*

'The train came long'

Compatibility of verbs and adjectives

- It is commonly assumed that distribution of the elements within a construction can be described in terms of **allowing and prohibiting some classes of the elements**
 - Interestingly, the DepC we are exploring cannot be described by rules of that type:
 - It is not possible to explain distribution of the DepC in terms of any classes of **verbs** or **adjectives**. The same verbs and adjectives can be allowed in the construction in one context and prohibited in the other:
-

Compatibility of verbs and adjectives

(a) **Dver' otkrylas' železnoj / železnaja.*

■ 'The door opened made of iron.'

(b) *Dver' byla železnoj / železnaja.*

'The door was made of iron.'

(a) *Poezd prišel čistym / čistyj.*

■ 'The train arrived clean.'

(b) **Poezd prišel železnym / železnyj.*

■ 'The train came made of iron.'

DepC as a construction

- 2 semantic restrictions:
 - instability of the event
 - contrast between +feature and –feature.
- This meaning can be encoded anywhere in the construction,
e.g. by the verb with a valence for a feature or
by the stage-level adjective.
- **NB!** The same effect: context shift, cf. (b) & (c):
 - (a) **On postroil dom kruglym / derevjannym.*
'He built the house round / wooden'
 - (b) *Rimljane stroili doma kruglymi.*
'Romans built the houses round.'
 - (c) *V XVII veke doma stroili derevjannymi.*
'The XVII-th century houses were built wooden.'

DepC as a construction

- (a) is normally ungrammatical in Russian.
- **BUT** if the situation of the sentence takes place elsewhere (b) and / or in the past (c) as contrasted with the present, then the example with the same verb and the same adjective is possible.

=> A larger context of the sentence can improve the construction and allow its use, even though the individual parts of it would not be allowed.

For similar effects, see Goldberg (1995, 2004).

P.S. Why Instrumental?

- Hypothesis (Rakhilina 2000, Rakhilina, Tribushinina 2010): Russian instrumental case expresses **visual** (perceptible) situations.
 - Instrumental of comparison:
letet' kak strela 'fly like an arrow' VS. *letet' streloj* 'fly arrow-INS'
 - BUT:
On vël sebja kak podlec 'He behaved like a scoundrel'
vs. **On vël sebja podlecom* 'He behaved scoundrel-INS'
molčal kak ryba / **ryboj* 'was silent like a fish'
utonul kak topor / **toporom* 'sank like an axe'
greet kak pechka / **pečkoj* 'gives out warmth like a stove'
-

Why Instrumental?

Cf.:

složit' ruki krestom na grudi `cross the hands'

idti cep'ju `walk in file'

stojat' strojem `stand in line'

kričat' petuxom `cry like a rooster'

NB! Contrastive feature should be manifested = the change of the feature should be perceptible & observable => Instrumental case needed

Conclusion

Construction Grammar approach accounts for all the details of DepC:

- ❑ General meaning
- ❑ Restrictions for each slot
- ❑ Context shifts
- ❑ Quasi-synonymous structures (AgrC)
- ❑ Motivation for the surface marking

These details make a single whole = construction!
