

Exposing the Russian verbal complex via evidence from prefixation and verb phrase ellipsis

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This talk seeks to bring together two prominent, and thus far separate, strands of research on Russian clause structure. The first strand concerns the question of whether there is verb movement in canonical Russian clauses. On this question there appears to be some agreement that Russian groups with languages like English, in which the verb does not move to T (Bailyn, 1995, *inter alia*). The second strand concerns the phenomenon of Russian prefixation, for which it is generally agreed that at least one class of prefix (namely, the superlexical class) externally merges into an Aspectual projection, located by hypothesis between T and vP (Babko-Malaya, 2003; Svenonius, 2004b). Connecting these two strands of research, I discuss novel Russian evidence from V-stranding verb phrase ellipsis (VPE) — traditionally understood to involve movement of the verb to T and ellipsis of vP —which seems to contradict the generalization that V does not move to T in Russian. I further demonstrate that this contradiction is only an apparent one, if we can make reference to an aspectual projection located between T and vP , to which the verb raises in order to ensure surface adjacency to the prefix for purposes of morphophonological well-formedness. This analysis, to the extent that it is successful, provides arguments for the existence of an aspectual projection, and provides a clue about the location of that projection.

According to traditional tests for verb movement (Pollock, 1989), the Russian verb does not move to T. It never precedes negation, and neither low adverbs nor floating quantifiers intervene between the verb and object (1). Given that V does not appear to move as far as T in Russian, it seems strange that it would exhibit behavior normally associated with verb movement, followed by VP ellipsis (2). This construction is characteristic of V-to-T raising languages, such as Irish (McCloskey, 1991) and Hebrew (Goldberg, 2005), among others. Unlike object drop (3), Russian V-stranding VPE allows elision of animate objects (2). The construction also exhibits other characteristics associated with VPE: the elision can take place in an embedded clause or in an adjunct (4), and both strict and sloppy readings obtain (5). The existence of the construction in (2), then, appears to contradict the conclusion that no V-to-T raising takes place in Russian.

Proposals by Svenonius (2004b), among others — that prefixes of the superlexical (SP) variety merge in a functional Asp projection between T and vP — can help us resolve the apparent contradiction between the existence of V-stranding VPE and the lack of movement from V to T in Russian. The Asp projection creates a landing site for the moved verb in V-stranding VPE that is outside the domain of elision, but still below T.

It has been hypothesized on independent grounds that V must move to Asp in order to join with the prefix (Babko-Malaya, 2003; Svenonius, 2004b); V-stranding VPE gives us a way to further test this claim. VPE is differentially sensitive to the various subcomponents of the verbal complex. This suggests that some, but not all, of those subcomponents are contained within the syntactic constituent targeted for elision and are therefore required to be identical to corresponding subcomponents within the antecedent constituent. Subcomponents which are, in the syntax, outside and above the ellipsis-site are subject to no such identity requirement (McCloskey, 2007; Goldberg, 2005). It appears that neither SP, secondary imperfective or tense are subject to the identity requirement for V-stranding VPE (6), confirming that these components are in fact merged outside

the elision site (ν P). The V-stranding VPE evidence thus provides supporting evidence both for the claim that V does not move as far as T in Russian, and the claim that an Aspectual projection located below T and above ν P (the domain for elision) must ultimately host the moved verb in canonical Russian clauses.

- (1) My vse ne ljubim často čitat^l (*vse/*často/*ne) gazetu.
 We all NEG love.1PL often read.INF (all/often/NEG) newspaper.ACC
 ‘We all don’t like to read the newspaper often.’
- (2) *Question:* Ty poznakomil Mašu s Petej?
 You.NOM acquaint.2SG.M.PFV Maša.ACC with Peter.PREP
 ‘Did you introduce Masha to Peter?’
Answer: Konečno poznakomil!
 Of-course acquaint.1SG.M.PFV
 ‘Of course I introduced (them)!’
- (3) Petja posadil devoček na krovat^l. Dina *(ix) odel.
 Peter sat.3SG.M girls.ACC on bed Dina *(them.ACC.PL) dressed.3SG.F
 ‘Peter sat the girls on the bed. Dina dressed (them).’
- (4) Včera ja Mašu s Sašej ne poznakomila, i poka ne
 yesterday I Maša.ACC with Saša.PREP NEG acquainted.1SG.F and until NEG
 poznakomlju, ne uedu.
 acquaint.1SG.FUT NEG leave.1SG.FUT
 ‘I didn’t introduce Masha to Sasha yesterday, and I won’t leave until I do.’
- (5) Dina kupila svojej dočke učebniki, a Maša ne kupila.
 Dina bought.3SG.F REFL.DAT daughter.DAT textbooks.ACC CONJ Maša NEG bought
 ‘Dina_y bought her daughter textbooks, but Maša_x didn’t (buy her_{x/y} daughter textbooks).’
- (6) *Question:* Ti uže pokormila mališa?
 You already DLMT-feed.2SG.F baby.ACC
 ‘Did you already feed the baby?’
Answer: Da, ja teper^l perekarmlivaju, kažetsja.
 Yes, I now EXCS-feed.2IMPF.1SG seems.REFL
 ‘Yes, it seems I’m over-feeding (him) now.’

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