Chapter 6

The Russian perfective present in performative utterances

Anja Gattnar
University of Tübingen

Johanna Heininger
University of Tübingen

Robin Hörnig
University of Tübingen

This paper aims to show that perfective verbs in Russian can – contrary to common sense – be used in performative utterances without lacking the performative meaning of the sentences. In Russian, performative utterances are generally built with an imperfective (IPV) verb in present tense, first person singular or plural. According to the Slavistic literature, the perfective (PV) verb is at most used in marked contexts and with a few selected performative verbs. In our contribution, we will show experimentally that the use of present perfective verbs in performative utterances is considerably more widespread than supposed so far. In two experiments, Russian native speakers located events in time, providing evidence, first, for the temporal interpretation of the sentence depending on the verbal aspect, and second, concerning whether the temporal interpretation differs depending on how much context is given.

Keywords: Russian, verbal aspect, speech act, performative verbs, interpretation, experimental evidence

Anja Gattnar, Johanna Heininger & Robin Hörnig. The Russian perfective present in performative utterances. To appear in: Denisa Lenertová, Roland Meyer, Radek Šimík & Luka Szucsich (eds.), *Advances in formal Slavic linguistics 2016*. Berlin: Language Science Press. [preliminary page numbering]

Preprint

1 Introduction

1.1 General remarks

Aspect use in performative utterances in Russian is the core issue of the present paper. We adopt the terminology of Eckardt (2012) and define a performative utterance as a sentence that is used to issue a speech act by applying a speech act verb. Since the present tense of the verb is a precondition for a performative utterance, the IPV verbal aspect is preferred in Russian. However, the Slavistic research literature describes cases where a performative speech act is expressed by a PV verb. This is interesting, because the PV aspect is thought of being unable to appear in present tense. Example (1a) shows a sentence expressing an ordinary correct performative speech act, whereas the corresponding version (1b) with PV *predložu* is unacceptable. Example (2) demonstrates the same mismatch with another speech act verb:

(1) a. Predlagaju otpravit'sja domoj.
propose.IPV go home
'I propose to go home.'

b. * Predložu otpravit'sja domoj.
propose.PV go home
Intended: 'I propose to go home.'

(2) Ja bol'še nikogda ne budu krast',
'I will not steal any more,'

a. kljanjus' ot čistogo serdca.
swear.IPV from pure heart
'I swear with all my heart.'

b. * pokljanus' ot čistogo serdca.
swear.PV from pure heart
Intended: 'I swear with all my heart.'

Different from the verbs in (1) and (2), there are other speech act verbs allowing PV aspect, as in (3):

(3) a. Ja prošu vas govorit' gromko i po očeredi.
I ask.IPV you speak loud and by order
'I ask you to speak loudly and one by one.'

b. Ja poprošu vas govorit' gromko i po očeredi.
I ask.PV you speak loud and by order
'I ask you to speak loudly and one by one.'

Preprint

Dickey (2000), for example, has noticed that for some speech act verbs in performative utterances both IPV and PV aspect can be used. Thus, his study is limited to some particular verbs like the PV *verba dicendi skazat'* 'to tell', *priznat'sja* 'to confess', *zametit'* 'to note', *pribavit'* 'to add', *poprosit'* 'to ask for', *povtorit'* 'to repeat', *doložit'* 'to report' (Dickey 2000: 179). In his opinion, some PV *verba dicendi* are not allowed, like *predložit'* 'to propose' and *pokljast'sja* 'to swear'; see (1) and (2).

We want to show that PV speech act verbs can perform performative utterances to a larger extent than previously expected. We do not assume that the PV and IPV performative utterances are used interchangeably. In our opinion, a PV speech act verb has an influence on the pragmatic interpretation of the speech act. We will not investigate interpretation differences in depth in this paper, but rather we want to experimentally establish that both aspects can indeed be used to utter a performative speech act.

In the following, we give a short overview of the Russian aspectual system (§1.2). Afterwards we explain the peculiarities of performative speech acts and how aspect use is related to it (§1.3). Then, the phenomenon of the present perfective is described, which has been intensively studied in the Slavistic literature (§1.4). Subsequently, we discuss the present perfective in performative speech acts and present the relevant literature on Russian performatives (§1.5). These theoretical issues are followed by the presentation of two experiments that we have conducted in St. Petersburg in 2016 (§2). Finally, we discuss our results and give an outlook for future research (§3).

1.2 The Russian aspectual system and tense

In Russian, aspect is a grammaticalized category. Nearly every Russian verb has two aspects that are morphologically distinguished and differ in grammatical function: the imperfective aspect (IPV) and the perfective aspect (PV). These verb pairs are derived by prefixes or suffixes: *pisat'* 'to write.IPV' and ***na**pisat'* 'to write.PV'; *otkryt'* 'to open.PV' and *otkr**yvat'*** 'to open.IPV'.[1] The IPV aspect is used for (i) habitual or iterated actions, (ii) single, incomplete actions in progress, and (iii) actions which do not emphasize the result. The PV aspect is used (i) for single,

[1]Other verb pairs are opposed by suffix only: *kričat'* – *kriknut'* 'to cry' or by suppletion *brat'* – *vzjat'* 'to take'. A smaller group of verbs do not form pairs: (i) biaspectual verbs: *kaznit'* 'to punish', (ii) *imperfectiva tantum*: *sidet'* 'to sit', and (iii) *perfectiva tantum*: *rinut'sja* 'to pounce on'.

completed actions or (ii) ongoing actions intended to be completed.[2]

Morphosyntactically there exist only three tense categories: preterite, present, and future. Not all three categories are represented in both IPV and PV aspect. Whereas IPV verbs conceptualize all three tense categories, PV verbs appear only in preterite and future, because present tense is not compatible with the concept of completeness. The lack of present tense marking for PV verbs plays a key role in our investigation. Table 1, a simplified version of Swan (1978), summarizes the (semantic) categories resulting from crossing aspect with tense in Russian.

Table 1: Tense and aspect in Russian

	past	**present**	**future**
IPV	✓	✓	✓ (with 'be' + infinitive)
PV	✓	✗	✓

1.3 Performatives

A speech act is called performative when the utterance and the action named by a speech act verb take place simultaneously. The utterance is part of the action (Austin 1962) and performs it. Performative utterances are not statements that are true or false, but concrete, unique actions. In Russian, by default, performatives are expressed with the IPV aspect present, first person; see examples (4)–(6).

(4) Obeščaju tebe poechat' k babuške.
promise.IPV you go to grandmother
'I promise you to go to grandmother.'

(5) Blagodarju za ponimanie.
thank.IPV for understanding
'Thank you for understanding.'

[2] There is a huge range of works on verbal aspect and its meaning to which we cannot refer in this paper. Therefore we limited our selection to pure Slavistic or Russian works that are generally accepted among Slavists and in Russian aspectology: Anstatt (2003); Avilova (1976); Bondarko (1971); Breu (1980; 2000); Comrie (1976); Dickey (2000); Galton (1976); Klein (1995); Lehmann (1999); Maslov (1984); Mehlig (1981); Padučeva (1996); Petruxina (2000); Rassudova (1982); Zaliznjak & Šmelev (2000); etc.

Preprint

(6) Ja očen' žaleju, čto my ne vstretilis' s vami.
I very apologize.IPV that we not meet with you
'I deeply apologize, that we didn´t meet you.'

We share the opinion with Apresjan (1988), Padučeva (1994), and Petruxina (2000) that performative verbs in Russian can only express a punctual event and not a process. They do not describe an ongoing event, because the action expressed by the verb is accomplished once the speaker finishes the utterance (Petruxina 2000). Therefore, it would be incorrect to translate one of the above examples, for instance (4), with the English continuous form: **I am promising you to go to grandmother.*[3]

As PV cannot get a present tense marking in Russian, we would expect that only the IPV speech act verbs can be used in performative speech acts. However, we have found examples with PV speech act verbs in performative speech acts, as in (7a) from the Russian National Corpus (RNC):[4]

(7) a. Pozdravim že naših peredovikov i zaodno
congratulate.PV.1PL PTCL our labor.activists and simultaneously
prezidenta s neverojatnym uspechom!
president with amazing success

b. Pozdravljaem že naših peredovikov i zaodno
congratulate.IPV.1PL PTCL our labor.activists and simultaneously
prezidenta s neverojatnym uspechom!
president with amazing success
'We congratulate our labor activists and also the president for the amazing success.'

In (7a) the PV speech act verb *pozdravim* 'congratulate.PV.1PL' is used to perform a speech act. In (7b) we replaced the PV verb of the original sentence with the corresponding IPV verb *pozdravljaem* 'congratulate.IPV.1PL'. (7b) is a properly built performative sentence with the IPV verb meeting all three conditions for a successful performative speech act: speech act verb, first person, and present tense. We find it plausible to assume that (7a) expresses a performative speech act, too.

It is interesting for us whether a PV speech act verb changes the sentence meaning compared to the corresponding IPV verb, for instance with respect to our

[3]Harnish (2007) discusses the English present progressive in performatives and shows that performative utterances favor the simple present.

[4]Interestingly, PV speech act verbs systematically fail the 'hereby'-test, which is only feasible with IPV verbs: *S ėtim ja prošu[IPV] vas govorit' gromko.* 'Hereby I ask you to speak loudly' vs. **S ėtim ja poprošu[PV] vas govorit' gromko* (Eckardt 2012).

variants (7a) versus (7b). The occurrence of present perfective speech act verbs is documented in many works, but we don't know of any experimental investigation addressing the interpretation of performative utterances as a function of the verb aspect. Are utterances with PV speech act verbs actually understood as performative speech acts? If yes, what does this imply for the temporal localization of the event denoted by the PV speech act verb? In our study we presuppose that the localization of an event denoted by a speech act verb in the present indicates a performative interpretation. We feel confident that sentences with PV speech act verbs are performative utterances only in the case that they express an event that proceeds simultaneously with the utterance time. This is only possible, when the PV speech act verb is interpreted as present perfective.

In the next section we will present arguments for a PV in performative utterances in Russian and invoke the debate on the present perfective.

1.4 The present perfective in Russian

The debate on the present perfective started with Koschmieder (1929). He declares, initially only for Polish, that present perfective is possible in non-future meaning solely when the action time coincides with the utterance time and when the verb is in first person form. Forsyth (1970: 120) even claims: "Their use in non-future meanings, however, is extremely common and not on the least exceptional." Švedova (1980) supports this view and notes that under certain syntactic conditions the PV verb can denote actions that take place in the present and not in the future with nuances of meaning. Rathmayr (1976) goes even further. She is of the opinion that the present perfective is equal to IPV present plus some stylistic function; yet the stylistic properties are difficult to identify: Even if they are identified by a survey of native speakers they are anticipated to strongly diverge.

Dickey (2000), as before him Bondarko (1971) and Galton (1976), calls the phenomenon of present perfective "the temporal coincidence of a situation that is referred to a PV present form in the moment of the utterances". The present perfective does not refer to the future but to the time of utterance and, simultaneously, to the time at which the action denoted by the PV verb takes place. De Wit (2017) dubs the phenomenon differently, "the present perfective paradox", because the meaning of the temporal localization that belongs to the PV aspect should prevent the use of present perfective in Russian. Additionally, the occurrence of present perfective in Russian is explained in terms of the aspectual function of the PV aspect. De Wit (2017) agrees with Breu (2000) who notices that the aspectual meaning of the present perfective is stronger than the temporal meaning. In present perfectives, the aspectual meaning should be stronger than the

temporal meaning of the aspect, because the meaning of temporal localization that is expressed by the PV aspect would prevent the use of present perfective. We will discuss this view at the end of the paper.

So far we have argued for the availability of a present perfective in Russian. But it still remains open, however, what kind of influence perfective present has in contexts where it substitutes the IPV.

1.5 The range of present perfective in performatives

Like others, we accept the present perfective as means of expressions with the above mentioned readings. We argue that the high acceptability of present perfective implies that PV speech act verbs are able to fulfill a performative speech act. This is a purely theoretical assumption and based on the mentioned theoretical works, empirically supported only in a few cases by way of corpus data (Łaziński 2014; Wiemer 2014). Before we present our experimental work, it is necessary to mention some aspects concerning the type of speech act verbs that are used in IPV and PV as well as to give possible conceptual differences between the use of IPV and PV speech act verbs that are offered in the research literature.

In the Slavistic research literature several works attest the occurrence of PV speech act verbs in performative speech acts. But the use of PV verbs, according to these works, is limited to special verb types. For example, Rjabceva (1992) and Dickey (2000) claim that only a few PV *verba dicendi* can be used in competition with IPV performatives. Only for those verbs the PV verb may be used and only those PV verbs may perform a performative utterance. Contrary to Rjabceva and Dickey, Wiemer shows that the use of PV speech act verbs is also possible for some social performatives like request, desire, thanks, refusal and approval, see example (8). Łaziński (2014) agrees with Wiemer and demonstrates similar corpus data for Polish, Czech and Slovak.

(8) Ispol'zuja ėti sposoby, uverju čto vam budet legko zanimat'sja
using this methods, assure.PV that you.DAT will.be easily study
russkim jazykom.
Russian language
'When you use this methods, I assure that you will easily learn Russian.'
(Wiemer 2014: 107)

The corpus findings of Wiemer and Łaziński lead us to the question, whether the range of PV verbs in performative utterances is wider than Rjabceva and Dickey assume. Some more detailed consideration is given by Israeli (1996; 2001). She

classifies speech act verbs into three groups depending on the verbal aspect that a speech act verb can take to perform a speech act (Israeli 2001: 84): (i) verbs performing a speech act only with IPV (see (1) and (2)), for example *prikazyvat'* 'to order.IPV', *trebovat'* 'to demand.IPV', *blagodarit'* 'to thank.IPV', *pozdravljat'* 'to congratulate.IPV' etc., often the IPV speech act verb has an iterative meaning; (ii) verbs performing a speech act both with IPV and PV (see (3)), for example *prosit'/poprosit'* 'to request.IPV/.PV', *sovetovat'/posovetovat'* 'to advise.IPV/.PV', želat'/poželat' 'to wish.IPV/.PV', etc.; (iii) verbs performing a speech act only with PV; in the latter case, the verb functions as structuring element, like *perejdëm k novoj teme* 'let's open.PV a new future topic', *otmetim* 'we note.PV', *zametim* 'we mention.PV' etc. (see example (10)).

(9) Govorju tebe – živ, živ!
say.IPV you living, living
'I'm telling you – I'm alive, alive!'

(10) Ja vam bol'še skažu: net povesti pečal'nee na svete.
I you say.PV more: NEG.is story sadder in world
'Even more, there's no sadder story in the world.'

According to Israeli (2001), IPV and PV performative utterances of the second group cannot be used interchangeably. This makes the aspectual competition particularly interesting for us. Although the alleged semantic or pragmatic differences in the interpretation of IPV and PV speech act verbs are not the central issue of this paper, we would like to shortly address Israeli's account. Whereas we believe that her account provides a promising perspective for future investigation, the first task accomplished here is to provide evidence that PV verbs actually can be used in carrying out a performative speech act.

Israeli argues that IPV and PV speech act verbs differs with respect to authority marking in performative utterances. A typical example for the authority marking in performative utterances in her sense is seen in (11a) from the oral corpus of the RNC. According to Israeli, the sentence shows, in comparison with (11b), how the different aspect use can influence the speaker's position of authority:

(11) a. *Situation:* Teacher to student:
Ja poprošu vas govorit' gromko i po očeredi.
I ask.PV.1SG you speak loud and by order
'I ask you to speak loudly and one by one' (RNC, oral corpus)

b. *Situation:* Young man to museum attendant:
Prošu vas nikomu ni zvuka!
ask.IPV.1SG you nobody no word
'I ask you to tell nobody.' (RNC, oral corpus)

The use of the PV verb *poprosit'* 'to ask.PV for' in (11a) can be connected with the communicative situation. The PV speech act verb stresses the authority of the teacher [+authority] towards the student. In (11b) the IPV verb *prosit'* 'to ask.IPV for' is used in a communication between a young man and a museum attendant. We might argue with Israeli that the IPV verb in (11b) is pragmatically neutral or even a polite request.[5] In §2 we will now present our two experiments that give evidence that sentences with a PV speech act verb are interpreted as present tense utterances.

2 Experimental evidence

We have provided instances of present perfective in performative speech acts in Russian from the literature as well as from the RNC. The interpretation of the PV speech acts has not yet been demonstrated experimentally. Rathmayr (1976) mentions that she has asked four (sic!) informants and every one of them has given her another interpretation. Others work with their own intuition or support their arguments by presenting examples from corpus investigation (Wiemer 2014; Łaziński 2014). The main concern is to study if sentences like (11a) are interpreted as performative speech acts or not. In (11a) the verb has the grammatical form 1SG PV aspect. The additional meaning that refers to the aspect function of PV aspect would be 'will ask for'. In future meaning the sentence is not a performative speech act but a statement about an event in the future: In the future there will be a situation in which I am saying *I ask you to speak loudly and one by one.* Our aim is now to investigate the temporal alignment of PV performative verbs in morphological present.

Our assumption is that in performative context the use of the present perfective is becoming more widespread than it is reflected in the literature so far. We even tend to assume that every PV speech act verb can principally be used to execute a performative speech act. Our experiments reported below compare the temporal interpretation of speech act verbs with perfective versus imperfective aspect: Are PV speech act verbs never or reliably less often interpreted as present tense IPV speech act verbs? We assume that:

[5]The examples (11a) and (11b) do not only differ in aspect use. In addition, the [+authority] marked utterance (11a) has an overt subject *ja* 'I' whereas in (11b) there is a null subject. We also agree with one of the reviewers that the sentences improve with overt subject. Our own corpus investigation leads us to the assumption that an overt subject encourages the [+authority] marker. We did not yet test sentences with overt subjects experimentally, but consider it a future task to do so.

- A future tense interpretation indicates that the event denoted by the PV verb does not coincide with the time of utterance, that is, the tense is not considered present perfective and the sentence is not understood as a performative speech act.
- A present tense interpretation indicates that the event denoted by the PV verb coincides with the time of utterance and, therefore, the tense is considered present perfective. The performative reading is thus available. In the case of performative utterances the context can also be a pragmatic presupposition. The hearer expects the honesty of the speaker who cares about the success of the rules.

The two experiments that are presented in this section test our hypothesis that PV speech act verbs used in performative utterances may substitute IPV verbs.

2.1 Method

2.1.1 Participants

41 native speakers of Russian participated in Experiment 1 without STOP-READING (as explained in §2.1.3 below), a different sample of 40 Russian native speakers took part in Experiment 2 with STOP-READING. All participants were students of Saint Petersburg State University. They were paid 10 € for their participation.

2.1.2 Material

20 verbs were selected from a pool of 28 speech act verbs, based on acceptability scores gathered in a web-based pilot study:[6] *uverit' / uverjat'* 'to assure sth. to so', *izvinit'sja / izvinjat'sja* 'to apologize for sth.', *poprosit' / prosit'* 'to ask for sth.', *potrebovat' / trebovat'* 'to demand sth. from so', *poželat' / ženat'* 'to wish sth. to so.', *poblagodarit' / blagodarit'* 'to thank so. for sth.', *priznat'sja / priznavat'ja* 'to admit sth. to so.', *priglašat' / priglasit'* 'to invite so. to sth.', *razrešit' / razrešat'* 'to allow so. to do sth.', *objazyvat'sja / objazat'sja* 'to commit oneself to sth.', *pochvalit' / chvalit'* 'to praise so. for sth.', *predupredit' / predupreždat'* 'to warn so. of sth.', *predstavit' / predstavljat'* 'to introduce so. to so.', *poprivetstvovat' / privetstvovat'* 'to welcome so.', *priznat' / priznavat'* 'to recognize so. as so.', *prikazat' / prikazyvat'* 'to order so. to do sth.', *otklonit' / otklonjat'* 'to reject sth.',

[6] 43 Russian native speakers judged performatives containing the verbs without preceding context on a scale from 0 to 6 (= most acceptable); mean acceptabilities of the 20 selected verbs were 3.7 (SD 0.96) and 1.7 (SD 0.96) for performatives with IPV and PV verb aspect, respectively.

preprint

pozdravit' / pozdravljat' 'to congratulate so. for sth.', *prostit' / proščat'* 'to forgive sth. to so.', *otkazat' / otkazyvat'* 'to refuse sth. to so.'

Two variants of a performative target sentence (in short: performative) were constructed for each verb. The variants differed only in the aspect of the sentence initial verb which was either imperfective or perfective present in the first person singular, exemplified in (12a) and (12b). Both performative variants were preceded by the same context consisting of two or three sentences.[7]

(12) *Context:* Vere predlagajut novuju dolžnost' na rabote. Ona dolgo kolebletsja, no eë načal'nik govorit:
'Vera is offered a new position at work. She hesitates for a long time, but her boss says:'

a. Uverjaju Vas, čto ėta dolžnost' – važnyj šag na puti k uspechu.
assure.IPV.PRES.1SG you that this position great step on way to success

b. Uverju Vas, čto ėta dolžnost' – važnyj šag na puti k uspechu.
assure.PV.PRES.1SG you that this position great step on way to success

'I assure you, that this position is a great step towards success.'

In addition to the performatives, two variants of non-performative, declarative target sentences (in short: declaratives) were constructed for each of the twenty verbs, serving as control items. Again, the target variants differed only in the aspect of the verb which was either IPV or PV past in the third person singular, as exemplified in (13a) and (13b). Both declarative variants were preceded by the same context which differed from the one of the performatives.

(13) *Context:* Terapevt zaxodil v palatu k pacientam po utram.
'The therapist came to the patients into the ward in the morning.'

a. Vrač uverjal ich v tom, čto oni vse skoro vyzdorovejut.
doctor assure.IPV.PAST.3SG them at that, that they all soon will.recover

[7] The complete list of stimuli can be found here: http://hdl.handle.net/11022/0000-0007-CB0A-A@Appendix.pdf.

Preprint

b. Vrač uveril ich v tom, čto oni vse skoro
doctor assure.PV.PAST.3SG them at that, that they all soon
vyzdorovejut.
will.recover
'The doctor assured them, that they will all recover soon.'

In addition to the performatives and the controls, 40 fillers were added to the material. The two variants of the performatives and the controls were assigned to two lists such that each item variant was assigned to one of the lists and either list contained 10 performatives and 10 controls with IPV and PV aspect. About the same number of participants was tested with either list, hence all participants worked on a set of 80 items consisting of a context followed by a target.

2.1.3 Procedure

Participants were tested separately in a quiet room at the Laboratory of Cognitive Studies at the State University of Saint Petersburg. Participants were randomly assigned to Experiment 1 without STOP-READING or Experiment 2 with STOP-READING. Participants were seated in front of a PC and instructed about the task to be performed. In each experiment participants worked on three practice trials to get familiar with the procedure before they moved on to the experimental block of trials.

In Experiment 1 without STOP-READING, a trial began with a full presentation of the context. Participants read the context until they understood what happened and then pressed the space bar. Now the context was replaced by the target sentence displayed left-aligned in the centre of the screen. Participants read the target sentence to understand what happened next; their task was to indicate by means of three cursor keys, where the event described in the target sentence was located in time: '←' ≙ past, '↑' ≙ present, '→' ≙ future (Response 1). For the sake of congruence with Experiment 2, the whole sentence was presented again immediately after Response 1, prompting participants to indicate the location again by pressing one of the cursor keys (Response 2). In order to encourage participants to read the contexts and targets carefully, half of the trials ended with a yes-no comprehension question that was answered by means of two designated keys (mean accuracy: 91%). A session lasted for about 20 minutes.

Trials in Experiment 2 with STOP-READING began with a full presentation of the context, too. Once participants understood what was told in the context they pressed the space bar. Now the context was replaced by the target sentence displayed left-aligned in the centre of the screen, yet masked except for the first

Preprint

word; masked characters other than blanks were substituted by underscores. Participants could then read the target sentence from left to right in a word by word fashion (moving window technique): with the first press of the space bar the first word was masked and the second word was uncovered; with each subsequent press the current word disappeared and the following word showed up. In this way participants could proceed until the end of the sentence. However, beginning with the presentation of the first word of the target sentence, participants could stop reading at any time by pressing one of the cursor keys instead of the space bar if they felt able to indicate where the described event is located in time: '←' ≙ past, '↑' ≙ present, '→' ≙ future (Response 1). Immediately after Response 1, the sentence was presented as a whole, prompting participants to indicate the location again via a cursor key (Response 2). Half of the trials ended with prompting an answer to a yes-no comprehension question (mean accuracy: 91%). A session lasted for about 30 minutes.

2.1.4 Main objectives

It was of main interest where events described by performatives are located in time. Events described by performatives are expected to be located in the present if they are interpreted as a performative speech act; non-performative interpretations should lead to localizations in the future. Performatives with IPV verb aspect should therefore generally lead to localizations in the present. Performatives with PV verb aspect are expected to also lead to a substantial amount of localizations in the present. The greater the loss of performative power due to the PV aspect, the more reduced should be the frequency of localizations in the present. If the localization in time depends to a large extent on the verb aspect, i.e., on verb morphology, the localization should be quite insensitive to the remaining content of the target sentence. In particular, localizations should be unaffected by the possibility to stop reading.

2.2 Results

The data were subjected to a generalized linear mixed model (GLMM) with a binomial link function, using the *lmer* function of the *lme4* package (Bates et al. 2015) for the R software for statistical computing (R Core Team 2014). When preparing the data for analysis, we had to realise that the performative target sentences for five of the 20 verbs deviated crucially from the stipulated structure in that the speech act verb was placed later than sentence-initially (see items 8, 13, 14, 18 und 20 in the stimuli; see link in footnote 7). One additional item, 6, had

Preprint

to be dropped due to a wrong stress marking. The analysis is thus based on 14 performatives, with 6 and 8 items instantiating the same condition on the two lists. α-errors for z-values are marked as follows: *** if $p < .001$; ** if $p < .01$; * if $p < .05$.

2.2.1 Response 2 in Experiments 1 and 2

Localizations in the present or future are valid if occurring after performatives (98% and 96% valid in Exp.s 1 and 2); localizations in the past are valid if occurring after declaratives (88% and 89% valid in Exp.s 1 and 2). The proportions of valid localizations in the present are 81% versus 70% for IPV and PV aspect in Experiment 1 and 78% versus 52% in Experiment 2. The GLMM converged for random intercepts for participants and random intercepts and slopes for items. In addition to the two main effects of Aspect and Experiment, the interaction was also significant [Asp: $z = 4.50^{***}$; Exp: $z = 2.54^{*}$; Asp×Exp: $z = 2.69^{**}$]. Localizations in the present decreased from IPV to PV aspect more strongly with than without STOP-READING (Exp. 2: 77 to 51%; Exp. 1: 81 to 70%), as shown in Figure 1.

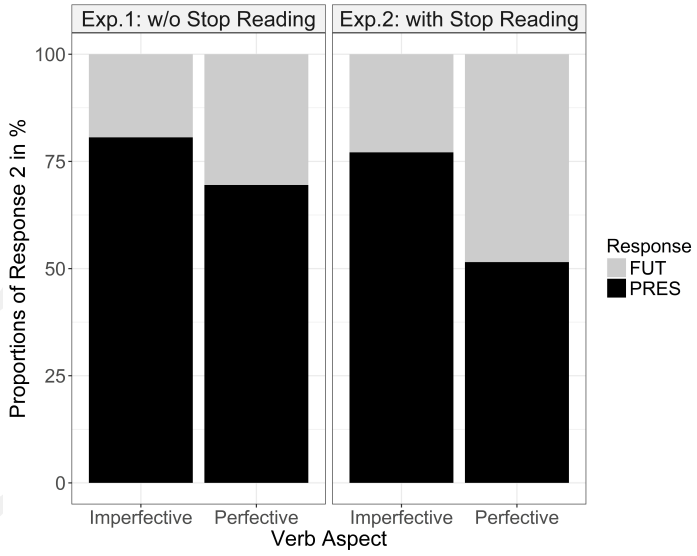


Figure 1: Response 2 (present versus future) in Experiments 1 and 2 as a function of verb aspect

2.2.2 Early versus late responses in Experiment 2

Figure 2 shows how valid localizations in time accumulate across the regions of target sentences with IPV (left panel) and PV verb aspect (right panel). Numbers indicate the proportions of localizations in the present within the valid responses, i.e., disregarding continuations. Whereas we recognize no trend for the IPV aspect, it appears that for the PV aspect these proportions remain around 41% until they rise in the last region up to 51% for Response 2. To determine whether the increase is substantial, Response 2 was categorized as Early (if it matched Response 1 given earlier than region 8) or Late (if it matched Response 1 given on region 8 or revised earlier Response 1) and was subjected to a GLMM analysis with the fixed factors Aspect and Time (Early vs. Late). The GLMM converged for random intercepts (participants and items) and random slopes for Aspect (items). In addition to a strong effect of Aspect, Aspect interacted with Time [Asp: $z = 3.61^{***}$; Asp × Time: $z = 3.40^{***}$]. We take this interaction to show that the proportion of localizations in the present is indeed substantially larger for late compared to early responses in case of a PV aspect (71 vs. 41%; total *n*: 91 vs. 177); no such difference is obtained in case of an IPV aspect (74 vs. 78%; total *n*: 89 vs. 181).

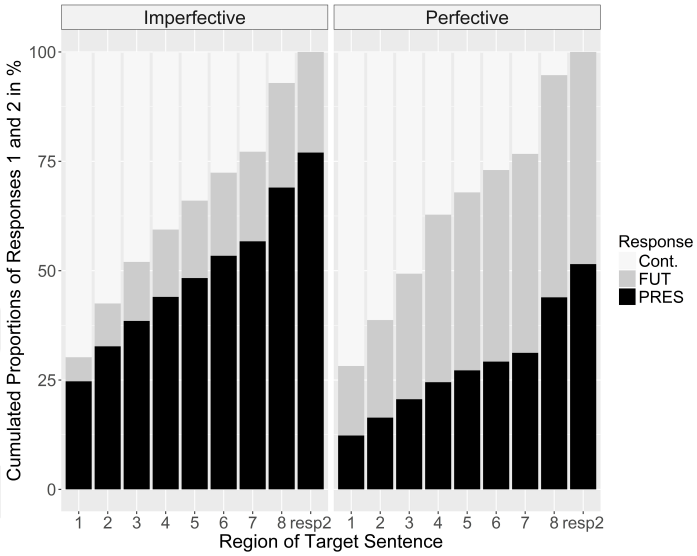


Figure 2: Responses 1 and 2 in Experiment 2 as a function of aspect dependent on sentence position

In sum, the results substantiate the claim that the PV aspect on a speech act verb reduces its performative force compared to the IPV aspect, i.e., it reduces the

probability that a native speaker interprets the sentence containing it as to perform a speech act. However, the performative force of the verb is often preserved nevertheless, in that speakers frequently interpret the utterance of the sentence as a speech act. In addition, given a PV verb aspect, there is evidence that speakers more likely opt for a speech act interpretation after having processed the uttered sentence as a whole. This claim is supported by much more speech act interpretations in Experiment 1 without STOP-READING than in Experiment 2 with STOP-READING; further evidence comes from Experiment 2 in which speech act interpretations were more frequent if participants read the whole sentence compared to when they stopped reading before the end of the sentence. This might be taken to indicate that the aspect morphology of the sentence initial PV verb is in conflict with a speech act interpretation, with the latter prevailing in particular if based on a full interpretation of the sentence. In line with this, we observe that a valid Response 1 often persists in Response 2 in particular for localizations in the present, 95%, compared to localizations in the future, 82%.

3 Discussion and outlook

The results of the experiments confirm our hypothesis that PV speech act verbs can be used in performative utterances, and may in principle substitute the IPV speech act verbs. Our investigation does not explain the restrictions of the class of PV verbs that can occur in performative utterances. Like Wiemer (2014) we tend to the opinion that PV performatives are lexicalized to a certain extent. For our investigation the evidence that PV speech act verbs are interpreted as present tense verbs is the most important result. In both experiments taken together about 60% of the PV speech act verbs were interpreted as present perfective. As not all of our speech act verbs were *verba dicendi* (for example 'to thank', 'to invite', 'to welcome', etc.), we may conclude, that not only *verba dicendi* but also other speech act verbs can be used in performative speech acts. Following our hypothesis, we have strong evidence that the present perfective speech act verbs own performative force. This is shown by the frequent present tense localizations of events denoted by our PV speech act verbs. Localization based on the full sentences promoted the localizations of the PV performatives in the present tense. We infer this from the comparison of the two experiments. Moreover, we found a late increase of locations in the present tense in Experiment 2 and a persistence of early localizations in the present. Therefore, we conclude that the sentence context plays an important role for the temporal localizations in the case of PV speech act verbs. The verbal aspect is thus not the decisive factor for the well-formedness

Preprint

of performative utterances in Russian. The interpretation as performative is also influenced by the particular semantics of the speech act verbs, the sentence embedding the speech act verb, and maybe the preceding context.

Summing up, we reach the following conclusions, which are in part preliminary and need further support:

First, PV speech act verbs can be used in performative speech acts, because, due to the available present tense interpretation, they fulfill condition 'present tense' that is inevitable to carry out a performative speech act. Second, the information conveyed by the sentence information following the PV speech act verb has an influence on the interpretation of the verb if it bears PV but not IPV aspect. Third, given the very low ratings of PV performatives without preceding context (see footnote 5), we suspect that the speech act interpretation also benefits from the preceding context. Evidence for this comes from the fact that the results with PV verbs in Experiment 2 increase in late present localization nearly to the rates for the IPV verbs. In the case of PV speech act verbs, we can even speak of an interaction between the successive enhancement of context information and the localization in the present. The PV speech act verb by itself may be crucial for present localization, but a more reliable localization is reached when the speech act verb is embedded in a wider context. The stronger performative power of the PV aspect in Experiment 1, where the whole speech act appeared before the decision, confirms how the quantity of the sentence information has influence on the decision.

As far as we know, this is the first experimental investigation on aspect use in Russian performatives showing that PV speech act verbs can be used in performative utterances. A next step would be to answer the question, whether and how the use of PV speech act verbs influences the sentence meaning in comparison to IPV speech act verbs. Like Israeli we tend to hypothesize a pragmatic difference between IPV and PV performative utterances; see example (12). It would be interesting to check whether an overt subject even strengthens the marking of authority in performative utterances. Another important consideration is the verbal semantics of IPV and PV speech act verbs. When we argue with Breu (1980) and De Wit (2017), we must also look at the verb immanent aspectual functions in which IPV and PV speech act verbs are different from each other. Following this line of reasoning, IPV speech act verbs would name and perform the performative event, whereas a PV speech act would emphasize the completion of the performative speech act. Both approaches are well worth pursuing and will give motivate further experimental investigation.

Preprint

Abbreviations

1	1st person	PL	plural
3	3rd person	PRES	present tense
DAT	dative	PTCL	particle
IPV	imperfective aspect	PV	perfective aspect
NEG	negation	RNC	Russian National Corpus
PAST	past tense	SG	singular

Acknowledgements

Special thanks go to Prof. Tatiana V. Chernigovskaya, head of the Laboratory for Cognitive Studies, St. Petersburg State University and her staff member Daria Chernova. They supported us in recruiting participants and placed a laboratory to our disposal for conducting the experiments. Furthermore, we wish to thank Tilman Berger, Stefan Heck, Eugen Kravchenko, Inna Pirina, Tatiana Perevozchikova and two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments.

References

Anstatt, Tanja. 2003. *Aspekt, Argumente und Verbklassen im Russischen.* Universität Tübingen Habilitation thesis.

Apresjan, Jurij D. 1988. Glagoly momental'nogo dejstvija i performativy v russkom jazyke. In Ju N. Karaulov (ed.), *Rusistika segodnja. Jazyk: Sistema i ee funkcionirovanie*, 57–78. Moskva: Nauka.

Austin, John L. 1962. *How to do things with words.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Avilova, Natal'ja S. 1976. *Vid glagola i semantika glagol'nogo slova.* Moskva: Akademija nauk SSSR, Institut russkogo jazyka.

Bates, Douglas, Martin Mächler, Benjamin M. Bolker & Steven C. Walker. 2015. Fitting linear mixed-effects models using lme4. *Journal of Statistical Software* 67(1). 1–48. DOI:10.18637/jss.v067.i01

Bondarko, Aleksandr V. 1971. *Vid i vremja russkogo glagola: Značenie i upotreblenie.* Moskva: Prosveščenie.

Breu, Walter. 1980. *Semantische Untersuchungen zum Verbalaspekt im Russischen.* München: Sagner.

Breu, Walter (ed.). 2000. *Probleme der Interaktion von Lexik und Aspekt (ILA).* Tübingen: de Gruyter.

Preprint

Comrie, Bernard. 1976. *Aspect: An introduction to the study of verbal aspect and related problems*. Vol. 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

De Wit, Astrid. 2017. *The present perfective paradox across languages*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dickey, Stephen M. 2000. *Parameters of Slavic aspect: A cognitive approach*. Stanford, CA: CSLI Publications.

Eckardt, Regine. 2012. *Hereby* explained: An event-based account of performative utterances. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 35(1). 21–55. DOI:10.1007/s10988-012-9110-4

Forsyth, James. 1970. *A grammar of aspect: Usage and meaning in the Russian word*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Galton, Herbert (ed.). 1976. *The main functions of the Slavic verbal aspect*. Skopje: Macedonian Academy of Sciences & Arts.

Harnish, Robert M. 2007. Performative utterances: Seven puzzles. *Łódź Papers in Pragmatics* 3(1). 3–21. DOI:10.2478/v10016-007-0002-y

Israeli, Alina. 1996. Discourse analysis of Russian aspect: Accent on creativity. *Journal of Slavic Linguistics* 4(1). 8–49.

Israeli, Alina. 2001. The choice of aspect in Russian verbs of communication. *Journal of Slavic Linguistics* 9(1). 49–98.

Klein, Wolfgang. 1995. A time-relational analysis of Russian aspect. *Language* 71(4). 669–695. DOI:10.2307/415740

Koschmieder, Erwin. 1929. *Zeitbezug und Sprache: Ein Beitrag zur Aspekt- und Tempusfrage*. Leipzig: Teubner.

Łaziński, Marek. 2014. The aspect of Polish performatives against the background of politeness rules. *Zeitschrift für Slavische Philologie* 70(2). 328–343.

Lehmann, Volkmar. 1999. Aspekt. In Helmut Jachnow (ed.), *Handbuch der sprachwissenschaftlichen Russistik und ihrer Grenzdisziplinen*, 214–242. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Maslov, Jurij S. 1984. *Očerki po aspektologii*. Leningrad: Izdateľstvo Leningradskogo universiteta.

Mehlig, Hans Robert. 1981. Satzsemantik und Aspektsemantik im Russischen: Zur Verbalklassifikation von Zeno Vendler. In *Slavistische Linguistik 1980: Referate des VI. Konstanzer Slavistischen Arbeitstreffens Hamburg 23.–25. Sept. 1980*, 95–151. München: Sagner.

Padučeva, Elena V. 1994. Vid i vremja performativnaja glagola. In Nina D. Arutjunova (ed.), *Logičeskij analiz jazyka. Jazyk rečevych dejstvij*, 37–42. Moskva: Nauka.

PREPRINT

Padučeva, Elena V. 1996. *Semantičeskie issledovanija: Semantika vremeni i vida v russkom jazyke: Semantika narrativa*. Moskva: Jazyki Russkoj Kul'tury.

Petruxina, Elena V. 2000. *Aspektual'nye kategorii glagola v russkom jazyke v sopostavlenii s češskim, slovackim, pol'skim i bolgarskim jazykami*. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta.

R Core Team. 2014. *R: a language and environment for statistical computing*. https://www.r-project.org/.

Rassudova, Ol'ga P. 1982. *Upotreblenie vidov glagola v sovremennom russkom jazyke*. 2nd edn. Moskva: Russkij jazyk.

Rathmayr, Renate. 1976. *Die perfektive Präsensform im Russischen: Eine multilateral-kontrastive Funktionsanalyse der russischen Form anhand ihrer französischen und deutschen Entsprechungen*. Wien: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

Rjabceva, Nadezhda K. 1992. Mental'nye performativy v naučnom diskurse. *Voprosy jazykoznanija* 4. 12–28.

Švedova, Natalija J. 1980. *Russkaja grammatika*. Moskva: Nauka.

Swan, Oscar. 1978. A generative semantic description of Russian tense and aspect. *Slavic and East European Journal* 22(4). 519–524. DOI:10.2307/307674

Wiemer, Björn. 2014. Upotreblenie soveršennogo vida v performativnom nastojaščem. In *Acta Linguistica Petropolitana*, 90–113. Sankt-Peterburg: Trudy instituta lingvističeskich issledovanij.

Zaliznjak, Anna A. & Aleksej D. Šmelev. 2000. *Vvedenie v russkuju aspektologiju*. Moskva: Jazyki Russkoj Kul'tury.

Preprint