# PEDAGOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON RUSSIAN VERBAL ASPECT: CORPUS STUDY

by

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## DEDICATION

Dedicated to Dr Teresa Polowy

I remember when I was thinking of switching tracks, Dr Polowy insisted that I continue with the LLL track because as she said it would look good on my resume for PhD applications. I wish I had been able to share the news with her about starting a PhD in the spring 2016. Even though she taught literature, she was always interested in talking about language matters and pedagogy. At a conference when I presented part of this thesis and corpus research, she suggested to another presenter who was after me to use corpus referring to my study. She was always there to hear me out and approve of my ideas. One of them was teaching a class at a computer lab, another big one was KGB conversation club. She will always be part of the Russian and Slavic Department at the University of Arizona.

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## ABSTRACT

The current work attempts to analyze aspect use in spoken language for pedagogical purposes by analyzing and comparing aspect behavior in a corpus of spoken texts and textbook dialogs. The immediate goal of this study is to incorporate corpus findings into material design for the first two years of Russian language instruction. The methodological approach taken in this work can be described as frequency-based and corpus-driven.

# CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The issue of aspect in Russian and other Slavic languages has received considerable attention from both theoretical and applied linguists. While there have been a number of studies on the description (formation, functions and contexts) and even acquisition of aspect, the pedagogical side of it, namely how-to's and what-to's of teaching aspect to L2 Russian learners, has been largely overlooked. Further, many of the existing studies on aspect have focused on the use of aspect in written language through the use of invented (unnaturally-sounding to native speakers) examples created solely for the purposes of research. As a result, the current work attempts to analyze aspect use in spoken language for pedagogical purposes by analyzing and comparing aspect behavior in a corpus of spoken texts and textbook dialogs. The immediate goal of this study is to incorporate corpus findings into material design for the first two years of Russian language instruction.

The underlying theoretical framework of this work is usage-based language acquisition (Tomasello 2005) associated with frequency effects:

> "That language users are sensitive to the input frequencies of constructions entails that they must have registered their occurrence in processing, and these frequency effects are thus compelling evidence for usage-based models of language acquisition" (Ellis et al 2013).

Frequency information has been at the forefront of dictionary design since 1980's (Sinclair and Renouf, 1988) and has also proven to enrich curriculum and materials design (Römer 2005; McCarthy 2005). Nation (1993) estimated that 85 percent of spoken English consists of 1,000 most frequently used words. While frequency data has been used for creating dictionaries for Russian for quite a long time now (Brown 1996; Sharoff et al 2013), these dictionaries, especially the recent ones, have not been actively used in material design.

The motivation for this study comes from several observations as a native speaker teaching Russian. First of all, learners of Russian experience major difficulties with using aspect correctly. From a pragmatic perspective, incorrect aspectual choices might cause misunderstanding as to when a certain situation happened and how it is viewed by the speaker/listener. For instance, the aspectual pair понимать$^{imf}$/понять$^{pf}$ (to understand) if used in the past tense the imperfective past tense means "used to (not) understand" but "now I do/don't", while the perfective just means that something was understood or not around the moment of the utterance as in "I get it (no further explanations needed)" or "I didn't understand/get it (please explain it to me)". Confusion of aspect here results in an unwanted outcome.

A second observation is that textbooks do not provide sufficient context for aspect use, particularly in grammar exercises and oral drills, nor do they explicitly represent aspectual use in context. This, in turn, creates difficulties for acquisition of Russian aspect by L2 learners, which as hypothesized in this work, can be the direct result of textbooks' lack and inconsistency of sufficient input and its explicit explanations with focus on form. Further, Ljung (1990) pointed out that textbooks often distort the frequency features, thus making it difficult or even impossible for learners to acquire the most salient vocabulary items and their forms.

Most of the practice for aspectual use in textbooks occurs in fill-in-the blank exercises that do not provide sufficient context for choosing one form over another. For example, in the Russian textbook used at the University of Arizona[1], students are required to select the appropriate aspect verbs, but there are multiple examples where even native speakers cannot select the appropriate choice without more contextual clues.

1.

– Надя показывает квартиру? (Is Nadya showing the apartment?)

[1] Golosa Student Activities Manual, p. 247, ex.10-17 (Robin et al.)

– Она ее уже (показывала/показала). (She already showed/has shown it.)

2.

– Дети обедают? (Are kids having dinner?)

– Они уже (обедали/пообедали). (They already had/have had it.)

3.

– Вы ужинаете? (Are you having supper?)

– Нет, мы уже (ужинали/поужинали). (No, we already had/have had supper.)

The difference in aspect in all of the above examples is only in the time frame, i.e. the time when the situation took place in relation to the moment of speech. The perfective in all these examples implies that the situations have just happened while the imperfective states that by the time of utterance, the situations already happened at some point in the past and are not relevant to the present moment.

After further examination of the issues with textbooks and second language acquisition theories, namely Grammar-Translation Method, Audiolingual Method, the Monitor and Input Hypothesis, Output Hypothesis, Noticing Hypothesis, Explicit Grammar Approach (Keck, Kim 2014:8-29), it is clear that the reason behind the inconsistencies and incongruities found in the textbooks stem from the fact that these textbooks, namely *Golosa* and *Nachalo,* follow methodological approaches that are not in full agreement with those advocated by their authors. Both textbooks use the communicative competence approach deeply rooted in Krashen's Input Hypothesis (Krashen as cited by Keck, Kim 2014:18), and even give explicit grammar explanations. However, what they lack is a focus on didactic grammar with more structured input that can lead to the production of more accurate/authentic output.

In his definition of didactic grammar Mindt (2000) emphasized three problems that didactic grammars should address, namely (1) selection of frequent lexical items, (2) linguistic progression of these items in a course curriculum (from most frequent to less frequent), and (3) presentation (co-occurrence of lexical items, i.e, which words frequently appear together) (Mindt as cited by Römer 2005:16). To achieve these goals, I set out to analyze the use and behavior of some of the most frequent Russian aspectual pairs in spoken Russian based on data from the frequency dictionary (Sharoff et all, 2013) and spoken subcorpus of the Russian National Corpus (RNC).

The use of the spoken corpus versus a written corpus for research was conditioned by the fact that the primary focus of the target audience, the first and second year students of Russian, is to be able to communicate verbally. In keeping with the pedagogical focus of this research, the obtained corpus data will be compared with the aspectual verb use in textbook dialogues. Two textbooks, *Golosa* and *Nachalo,* were selected for this purpose, as they are frequently used for teaching Russian in the U.S., and the author has had experience teaching from both of them.

Due to limits of time and space, this study examines only three aspectual pairs in the past tense, even though they were carefully selected for frequency. Also, the number of examples analyzed might not be sufficient to draw broad generalizations; however, a closer analysis of context is made possible by the smaller set of data, which allows for a finer grain of analysis.

The Russian National Corpus (RNC) was selected for the study, as it is the only publicly available Russian corpus online that contains spoken data. Further parameters were applied to the spoken corpus, and only the section of spontaneous speech was selected for this analysis, thus excluding movie scripts, public speeches, etc.

The methodological approach taken in this work can be described as frequency-based and corpus-driven. Frequency of word occurrence is an important rationale for the order of presenting lexemes, i.e. more frequent words should be taught at earlier stages of L2 acquisition and less frequent words, in turn, should come in the later stages of language proficiency (Ellis 2001). Following the tradition of corpus-driven research (Sinclair 2004; Biber et al. 1998; Romer 2005), this study is not based on pre-existing theories of aspect; rather, it fully relies on empirical findings from corpus following Sinclair's (2004) proposition of "trusting the text".

The verbs for the study have been taken from a frequency list of verbs based on RNC from an online frequency dictionary: www.dict.ruslang.ru. Sixteen aspectual pairs were identified as contenders, which were selected from the first hundred on the list of most frequently used verbs. Then, to avoid skewing data as much as possible, the verb frequency was also checked in the RNC spoken subcorpus, since the frequency list provides only lemmatized infinitive forms of verbs while this study considers only the past tense. For example, the verbs "to understand (понимать$^{imf}$/понять$^{pf}$)" are found among the first hundred most frequent verbs in both aspects, but in the spoken corpus the frequency of the past imperfective form occurs only 55 times, which did not meet the minimum requirement of 100 tokens set for the analysis. Therefore, despite the high frequency overall, "to understand (понимать$^{imf}$/понять$^{pf}$)" is not analyzed here.

As already stated, this study only concerns itself with the use of aspect in the past tense. The absence of aspectual distinction in the present tense and the complicating factor of modality interacting with aspect in the future tense prompted the decision to analyze the past tense only. As the research progressed, more evidence was found to support this decision. According to Shteinfel'dt "the past tense occurs more frequently than any other form of the verb in Russian, and is also the form in the usage of which most of the functions of the opposition perfective vs imperfective can most easily be demonstrated" (Shteinfelʹdt as cited by Forsyth 1970:59). From the pedagogical perspective, the choice of the past tense is also justified, as it is a persistently problematic area in aspect acquisition for American students, given the lack of one-to-one mapping to English past tenses.

The pairs analyzed in this research include: *делать (359.7)/сделать (441)*[2] *(to do, make), писать (129.4)/написать (224.8) (to write), спрашивать (103.1)/спросить (128.7) (to ask).*

The present work consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, and is organized according to the framework for pedagogical grammar presented by Casey Keck and Youjin Kim (2014): grammar description, L2 grammar acquisition and L2 grammar instruction. Following the introduction, Chapter II discusses theoretical *descriptions.*

Chapter III focuses on *acquisition* and *instruction* of aspect, while Chapter IV provides a detailed corpus analysis of the aspectual pairs.

## CHAPTER II: ASPECT DESCRIPTIONS

### 2.1. THEORIES OF ASPECT

There has been a great deal of research related to issues of verbal aspect in various languages (Comrie 1976), and particularly the Slavic languages, with major contributions by Forsyth (1970), Timberlake (1982), Jakobson *et al* (1984), Maslov *et al* (1985), Bondarko (1996), and Fielder (1990) Since the current study concerns itself with the aspectual category in Russian only, studies of other languages will not be discussed here. Despite such a myriad of existing research in the area of aspectology, most of the research is of a purely theoretical and descriptive nature. Therefore, this work attempts to bridge the gap between grammar descriptions and grammar instruction.

The category of aspect has been labeled controversial and even mysterious, or as Townsend in his summary article in *The Scope of Slavic Aspect* puts it, “there is no single solution to this problem” and “there is no real agreement as to what aspect is” (Townsend 1985: 294). So what is aspect? Bernard

[2] The numbers in parenthesis following the aspectual pairs indicate their frequency of occurrence in the Spoken Corpus per 1, 308 195 words. Following Romer’s corpus analysis of progressives (Romer 2005), I chose to analyze only those verbs that meet the minimum frequency cap of one hundred tokens.

Comrie defines aspect as “situation-internal time” in comparison to tense, which he calls “situation-external time”. While tense places situations in the context of time relating to either the present moment or other situations, aspect looks at a situation through “internal temporal constituency of the one situation” (Comrie 1976:5). In Comrie’s terms, the same speaker can view the same situation from either perfective or imperfective aspect. For example, *John read that book yesterday*; *while he was reading it, the postman came*. The forms ‘read’ and ‘was reading’ refer to the same situation but morphological encode different aspects, perfective and imperfective, respectively. Although Comrie uses the terms perfective and imperfective here to distinguish aspect, it seems more appropriate to call the distinction non-progressive and progressive in more traditional terms for English aspect. The definition of aspect as “situation-internal time” appears to work with the dichotomy of progressive and non-progressive, however, Timberlake (1982:312) argues that aspect goes beyond internality of the situation and can be evaluated externally (anterior or posterior) to the situation or what Timberlake calls aspect locus i.e. point of perspective on the temporal axis. In the example, *When the last shots died down, the group had already abandoned the region*, the situation (event) *had already abandoned* is positioned anterior to the situation *died down*. In another example, *When the tanks reached the canal, the Fascists blew up the bridge,* the event *blew up* comes posterior to the preceding event *reached*. From these examples, one can see that aspect can both be internal and external to the situation, and what matters is the point of perspective, i.e. how the speaker views the situation.

In Russian, speakers distinguish between a binary opposition of perfective and imperfective aspect with morphologically distinct forms. There are four common ways of forming aspect: 1) incorporating a derivational suffix into the word as in ‘дать$^{\text{pf}}$/давать$^{\text{imp}}$’ (to give) where the *-ва-* is an imperfectivizing suffix (this is not a productive derivation for aspect, however); 2) vowel alternation in the root in case of ‘спрашивать$^{\text{imf}}$/спросить$^{\text{pf}}$’ (to ask); 3) suppletive, i.e. having two separate words:

‘брать$^{imf}$/взять$^{pf}$’ (to take); and 4) adding a prefix to a simplex verb as in ‘писать$^{imp}$/написать$^{pf}$’ (to write), where *на-* is a prefix.

It is a well-known fact that adding a prefix to a simple verb in Russian results in a perfective verb; however, the addition of a prefix also has the potential to introduce additional meaning beyond simply perfectivizing the imperfective verb. It can result in either a completely different meaning or emphasize only one component of a situation such as inception of the action, its conclusion, etc. In aspectology, the former is known as lexical prefixation as in писать$^{imf}$ (to write) /подписать$^{pf}$ (to sign), where the prefix под- changes the lexical meaning, while the latter is traditionally referred to as Aktionsarten. For example, Aktionsarten *курить (smoke)*$^{imf}$*/закурить (to begin to smoke)*$^{pf}$ with the prefix за- implies that the action of smoking began (Brecht 1985:15). In contrast, Townsend (1985:288-289) speaks of an emerging process of grammaticalization of some prefixes in which their lexical becomes “meaningless” or “empty”. He suggests that the prefix по- in Russian, for example, has already given up its lexical meaning over to the grammatical one, which implies that *по-* now simply means the internal change of viewing the situation from imperfective to perfective. He also submits that inception and other temporal shades of meaning of the perfective, generally considered as Aktionsarten, are “perfective” to the same extent as a traditionally acclaimed completion or totality.

The opposition between perfective versus imperfective has been predominantly defined in terms of the perfective, which has been often labeled as the marked member of the opposition, leaving the imperfective to mean what the perfective does not (Jakobson 1984). However, it is argued by many aspectologists that the contexts of imperfectives can also be marked unique (Forsyth 1970; Fielder 1990; Townsend 1985). Townsend gives examples of the imperfective, which he argues are marked for various meanings such as cancellation of an action, conation, taking the emphasis away from the result, and a type of state that comes from the result (Timberlake et al. 1985:286-287). The classical example of action nullification (cf. cancellation of an action) is *Кто открывал*$^{imp}$ *окно? (Who opened the window?)* implying that the window is closed at the time of utterance. When an action has been attempted but not successful in its completion such as *Он решал задачу,* in which the implication is that he has attempted to solve the problem but has not solved it. If there is no emphasis on the result, an imperfective is preferred as well, for example, in *Ты смотрел*$^{imf}$ *Шрека? (Have you seen Shrek?).* This last example is what Forsyth refers to as *konstatacija fakta dejstvija* or statement-of-fact. The imperfective is used to name the action, while the information that is being sought is whether or not the movie *Shrek* has been seen, as, according to Forsyth, "the speaker is merely interested in the fact that the type of action named did occur (or alternatively did not occur)" (Forsyth 1970:82)

The idea of the morphological form being closely connected to the meaning of aspect (invariant: one form, one meaning) has generally prevailed in the study of structural aspectology. For example, the imperfective has semantic features of durativity, iterativity, statement-of-fact, etc., while the perfective denotes completion and result (Forsyth 1970). Taking it to another level, Brecht argues that there is a very strong connection between the derivational and semantic levels in Russian that, in his opinion, has been underappreciated; namely, verbs used in telic contexts are usually prefixed, while verbs expressing atelic situations are often simplex (unprefixed) verbs (Brecht 1985). In my view, such a broad generalization is not sufficient simply because aspectual pairs can also be formed through suffixation (давать$^{imf}$/дать$^{pf}$) or have different roots altogether (брать$^{imf}$/взять$^{pf}$).

Contrary to the idea of the invariant, Timberlake (1982) emphasizes the importance of context by proposing the idea of "nested levels": base, verb, predicate, proposition, and narrative,

> "… base (inherent semantics of the lexical base); verb (base plus semantic operations like inception and stativization); predicate (verb plus its major syntactic arguments, including subject and objects); proposition (predicate plus its position in temporal or modal space); and narrative (proposition plus its relationship to other events in a narrative text)…

which may be termed the lexical (including base, verb, predicate) and the propositional (including proposition in the strict sense and narrative)"

Alan Timberlake (1982:309-310)

At the propositional level, an event is evaluated through some point of reference, or "aspect locus", which can be expressed by adverbs of time and implicitly evaluated in relation to other events. In the example below (Timberlake 1982:314), the aspect locus is established through a sequence of perfective events: took, looked at and even sniffed. However, the adverb *for a long time* interferes with the aspect locus by emphasizing duration on the time axis, which requires the use of imperfective.

(1) Rogov took (pf) the balls and looked (imp) at them for a long time, and he even sniffed (pf) them.

Fielder supports Timberlake's view of the propositional level and emphasizes the importance of narrative level when the contexts for aspect encoding are unspecified on the propositional level. In the following example (2), the choice between perfective and imperfective is conditioned by the narrative context. The choice of the perfective *попросил* would imply that Televosjan had agreed to help, while the imperfective *просил* can imply that he had not yet agreed or had not agreed at all (Fielder 1990:270-272).

(2) If things get difficult – come to me, I'll help with whatever I can. Your head of administration and the main engineer of the central board are good party comrades. They will tell you in detail what specifically needs to be done. I have also asked (просил$^{imf/}$ попросил$^{pf}$) Tevosjan to help you out in the beginning.

Another body of research proposes a strong correlation between grammatical aspect and situations to which verbs refers (Vendler 1957; Forsyth 1970; Brecht 1985). Brecht, for example, follows Vendler's taxonomy of types and classifies situations into states, activities, accomplishments and achievements, and Garey's terms 'telic' and 'atelic'. By telic Brecht means situations "which inherently involve a goal or natural end-point" (Brecht 1985). In his modified classification, Brecht replaces the term accomplishments by culminations, described by Brecht as "goal-oriented situations, which are characterized by the presence of an activity preceding the end-point" and are intrinsically durative. Conversely, achievements are "instantaneous leaps" between two states. Both situations reflect what Townsend calls the "change of status," with the former happening over time as in "Judy closed the door," where closing was an activity that reached an end point; and the latter undergoing a quick change as in "Tom lost his coat," where losing is a state and there is no process of losing. Losing refers to a change in state from a state of "foundness" or having to a state of "lostness", where *losing* is thus a punctual, momentary action.

While Brecht (1985) renames Vendler's accomplishments as culminations and considers both culminations and achievements to be the domain of the perfective verbs, Townsend (1985) proposes yet another modification to Vendler's system by adding a new category of 'actions,' possibly including constative imperfectives in the picture. For example, in 'Я читал$^{imp}$ Достоевского' *читал* is not a culmination of the activity *читать,* but rather the fact of reading, or the action of reading simply being stated or named. Similarly, Gagarina (2004) claims that Vendler's system in Russian only works with imperfectiva tantum (states, activities) and perfectiva tantum (achievements, accomplishments), and that when it comes to aspectual pairs, there appears to be an issue with the application of Vendler's system, since, according to Gagarina, in Russian both partners of the aspectual pair "падать$^{imf}$/упасть$^{pf}$" can be perceived as accomplishments.

As shown in the discussion above, the category of aspect has been studied and defined from many different angles. The purpose of this research is not in any way to discredit traditional definitions of aspect and invent new ones, but rather make a purely practical and pedagogical attempt to analyze and describe the behavior of the most frequent aspectual pairs in naturally-occurring environments. In other words, a holistic or gestalt approach will be used here along with Sinclair's idea of "trusting the text" (Sinclair 2004) and Larsen-Freeman's (Larsen-Freeman, 2003:34-35) proposed dimensions of form, meaning, and use.

In a nutshell, this work addresses the following issues: morphological formation of aspect to identify the true pairs for the analysis (form); lexico-semantic meanings of these pairs and their functions to map form-meaning-use connections (meaning); and the behavior of aspectual pairs at the discourse-pragmatic level (use).

## 2.2. PAIRS OR TRIPLETS

As mentioned above, the morphology of aspect is not very straightforward, and there are competing views and disagreement in dictionaries on which Russian verbs should be considered aspectual pairs. Moreover, the status of aspectual pairs has been questioned in favor of an aspectual triplet. Traditionally, an aspectual triplet is regarded as a simplex verb, a prefixed perfective (natural perfective), and a secondary imperfective formed from the prefixed perfective by means of suffixation. Janda and Lyashevskaya (2011) hypothesize that aspectual triplets are a widespread phenomenon and provide evidence from their study that "27% of all imperfective base verbs that form a Natural Perfective via prefixation form multiple aspectual partner verbs, using from two to six prefixes." To prove this further, Janda and others create a database of aspectual triplets verified through the Russian National Corpus data and Google search (http://emptyprefixes.uit.no/triplets_eng.htm).

Since this research is concerned with aspectual pairs of specific verbs, I looked them up in Janda's triplet database. Out of three pairs, only two qualified as aspectual triplets (делать/сделать, писать/написать), since for the third pair (спрашивать/спросить), the perfective counterpart is not a 'natural perfective' in the sense that the perfective is prefixed and imperfective not, but rather by suffixation and so they do not form aspectual triplets. In Janda's terms, an aspectual triplet is a set of verbs that have the same lexical meanings. One of the triplets from the database is given here: баюкать$^{\text{imp}}$, убаюкать$^{\text{pf}}$, убаюкивать$^{\text{imf}}$. All of them, according to Janda, should mean 'to lull to bed'. The Russian online definition dictionary[3] defines *убаюкивать* through *баюкать* and equates them: *УБАЮКИВАТЬ, -аю, -аешь; несов., кого-что. То же, что (same as) баюкать* (underscore and translation is mine). The same results were expected for the three aspectual pairs under question in this research. Thus, aspectual triplets of the verbs under discussion here were extracted from the triplet database:

1. *To do: делать (61210), сделать (65963), сделывать (0 :195);*

*2. To write: писать (37264), написать (28274), написывать (0: 600).*

The numbers in brackets for the first two imperfective/perfective partners are the verb frequency in the Russian National Corpus (RNC), and the ratio in brackets for the third partner is its frequency in the RNC vs Google search. The data here suggest that maybe the secondary imperfectivized partners are not so frequently used (Google data), or are even non-existent for these verbs after all (corpus data). To verify this, I consulted the online definition dictionary again, which contrary to Google search, but similarly to the RNC, showed no results for *сделывать* and *написывать*.

Despite the fact that aspectual triplets do exist for some verbs, cf. the example of баюкать$^{\text{imp}}$/убаюкать$^{\text{pf}}$/убаюкивать$^{\text{imp}}$ (to lull to sleep), this approach needs further examination but is beyond the scope of this study. First, only "natural perfectives" are taken into account i.e. perfectives formed through prefixation of simplex imperfectives, such as *читать*$^{imf}$/*прочитать*$^{pf}$ where про- is a perfectivizing prefix, while simplex perfectives such as *понять, дать,* etc. are left out. Second, they do

[3] http://www.ozhegov.org

not always have the same lexical meaning as in *смотреть (to look, watch), посмотреть (to look, watch)* and *посматривать (to glance from time to time)*.

Yet another approach, taken by Sharoff (Sharoff et al, 2013) in the Russian frequency dictionary, maps "closely related aspectual pairs (e.g. бросать / бросить 'to throw')" in one entry and lists the imperfective only. However, the perfective verbs produced by prefixation *(делать$^{imf}$/сделать$^{pf}$)* or pairs having an irregular (aka suppletive) pattern *(брать$^{imf}$/взять$^{pf}$)* are listed as two separate verbs. The reason for this method is explained by the fact that the English translations of the two Russian aspectual partners is quite similar, plus the "grammatical aspect is an area of Russian grammar that English-speaking students fail to assimilate fully" (Sharoff at all, 2013). In my view, it is a rather awkward assumption for a pedagogically inclined work such as this dictionary to treat aspectual pairs selectively due to the similarity of their English translations and the lack of full assimilation of aspect by L2 learners.

The most comprehensive approach to aspectual pairs was found in the work of Forsyth (Forsyth 1970, p.46-56). He groups aspectual pairs into five categories. Group 1 and 5 are not included herein because they consist of unpaired verbs, either unpaired perfectives or unpaired imperfectives. Group 2 consists of pairs, in which the perfective implies "an instantaneous effect or 'leap' into a new state," as in *находить$^{imf}$/найти$^{pf}$ (find) or терять$^{imf}$/потерять$^{pf}$ (lose).* In Brecht's classification, this group would fall into achievements (Brecht 1985). This group is not represented in the current analysis since none of the verbs chosen for this study belong to this group.

In contrast, in Group 3, instead of the instantaneous leap, there is "a gradual approach to, the critical point at which the action takes place," which corresponds to Brecht's (1985) culminations. One pair used in this analysis falls into this group, which is *делать$^{imf}$/сделать$^{pf}$ (do, make).* (NB this is an example constructed by the author), *(1) Марк делал домашнюю работу три часа. Он был рад, что наконец-то всё сделал.*

*It took Mark three hours to do homework. He was happy that he had it all done.*

In the example above, the fact that it took three hours indicates a gradual approach of the process/activity of the imperfective "делал" to the completion of the action of the perfective "сделал".

The remaining two pairs *write* and *ask* in this study belong to Forsyth's Group 4, which is divided into two more subgroups. The first subgroup includes verbs "denoting concrete processes which gradually produce an effect on the substance or situation." For example, *писать$^{imf}$/написать$^{pf}$ (write),* and "once we add the prefix на- to писать, we are no longer interested in a process, but in a change of state" (Timberlake 1985:72). For example,

*(2) Анна писала диплом два месяца. Она его наконец-то написала (constructed example).*

*Anna wrote her thesis for two months. Finally, she has finished writing it.*

From these two examples about Anna and Mark, it seems very nuanced and almost unnecessary to differentiate between the group 3 and 4 (at least at a first and second year level), since the example with Mark is identical in context to the one with Anna: a process of writing followed by a final result of having written.

The second subgroup contains "those verbs which denote, not physical actions directed towards some final result, but manifestations of human consciousness – perception, states of mind and emotional attitudes, speech and other utterances of sound" such as *видеть$^{imf}$/увидеть$^{pf}$ (see), смотреть$^{imf}$/посмотреть$^{pf}$ (look), понимать$^{imf}$/понять$^{pf}$ (understand).* Forsyth also states that "pure and simple" aspectual pairs belong to this group, and the verbs of these pairs only differ in how the action is viewed (Forsyth 1970:53).

There seems to be more or less agreement in the literature about писать$^{imp}$/написать$^{pf}$ being a trivial aspectual pair (such that the two members share the same lexical semantics) (Paducheva 1996;

Forsyth 1970). However, the pair видеть$^{\text{imf}}$/увидеть$^{\text{pf}}$ (see) as a ‘verba percipiendi’ causes some disagreement as to whether the opposition is purely aspectual, that is, the perfectivizing prefix “у- is not a purely inceptive meaning” (Timberlake 1985). Other scholars (Isacenko 1960; Timberlake 2004) treat as ‘real’ only those aspectual pairs that are formed via suffixation by deriving an imperfective verb from a prefixed perfective. This process is also known as imperfectivization, when an imperfectivizing suffix is added to a prefixed perfective to form a ‘secondary’ imperfective, as in *перечитать*$^{\text{pf}}$/*перечитывать*$^{\text{imf}}$ *(reread, read several times).* However, most scholars acknowledge the validity of aspectual pairs that are formed both through suffixation and prefixation (Janda & Lyashevskaya 2011). An example of prefixation would be *делать*$^{imf}$/*сделать*$^{pf}$ *(do, make).* In a corpus study by Janda and Lyashevskaya (2011), the traditional view that aspectual pairs formed via both suffixartion and prefixation are a valid phenomenon was confirmed.

In this study the formation of pairs is based on traditional views presented in many dictionaries, which reflects the views of most scholars discussed, along with the native speaker intuition and language competence of several of my colleagues.

# CHAPTER III: ACQUISITION, LEARNING AND TEACHING OF ASPECT

This chapter will take a critical look at an array of issues concerning L1 acquisition, L2 learning and teaching of aspect as well as provide some pedagogical grounding for this study and argue for the importance of the pedagogical study of aspect in general.

As has been discussed in the previous chapters, verbal aspect in Russian is a complex phenomenon, which has been at the forefront of attention not only in the realm of theoretical linguistics but also language acquisition (sometimes referred to as "applied linguistics"). The latter field studies questions related to how and when aspect is acquired in both L1 and L2 language development. Studies in child language acquisition reveal that acquisition of aspect by Russian L1 children is mastered early in the language acquisition process. However, there is evidence, according to Gagarina (2008) that aspectual pairs are not acquired systematically, and the actual number of aspectual pairs in the speech of both children and adults is very low, which leads to the fact that aspectual pairs might not be such a common phenomenon as it is presented in Russian L2 textbooks. To explain the rare case of aspectual pairs, Gagarina uses Lehmann's notion of 'alpha-verbs' and 'beta-verbs' (Gagarina 2008). Alpha-verbs are the prototypical partners of the aspectual pair, thus they are more frequent and are acquired first, while beta-verbs are peripheral and used less frequently due to their 'functional recategorization'. Alpha-verbs can be determined through 'a denoted situation'; for example, in падать$^{imf}$/упасть$^{pf}$ the alpha-verb is упасть$^{pf}$ since the situation is denoted by resultativity. It is suggested that children have a strong association between aspectual use and situations such that "children learn to recognize and 'name' situations by means of various verbs (by employing the lexical meaning), and simultaneously they learn to code boundaries of events by means of the verbal aspect" (Gagarina 2008). So essentially children learn prototypical examples and then extrapolate the more ambiguous examples.

These findings correlate well with those of a few other hypotheses such as the Aspect Hypothesis, the Distribution Bias Hypothesis, and the Prototype Hypothesis (Anderson 1991; Anderson and Shirai, 1994). The main claim of the Aspect Hypothesis is that there is a direct association between morphological aspect (form) and semantics of verbs (meaning) among learners who attach perfective past tense marking to telic verbs and imperfective ones to atelic in a naturalistic (uninstructed) environment (Anderson 1991). Anderson based her conclusions on a longitudinal study of English speakers acquiring Spanish naturally in Puerto Rico. It is important to note that Anderson makes a clear distinction between grammatical and lexical aspect. In her terms, grammatical aspect is morphologically encoded and is not acquired until later stages of language development. By contrast, lexical aspect is not explicitly encoded in the morphology, but is merely "an inherent part of the word or construction that expresses the situation or action" (Anderson 1991, p. 308). Anderson adapted Vendler-Mourelatos's classification of verbs into states, activities, telic events and punctual events. In her analysis she discovers a direct correlation between the inherent lexical aspect (states, activities, telic and punctual events) and the stages of acquisition. In the beginning stages of acquisition punctual events and then telic events are associated with Preterit (perfective aspect), while imperfective forms appear to be reserved for states and activities. It can problematic in Russian to make a claim about the existence of pure inherent lexical aspect since most verbs in Russian are morphologically encoded for aspect. However, I think the results of Anderson's study can still be applied to Russian if such a dichotomy between grammar and lexis is not made. One of Anderson's goals in her analysis was to test the Defective Tense Hypothesis, which states that aspect is acquired before tense (p. 307). However, it seems that the more interesting results and speculations of the study, especially for pedagogical purposes, are that the inherent nature of the verbs seems to be associated with a particular aspect, which proves the inextricable nature of lexi-grammar (Sinclair 2004). In other words, these findings can be applied to selecting content for teaching of aspect as more of a vocabulary type of learning since both first and second language learners are initially affected by inherent lexical aspect of verbs. In addition, in later studies of the Aspect Hypothesis it was predicted that languages, in which aspect is morphologically encoded, learners acquire perfective past before the imperfective past (Lee & Shirai as cited in Whitehead Martelle, 2011:50). However, in a later study by Whitehead Martelle (2001) this hypothesis was not confirmed for Russian.

The Lexical Aspect hypothesis was further developed and extended to agree with the Distributional Bias Hypothesis and Prototype Hypothesis (Anderson & Shirai 1994). The distributional bias principle was first proposed by Anderson in an attempt to explain the findings of the Lexical Aspect Hypothesis. It states that native speakers when communicating with other native speakers use aspectual morphology in a distributed way that aligns it with inherent lexical meanings. For example, atelic verbs are mostly used in imperfective while telic ones are preferred in the perfective aspect. Non-native speakers (learners) when exposed to the native speaker input follow the same pattern. To see a pattern, according to Anderson and Shirai, "learners initially infer from the input the most prototypical meaning of each inflection" in order to make form-meaning connections and associate specific meanings with specific inflected forms. The prototypical meaning of *broke* and *fell down* are that of 'completion', while *reading and watching* would prototypically be associated with 'action in progress'. These two hypotheses work together in a way that the distributional bias in native speakers results in learners' formulation of prototypes through input.

I will discuss in more detail in Chapter IV how these hypotheses are consistent, to varying degree, with the data obtained from the frequency dictionary and spoken corpus. In the first stage of my analysis most of the imperfective verbs on that list are activities and states, i.e. are atelic, while most of the perfective verbs are telic. Keck and Kim in a summary of research on lexical aspect state that "many verbs in a language tend to occur with a high frequency in particular tenses and aspects, and this frequency of occurrence is due, in large part, to the meaning the verb typically conveys" (Keck, Kim 2014), which has proved to be true in the second stage of my analysis in Chapter IV.

Hypotheses about L1 acquisition and L2 learning of aspect raise important issues and undoubtedly contribute to the teaching of aspect, nonetheless it is also crucial to look at the teaching of aspect with more focus on textbook content in terms of morphological transformations, grammatical functional explanations, and textual input. Ostensibly, there are more factors that affect the teaching of aspect such as extra materials brought in class by the teacher, grammar reference textbooks, an abundance of online materials that students can use, etc. However, I argue that textbook materials are typically used as the main source of by both teachers and students, so a closer look at the mainstream textbooks will allow us to have a glimpse at how aspect is taught in the average Russian language classroom.

The two mainstream textbooks of Russian for L2 English speakers in the United States are *Golosa* and *Nachalo.* To start off, I would like to examine these two textbooks in relation to morphological derivations/transformations. Both textbooks start with the present tense, which requires only the imperfective aspect is taught. Later on, when the past tense is introduced, students are told how to form the past tense morphologically from the imperfective verbs that they already know in the present tense, which is by taking out *'ть'* from the infinitive form and replacing it with *–л, –ла, –ли, –ло* contingent with the right gender and number. Thus, what happens is that learners are introduced to the past tense in the imperfective first, which is opposite to what we have previously seen in natural acquisition of lexical aspect supported by the Aspect Hypothesis. In Whitehead Martelle's study (2011) the results produced by low-level L2 learners are not consistent with the Aspect Hypothesis, that is, beginner learners use the imperfective past more than necessary. She confirms Salabbery's Default Past

Tense hypothesis (Salaberry 2008), which states that low-level L2 learners use a single default marker for the past tense without associating verbal morphology with lexical aspectual meanings of verbs and seem to show a preference for the imperfective past using it with all four types of verbs: activities, states, accomplishments, and achievements. Whitehead Martelle concludes that that the default past form for beginner level students is the imperfective due to the order of morphological instruction in language textbooks. Further, since imperfective is morphologically unmarked, Whitehead Martelle suggests that in the case of English L1 speakers learning Russian as an L2 they might associate Past Imperfective with Simple Past in English. In addition, in my view when students use English-Russian dictionaries including Google Translate, the present form (imperfective) is what they see in a dictionary entry, making the choice of imperfective past more frequent and thus more readily accessible.

Apart from morphological structuring of the aspectual representations, the above-mentioned Russian textbooks (*Golosa* and *Nachalo*) textbooks offer explicit grammatical explanations.
When the past tense is introduced in the *Golosa* textbook (Book One), the following functions of the imperfective past are provided to the student 1) repeated action 2) emphasis on length or process/activity 3) emphasis shifted away from result or completion 4) attempt as opposed to success (p. 366-367) compared to the following features of the perfective: 1) one-time action seen as a whole 2) emphasis on brevity of a whole action 3) emphasis on result or completion 4) success as opposed to attempt. The *Nachalo* textbook (Book One) is similar in that it instructs learners to use the perfective for the completion and result of a single action and the imperfective for habitual and repeated actions or "in nearly all other situations" (p. 288). Essentially the main functions of the imperfective past that are frequently associated with it in these two Russian textbooks are durativity and repeatedness, while the more salient feature of the perfective is one-time completed action with the emphasis on result.

No matter how comprehensive the grammatical and morphological explanation of aspect, there are several additional factors that can play a role in the acquisition of aspect by learners according to Shirai (Shirai 2004 as cited by Whitehead Martelle 2013:2, 13): L1 influence, input frequency and individual differences. While all these factors certainly play a role, one can argue that input frequency is the only one that can be controlled for in a classroom setting. Individual differences and L1 influence can certainly be accounted for in the classroom, but if there is a lack of/insufficient naturalistic input available for L2 learners not living in the L2 environment, textbook materials become students' main if not only source of input. Thus, I argue that input frequency is a crucial factor and needs to be taken into consideration in the process of designing textbook materials. According to the Distributional Bias hypothesis (Shirai & Anderson 1995) the distribution of tense and aspect markers with particular classes of verbs in children's speech follows the distribution children hear in the language around them. Could not one assume the same takes place with university students and the distribution they hear comes from the textbooks?

In addition, input quality, or authenticity/naturalism of input is also crucial, according to Andrews (Andrews 1990). She provides an example of a situation where the imperfective is used instead of a logical perfective simply based on a cultural nuance. In the following sentence, *"В прошлом году Андрей поступал*$^{imp}$ *в университет" (Last year Andrei enrolled in college),* the logical rule-based approach would suggest a perfective since it is a single action that happened in the past. However, the choice of the imperfective here is inferred from the fact that "the admission process in the USSR is much more rigorous than in most American universities" and "Russians perceive the process differently from Americans" (Andrews 1990). In giving these examples, Andrews argues for "simply providing the L2 learner with a natural context, an actual speech community of the target language", which very well resonates with the use of corpus-informed pedagogy used in Chapter IV.

# CHAPTER IV: CORPUS-INFORMED PEDAGOGY

## 4.1. CORPUS ANALYSIS

"Opening a fresh concordance for all<br>
uses of a given word in a 7.3 million<br>
word corpus was like opening a window<br>
on a landscape of fresh snow<br>
on a sunny winter's morning."<br>
(Patrick Hanks in his obituary<br>
for John Sinclair,<br>
EURALEX Newsletter, Summer 2007)

This chapter will introduce the corpus methodology used in this research and present the a quantitative and qualitative discussion of results. First, I will start by a definition of what corpus is. As defined by the *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Applied Linguistics* (1999) corpus is "a large computer-held collection of texts (spoken, written, or both) collected together to stand as a representative sample of a language or some part of it". Therefore, corpus linguistics is the study of language with the use of corpus for different types of linguistic analysis. Corpus can be built using a variety of text genres and registers such as newspapers and magazines, academic papers, literary texts, movie scripts, public and spontaneous speech, etc. Corpus is not only a body of texts; it is also a searchable database. So after a corpus is collected, it is then tagged for various linguistic criteria. For example, every word is assigned a part of speech, tense, gender, number, etc. Some corpora are also annotated for semantic features such as a group of words related to positive emotions and feelings. Thus, tagging and annotation make corpus easily searchable for any kind of data. For example, let us say that I would like to find all words that are used with the preposition 'to'. In my search I need to specify that I am interested only in the preposition 'to' and not the infinitive particle 'to'. If a corpus has a pre-installed concordance I can also find out what other words (nouns, adjectives, etc.) this preposition co-occurs with most frequently. Besides the quantitative frequency data, further qualitative analysis of concordance lines can be made and patterns revealed. For example, McCarthy, looking at the English common verbs *'to go'* and *'to turn'* saw that *'turn'* and *'go'* were frequently co-occurring with colors and it was mostly inanimate objects that go or turn to different colors as in *'go or turn grey'*, while *'go'* and not *'turn'* used with people was mostly followed by adjectives that changed state, for example, *'to go mad'* or *'go blind'*. Thus, quantitative corpus data goes hand in hand with qualitative, which helps researchers see the patterns of use (O'Keffee *et al* 2007).

With the advancement of technology, corpus (pl. corpora) has revolutionized the ways in which language can be analyzed, especially large quantities of language. The early successful use of corpora was made mostly by lexicographers. One of the most influential scholars in the field was John Sinclair, who initiated the creation of COBUILD dictionary in early 80's. Now many dictionaries claim to use corpus data in their entries and examples (Longman, McMillan, etc.). Also, the success of the COBUILD project had an impact on grammar by focusing on the inseparability of lexis and grammar in a pattern. Biber et al. published a well regarded grammar reference book based on corpus findings (Biber *et al*, 2002).

Corpora have been successfully used for language teaching. There have been two main approaches: a data-driven approach and corpus-informed pedagogy. They both involve analyzing corpus data but the difference is that the data-driven approach is used in the classroom and involves students in data analysis under the supervision of an instructor, while the corpus-informed approach gives students the end product of analysis in the form of a textbook. The data-driven approach is usually used for more advanced students, since it involves working with raw datasets and large amounts of text. However, Ackerley and Coccetta (2007) propose using a multimedia corpus, which can be appropriated to any level, to help students with the meaning-making process that involves verbal as well as non-verbal expressions. Instead of looking at the transcribed spoken corpora, the multimedia corpus allows for watching language in use with transcriptions (Ackerley & Coccetta 2007). Despite the obvious benefits of this approach, is the disadvantage is that it is costly and time-consuming. More so, it requires a lot of work on students' part, and some students might not be prepared for such work. An alternative to data-driven approach is corpus-informed pedagogy, which emerged out of the need for more authentic textbook materials such as the Touchstone series (McCarthy 2005). Corpus-based research has consistently proved that there are strong associations between grammatical structures and words used with them. In other words, not every word is equally as likely to occur in a given grammatical structure. Moreover, some words are more frequent than others. Thus, prototypical examples of patterns found in corpora should be taught to students, and more frequent words should be given more priority, accordingly. Romer (2008) submits that typical patterns from naturally-occurring speech incorporated in the language teaching input can help learners develop both comprehension and production skills. To this end, research can be done comparing language items presented in teaching materials to those found in corpora. Typically, the language items selected for analysis are the ones that learners have the most problems with, so that patterns can be found to help learners with their acquisition. Then, the patterns found in corpora are compared to the ones presented in textbook, and necessary adjustments are called for (Romer 2008). The research undertaken in the current work is similar, as it looks at verbal aspect, which is one of the most problematic areas for Russian learners, identifies language patterns of aspectual use in the native speaker spoken corpus, compares those findings to the current teaching materials, and calls for changes in the curriculum.

Despite its many benefits for language teaching, the use of corpora presents a few potential issues. According to Cook (Cook 1998 as cited by Reinhard 2010), the frequency of words in a given corpus could depend on the prevalenc8e of a certain type of text. However, corpus linguists are aware of this and strive to balance corpora by incorporating texts on various topics with different genres and registers. Another of Cook's criticisms was that patterns of language use extracted from corpus are very subjective and devoid of context because, he argued, there is no direct interdependence between words people use, what they intended to say, and how it was interpreted by other speakers. However, it seems that this argument is not sufficiently clear, as it implies that form-meaning connections in words are somehow chaotically assigned by speakers and are, in turn, arbitrarily reinterpreted by listeners. Cook also expressed a concern that most corpora are collections of native speaker data, which is not useful for L2 learners who will never attain the native speaker level. This argument was well taken by corpus linguists, and now learner corpora are becoming a new trend. In this work, however, a decision was made to analyze a corpus of native speakers both due to the absence of Russian spoken learner corpora but also because of the purpose of this research. The Russian native speakers' speech is taken as a standard for modeling learners' speech in this work. Excluding varieties of Russian spoken in the former USSR countries, for example, by bilingual speakers or those who speak Russian as a second language, is not a bias but a direct result of the unavailability of data.

Corpus studies have been very popular in English language teaching but have received not as much attention for less commonly taught languages, including Russian. Most of the studies (if not all) known to me have not focused on spoken corpus. Despite many benefits and possibilities of corpus research, as argued by Grønn (2003), "this seems to be a neglected area in Russian aspectology […] considering the important role corpora could play for instance when comparing the frequency or preference for imperfectives vs. perfectives in specific syntactic environments". The idea of specific environments is also expressed by Lubensky (1985), who argued that instead of looking for invariants of all possible aspectual meanings, the focus should be shifted to “the analysis of contextual variants of aspectual forms, particularly on the basis of their co-occurrence with different types of temporal adverbials and verbal arguments, and the description of semantic properties per se of different verb classes” (Lubensky, p 78). Thus, one of the goals of this work is an attempt to look at those contextual environments.

### 4.2. METHODOLOGY

Every corpus study begins with a corpus selection to be used for analysis. In our case choices were limited due to the study of spoken language in particular. The only Russian spoken corpus that is publically available today is a subcorpus of the Russian National Corpus (RNC). The choice of spoken language was not entirely arbitrary but rather motivated by the lack (absence) of grammars of Russian that are based on real-life conversations and reflect the spoken language.

The size of corpus is also an important factor, as it is directly related to corpus representativeness. The Russian spoken subcorpus is ostensibly smaller than the size of the complete RNC by several orders of magnitude namely 229, 968 798 and 1, 308 195, respectively. However, a corpus of over a million tokens is considered to be sufficient for the analysis of patterns (Cortes 2008).

A list of the first hundred most frequent verbs (See Table 1) was extracted from an online Russian verb frequency dictionary: http://dict.ruslang.ru/freq.php (Lyashevskaya, Sharoff 2005) The dictionary presents lemmatized infinitives based on the texts from the Russian National Corpus. The corpus used includes both written and spoken texts of various registers and genres. Although the list is quite exhaustive and representative, it could not be used in its present form for analysis for two reasons. First, this study only looks at the past tense of verbs, while the lemmatized list includes all the forms, thus potentially leading to high frequency of certain verbs and skewing the data because of inclusion of present or future tense forms. Second, in this study we are only interested in spoken data, whereas the list is based on both spoken and written. To account for these issues, I looked up every verb on the lemmatized list in all its past forms in the spoken subcorpus used for this study. To obtain more accurate results, we controlled our data not only for register by choosing only spoken Russian but also for genre, thus only selecting to work with the genre of spontaneous speech which excludes movie scripts and public speeches. The size of the complete spoken corpus might seem more representative and reliable at first sight, as it is almost ten times larger than the subcorpus of spontaneous speech, 11 349 008 and 1 308 195, respectively. The search of the lemmatized verbs from the list was performed on the spoken subcorpus of spontaneous speech with the following parameters: past tense, indicative mood, and active voice. The frequency benchmark of at least one hundred tokens was set in order to consider whether to include a verb for analysis. The number of occurrences to be considered formulaic varies in literature and ranges between twenty to a hundred (Cortes 2008; Romer 2005).

After completing the search with the preset parameters, the number of verbs on the list went down to 64, which are presented in Table 2. These verbs have been categorized as imperfectives and perfectives. I had expected the perfective to be more prevalent however, the ratio turned out to be almost identical, at 31 for imperfectives and 33 for perfectives.

**Table 1. List of the first hundred most frequent lemmatized verbs based on the data from the Russian National Corpus (translations into English are mine)**

| Lemma | Frequency (ipm) | Lemma | Frequency (ipm) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Быть (to be) | 12160.7 | Подумать (to think) | 315.6 |
| Мочь (to be able to) | 2912.3 | Уйти (to leave) | 315.6 |
| Сказать (to say, to tell) | 2396.6 | Посмотреть (to look, to watch) | 314.2 |
| Говорить (to speak, to talk, to say) | 1755.0 | Вернуться (to return) | 311.2 |
| Знать (to know) | 1713.8 | Следовать (to follow) | 305.1 |
| Стать (to become) | 1621.8 | Читать (to read) | 304.4 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Хотеть (to want) | 991.3 | Бывать (to visit) | 297.3 |
| Идти (to go) | 957.1 | Ходить (to go, to walk) | 296.6 |
| Иметь (to have) | 906.7 | Начинать (to start) | 296.0 |
| Видеть (to see) | 818.2 | Появиться (to appear, to show up) | 294.6 |
| думать (to think) | 755.5 | Называть (to call, to name) | 293.4 |
| Сделать (to do, to make) | 743.5 | Прийтись (to suit, to fit) | 285.5 |
| Жить (to live) | 725.5 | Хотеться (to want) | 285.3 |
| Делать (to do) | 701.1 | Вести (to behave, to conduct) | 280.3 |
| Смотреть (to watch, to look) | 667.2 | Показать (to show) | 277.7 |
| Работать (to work) | 611.2 | Поставить (to put) | 267.3 |
| Понять (to understand) | 588.2 | Бояться (to be afraid) | 266.5 |
| Пойти (to go) | 587.2 | Происходить (to stem from) | 263.6 |
| Спросить (to ask) | 573.9 | Существовать (to exist) | 260.9 |
| Дать (to give) | 573.1 | Становиться (to become) | 259.3 |
| Понимать (to understand) | 559.7 | Слышать (to hear) | 256.1 |
| Получить (to receive) | 557.7 | Смочь (to be able to) | 255.1 |
| Сидеть (to sit) | 538.1 | Заметить (to notice, to spot) | 253.9 |
| Оказаться (to find oneself in, to turn out) | 531.9 | Использовать (to use) | 249.6 |
| Взять (to take) | 525.8 | Пытаться (to try) | 249.4 |
| Прийти (to come, to arrive) | 523.3 | Представить (to imagine) | 247.2 |
| Являться (to show up, to appear) | 522.9 | Чувствовать (to feel) | 246.9 |
| Любить (to love) | 503.1 | Создать (to create) | 245.9 |
| Стоить (to cost) | 501.9 | Заниматься (to do, to engage oneself) | 240.8 |
| Остаться (to stay) | 482.7 | Продолжать (to continue) | 240.6 |
| Выйти (to exit, to leave) | 480.9 | Слушать (to listen to) | 239.5 |
| Начать (to start) | 473.3 | Узнать (to find out) | 238.1 |
| Считать (to consider, to count) | 455.3 | Приехать (to arrive) | 234.4 |
| Увидеть (to see) | 452.4 | Отвечать (to answer) | 232.4 |
| Казаться (to seem) | 448.2 | Рассказывать (to tell) | 230.0 |
| Писать (to write) | 444.3 | Рассказать (to tell) | 229.4 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Найти (to find) | 424.1 | Представлять (to imagine) | 228.5 |
| Стоять (to stand) | 419.3 | Брать (to take) | 226.3 |
| Решить (to decide, to solve) | 409.7 | Забыть (to forget) | 226.0 |
| Пройти (to get to, to pass) | 398.4 | Провести (to spend) | 222.0 |
| Принять (to accept) | 386.9 | Спать (to sleep) | 221.9 |
| Давать (to give) | 370.7 | Помочь (to help) | 218.8 |
| Ответить (to answer) | 370.4 | Приходить (to come) | 218.2 |
| Помнить (to remember) | 363.1 | Просить (to ask for a favor) | 215.9 |
| Ждать (to wait) | 360.2 | Вспомнить (to remember) | 215.5 |
| Находиться (to be found, to be located) | 342.7 | Открыть (to open) | 214.8 |
| Написать (to write) | 336.2 | Привести (to bring) | 214.7 |
| Оставаться (to stay) | 327.4 | Оставить (to leave) | 210.5 |
| Играть (to play) | 319.1 | Спрашивать (to ask) | 208.3 |
| Лежать (to lie) | 318.1 | Принимать (to accept, to receive) | 207.7 |

**Table 2. List of the most frequent past tense imperfective and perfective verbs based on the Subcorpus of Spontaneous Russian Speech**

| Imperfective | Perfective |
|---|---|
| Быть 11 535 (to be) | Сказать 1 998 (to say, to tell) |
| Говорить 994 (to speak, to say) | Пойти 1 359 (to go) |
| Хотеть 914 (to want) | Стать 917 (to become) |
| Видеть 898 (to see) | Прийти 875 (to come) |
| Ходить 798 (to walk, to go) | Приехать 721 (to arrive) |
| Жить 630 (to live) | Понять 619 (to understand) |
| Думать 580 (to think) | Взять 615 (to take) |
| Мочь 516 (to be able to) | Сделать 569 (to do, to make) |
| Работать 513 (to work) | Начать 563 (to start, to begin) |
| Делать 464 (to do) | Остаться 534 (to stay, to remain) |
| Смотреть 443 (to watch, to look) | Выйти 470 (to exit, to walk out) |
| Знать 442 (to know) | Дать 469 (to give) |
| Сидеть 378 (to sit) | Решить 448 (to decide, to solve) |
| Слышать 330 (to hear) | Уйти 398 (to leave) |
| Читать 318 (to read) | Найти 364 (to find) |
| Идти 316 (to go) | Пройти 317 (to get to, to pass) |
| Рассказывать 303 (to tell) | Написать 291 (to write) |
| Стоять 254 (to stand) | Поставить 262 (to stand something, to put something in an upright position) |
| Играть 239 (to play) | Увидеть 247 (to see) |
| Давать 197 (to give) | Посмотреть 239 (to look, to watch) |
| Брать 195 (to take) | Привезти 214 (to bring) |
| Писать 167 (to write) | Получить 190 (to receive) |
| Приходить 164 (to come) | Узнать 183 (to find out) |
| Любить 133 (to love) | Оказаться 178 (to turn out, to find oneself in) |
| Спрашивать 133 (to ask) | Спросить 167 (to ask) |
| Заниматься 125 (to engage oneself in) | Подумать 157 (to think) |
| Лежать 118 (to lay) | Рассказать 137 (to tell) |
| Спать 117 (to sleep) | Оставить 135 (to leave) |
| Просить 117 (to ask for a favor, to beg) | Заметить 129 (to notice, to spot) |
| Ждать 115 (to wait) | Вернуться 118 (to return, to come back) |
| Бывать 114 (to frequent, to visit) | Вспомнить 107 (to remember) |
| | Открыть 105 (to open) |
| | Появиться 101 (to appear) |

What is interesting to note about the verbs from Table 2 is that a quick look at the verbs can show us that most verbs in the imperfective are atelic, namely states: *быть (to be), хотеть (to want), видеть (to see), жить (to live), думать (to think)* and activities: *работать (to work), заниматься (to engage onself in), играть (to play), читать (to read)*, while most verbs in the perfective are telic such as accomplishments: *стать (to become), открыть (to open), решить (to decide)* and achievements: *поставить (to put in a standing position), получить (to receive), оказзаться (to end up, to turn out).* Some of the verbs are more difficult to classify such as *давать (to give), брать (to take), спрашивать (to ask)* just because they are imperfective and telic at the same time. In addition, the verbs that are hard to classify appeared both in imperfective and perfective, while most verbs in Table 2 do not have aspectual partners. In other words, they occur only in either aspect in the first hundred most frequent verbs. This does not mean that they do not have aspectual pairs at all, it just implies that their aspectual partners are not that frequent, and subsequently should be acquired later in the acquisition process. Among the 64 verbs, the following verbs did occur with an aspectual partner.

**Table 3. Aspectual pairs encountered in the first 100 most frequent verbs in the past tense**

| | |
|---|---|
| Делать 464 | Сделать 569 |
| Писать 167 | Написать 291 |
| Спрашивать 133 | Спросить 167 |
| Смотреть 443 | Посмотреть 239 |
| Видеть 898 | Увидеть 247 |
| Думать 580 | Подумать 157 |
| Рассказывать 303 | Рассказать 137 |
| Давать 197 | Дать 469 |
| Брать 195 | Взять 615 |
| Говорить 994 | Сказать 1 998 |
| Ходить 798, идти 316 | Пойти 1 359 |
| Приходить 164 | Прийти 875 |

Some observations:

1. The verbs of motion *‘to go’ (идти, ходить, пойти)* and *‘to come’ (приходить, прийти)* are a special case/group. While these verbs are traditionally considered aspectual pairs, they are used for very different purposes. In the past tense, these verbs have distinct meaning. For the verb ‘to come’ the perfective прийти implies that the person came and is still here, while the imperfective *приходить* has an implication that the person was here but now is gone (cf. example (1) in Chapter 2 for the reversed result reading of the imperfective открывал ‘open’ mentioned above). The imperfective verbs ‘to go’ have a clear distinction of unidirectionality vs multidirectionality. Also, the reason *пойти* is so frequent is because it is commonly used as an imperative in colloquial Russian.
2. The verbs *‘to tell a story’ (рассказывать, рассказать)* could be both an activity and an accomplishment, i.e. the process of telling a story and the endpoint of a story, respectively. However, it is possible that the imperfective could be used as a statement of fact.
3. The three similar verbs *‘to give’ (давать, дать), ‘to take’ (брать, взять*) and *‘to ask’ (спрашивать, спросить)* are tricky because although they are telic, they are frequently used in imperfective, not so much to express process, but statement of fact.
4. Three state verbs *‘to watch/to look’ (смотреть, посмотреть), ‘to see’ (видеть, увидеть)*, *‘to think’ (думать, подумать)* can be both atelic and telic. The telicity of these verbs is expressed through different meanings.
5. Two activity verbs *‘to write’ (писать, написать)* and *‘to do’ (делать, сделать),* which can be both activities and accomplishments with the activity reaching an endpoint.

6. The suppletive pair *'to speak/say' (говорить, сказать)* has traditionally been controversial. Some grammars include it as a pair, while others treat these verbs as separate lexemes because the verb *'говорить'* also has a prefixed partner *'поговорить'*.

Since this work claims that structured input and frequency effects presented in textbooks are important factors in acquisition of aspect, I conducted a basic quantitative analysis of the spoken content in the textbooks *Golosa* and *Nachalo*. The spoken content selected was dialogs from these two textbooks. The dialogs were digitized, and a concordance software AntConc was used to search for the verbs in Table 3 in all past tense forms in the textbook dialogs. The results are presented in Table 4 below.

**Table 4. Distribution of verbs in Spoken Corpus, *Golosa* Textbook and *Nachalo* Textbook**

| | **Spoken Corpus** | **Golosa textbook** | **Nachalo textbook** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Делать<br>Сделать | 464<br>569 | 0<br>1 | 4<br>0 |
| Писать<br>Написать | 167<br>291 | 0<br>0 | 0<br>3 |
| Спрашивать<br>Спросить | 133<br>167 | 0<br>0 | 0<br>2 |
| Смотреть<br>Посмотреть | 443<br>239 | 3<br>0 | 2<br>0 |
| Видеть<br>Увидеть | 898<br>247 | 0<br>0 | 5<br>3 |
| Думать<br>Подумать | 580<br>157 | 2<br>0 | 1<br>1 |
| Рассказывать<br>Рассказать | 303<br>137 | 0<br>0 | 0<br>2 |
| Давать<br>Дать | 197<br>469 | 0<br>1 | 0<br>1 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Брать<br>Взять | 195<br>615 | 0<br>3 | 1<br>1 |
| Говорить<br>Сказать | 994<br>1 998 | 2<br>5 | 5<br>20 |
| Ходить<br>Идти<br>Пойти | 798<br>316<br>1 359 | 1<br>0<br>3 | 1<br>0<br>3 |
| Приходить<br>Прийти | 164<br>875 | 0<br>1 | 0<br>3 |

From Table 4 we can see that these aspectual pairs are very scarcely represented in the textbook dialogs. The *Golosa* textbook only has two aspectual pairs represented 'говорить/сказать' and 'ходить/пойти', neither of which are even considered pure aspectual pairs by some aspectologists. The *Nachalo* textbook is more representative and includes the following pairs: *'думать/подумать', 'видеть/увидеть', 'брать/взять', 'говорить/сказать'* and *'ходить/пойти'*. As a disclaimer, I understand that these textbooks might have more aspectual pairs in the dialogs that are not among the first hundred frequent verbs; however, this study emphasizes frequency effects on acquisition, thus assuming that the most frequent verbs should be included in the input.

Despite the fact that these pairs in Table 4 are on the list of the first hundred most frequent verbs, they occur with different frequency. In other words, most of these pairs have a more prominent (frequent) partner. Only three pairs occur with a similar frequency in the corpus: *'to ask' (спрашивать/спросить), 'to do' (делать/сделать),* and *'to write' (писать/написать),* none of which were represented in both aspects in the textbook dialogs. Thus, these three pairs were selected for further quantitative and qualitative corpus analysis. To perform the analysis, the following formal (contextual) features were selected: question vs. statement, negation vs.

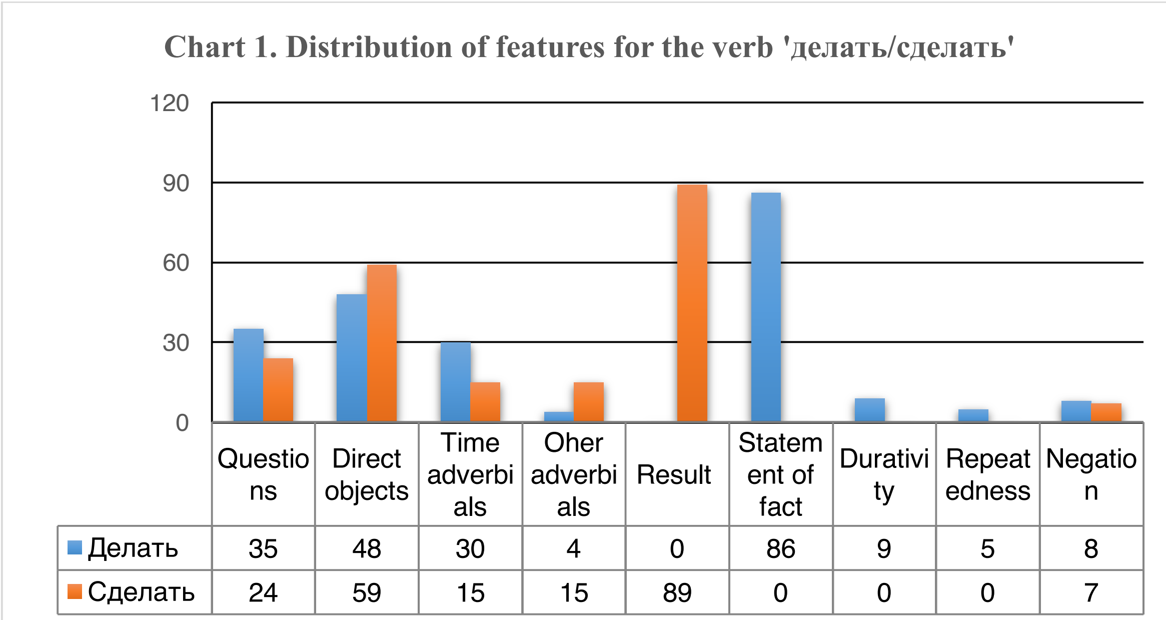
absence of negation, direct and indirect objects, time and other adverbials, main vs. relative clause, direct vs. indirect speech, as well as some functional features such as repeatedness, durativity, and result vs. statement of fact. The feature of statement of fact vs. result was initially difficult to tease apart but after looking at dozens of examples, the feature of result was made more specific as an explicit result in the context, such as another action (a series of sequential actions).

To account for all the features in the analysis and to make it easier to compare them, Microsoft Access database software was used. The verbs were extracted from the subcorpus of spontaneous speech of the Russian National Corpus. A hundred examples of each verb was copied from the corpus and pasted into an Access database. Every sentence was analyzed according to the above mentioned features. If a feature was present, the information was entered in the appropriate field. In the following section of the chapter, I will discuss how these features were distributed in the analysis.

## 4.2. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

### *The verb "to do, to make" (делать, сделать)*

The analysis of the verb 'to do' in both aspects in the past tense gave the following results, which are presented in Chart 1 below.




| | Questions | Direct objects | Time adverbials | Oher adverbials | Result | Statement of fact | Durativity | Repeatedness | Negation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Делать | 35 | 48 | 30 | 4 | 0 | 86 | 9 | 5 | 8 |
| Сделать | 24 | 59 | 15 | 15 | 89 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 |

Both the imperfective and perfective occur with direct objects with similar frequency, at 48% and 59%, respectively. There does not seem to be much in terms of the use of a particular aspect with particular direct objects except for the fact that the preparation of food is mainly in imperfective, possibly due to the time involved in the process of preparing food. But this is just a mere assumption and needs to be investigated further. Two direct objects that seem to have direct correlation with the perfective aspect in the past tense is 'вывод' (conclusion) and 'открытие' (discovery). It does not sound natural (to this native speaker) to use them with the imperfective past. Translation of these expressions *'to make a conclusion'* and *'to make a discovery'* from English into Russian gives the result of 'сделать вывод' and 'сделать открытие' with the use of perfective verb.

Example 1:

*[Надежда, жен, 43] Да / да. Стояла / взяла и застрелила как-то / отняла как-то автомат / толкнула. Вот. Валя сидела в кустах / видела все это и* ***сделала вывод / что*** *Маша смелая девушка. [нрзб] [Снежана, жен, 19] А Валя Машу слабой что ль считала.*

*Когда они шли / она говорила / «Давай привал сделаем / давай поспим». [Надежда, жен, 43] А / ну она да / уставала (Пересказ фильма // Из материалов Ульяновского университета, 2006).*

Translation:

*[Nadezhda, female, 43] Yes / yes. She was there / she went ahead and shot somehow / somehow she managed to take away the machine gun / pushed aside. So. Valya was sitting in the bushes / saw everything and **made a conclusion** / that Masha is a brave girl. [not clear] [Snezhana, female, 19]. And Valya used to think Masha was weak. When they were on their way, she said, "Let's stop / and take a nap". [Nadezhda, female, 43] Yeah, she would get tired (Retelling of a movie // From the materials of Ulyanovskii university, 2006).*

Example 2:

*[Елена Владимировна, жен, 69] Только в другом отделе. Я-то всё вредное на себя брала / потому и зубов уже своих нету. С рентгеном всю жизнь работала / со вредными металлами. Я даже **открытие сделала** / между прочим. Мне приятельница / начальница она моя была / говорит / «Лена / пиши работу / защищайся». А я знаешь / я всё же женщина-мать. Забеременела твоей мамой и всё / а открытие моё повторили за рубежом / пока я в декрете всё была (Телефонный разговор бабушки с внучкой // Из коллекции НКРЯ, 2007).*

Translation:

*[Elena Vladimirovna, female, 69] Only at the other department. I did everything hazardous myself / because I didn't have any of my own teeth left. I worked with X-ray all my life / with hazardous metals. I even **made a discovery** / by the way. My good friend / she was my boss / said "Lena / write a dissertation / and defend it". But you know / I'm a mother. Got pregnant with*

*your mom and that was it / and my discovery was replicated overseas / while I was on maternity leave (Telephone conversation between a grandmother and a granddaughter // from the collection of NKRY, 2007).*

Time adverbials was another factor. It is not surprising that certain time adverbials are more frequently used with the imperfective, which is mainly due to the temporal features of durativity expressed by adverbials such as *'два с половиной часа' (two and a half hours)*, *'полгода' (half a year),* repeatedness as in *'два раза' (twice),* or indicating at what period of time something happened in the past, for example, *'раньше' (in the past), 'в последний раз' (last time), 'тогда' (back then).* On the other hand, the most common time adverbial used with the perfective is *'уже' (already)* indicating that the action has been accomplished, and there is a result.

<u>Example 3:</u>

*[№ 2, жен, 19] А-а / фак! Убийственный предмет. [№ 1, жен, 19] Брутальный [смех] [№ 2, жен, 19] Сколько сделала уже? Там ваще много писать? А теорию читала? [№ 1, жен, 19] Пять / а чё по теории? (Телефонные разговоры московских студенток // Из коллекции НКРЯ, 2007).*

<u>Translation:</u>

*[No 2, female, 19] A-a / fuck! This class is killing me. [No 1, female, 19] Brutal [laughter] [No 2, female, 19] How much* ***did you already get done?*** *Is it a lot of writing? Have you read theory? [No 1, female, 19] Five / What about theory?(Telephone conversations between Moscow students // fromt he collection of NKRY, 2007).*

Example 4:

*[В., жен, 45] Ежедневно. [Р.Р., муж] Нет / ключи остаются только у Вас и у меня. [В., жен, 45] Никому не сдаются. [Р.Р., муж] Так кроме того / вот щас мы заканчиваем / **уже** практически **сделали** нам лингафонные кабинеты. [В., жен, 45] Да. [Р.Р., муж] Компьютерные лингафонные кабинеты / то есть стоят компьютеры / лингафоны все вот это. [В., жен, 45] Не умею пользоваться компьютером (Разговор об устройстве на работу // Из коллекции НКРЯ, 2007).*

Translation:

*[V., female, 45] Every day. [R.R., male] No, the keys stay with Vasya and me. [V., female, 45] You don't need to turn them in. [R.R., male] Besides / we are almost done / they have practically **already finished the language labs**. [V., female, 45] Yes. [R.R., male] Computer language labs / with all the equipment. [V., female, 45] I don’t know how to use a computer (Conversation about applying for a job // from the collection of NRKY, 2007).*

The features of repeatedness and durativity for the verb *‘делать’* are present but rare at 5% and 9%, respectively, thus making the feature of statement of fact dominant at 86%. The examples below represent features of durativity (example 5), repeatedness (example 6) and statement of fact (example 7).

Example 5: Durativity

*[Аня, жен, 18] Так / ждем Сат / да? [Настя, жен, 18] Да. Она теперь вернется нескоро. Печальный опыт нас… Когда мы ждали ее с Машей два с половиной часа… **Мы языкоз делали**. Библиотеку закрыли / уже выгнали нас / перерыв закончился. [Аня, жен, 18] А куда она ушла? [Настя, жен, 18] Пошла провожать Араксю и не вернулась. (Разговор студенток // Из материалов Ульяновского университета, 2007).*

Translation:

*[Anya, female, 18] we're waiting for Sat, right? [Nastya, female, 18] Yes. She won't be back soon. We had a bad experience… When Masha and I were waiting for her for two and a half hours…**while doing linguistics.** The library closed / they kicked us out / the break ended. [Anya, female, 18] Where did she go? [Nastya, female, 18]. She went to walk Araksya out and never came back (Conversation between two students // from the collection of Ulyanovsk university, 2007).*

Example 6: Repeatedness

*Разговор матери с сыном // Из материалов Ульяновского университета, 2006*

*[Мама ???] Похвалил? [Артем, муж, 12] Сказал / что неплохо / но могу лучше. Да я сам знаю. **Я иногда глупые ходы делал** / но понимал это / когда было уже поздно. [Мама ???] Ну и ладно! На ошибках учатся. Зато в следующий раз уже не сделаешь так.*

Translation:

*[Mother ???]Did he praise you? [Artyom, male, 12] He said /that it was not bad / but I can do better. But I know that myself. I **made some stupid moves** / but I realized that / when it was too late. [Mother ???] That's okay! You learn from your mistakes. The next time you won't do it again (Conversation between mother and son // from the materials of Ulyanovsk university, 2006).*

Example 7: Statement of Fact

*[В ???] Проверке / да. [А ???] А ты когда последней раз красилась? [В ???] Я красилась полгода назад. **Я делала мелирование.** [А ???] Ну / ты собираешься еще покраситься? А*

*то у тебя уже цвета не осталось. [В ???] Да вот собираюсь на днях покраситься тоже. (О прическах // Из материалов Ульяновского университета, 2006).*

<u>Translation:</u>

*[V ???] at the review / yes. [A ???] When did you dye your hair last time? [V ???] I dyed it half a year ago.* ***I did highlights.*** *[A ???] Are you going to dye it again? Since your color has almost all faded away. [V ???] Well yeah I was going to one of these days (About hairdos // from the collections of Ulyanovks university, 2006).*

Most uses of the perfective are result-oriented, where the result is often explicitly stated. See examples 8-9.

<u>Example 8:</u>

*[№ 1, жен, 19] А мой телик не показывает / потому что он до розетки не достает. [№ 2, жен, 19] Ни фига… а как это? Как же он раньше показывал? [№ 1, жен, 19] Просто мы недавно сделали перестановку… [№ 2, жен, 19] А-а-а / неудачно расположили телик / а я не люблю ужастики. [№ 1, жен, 19] Хотя нет ничего невозможного. Ща я поставлю его на свой письменный стол… Ой / я смотрела этот фильм / он / кажется / называется «Поворот не туда» (Телефонные разговоры московских студенток // Из коллекции НКРЯ, 2007).*

<u>Translation:</u>

*[No 1, female, 19] My TV doesn't work / because it wouldn't reach the outlet. [No 2, female, 19] WTF … why is that? How did it work before? [No 1, female, 19]* ***We recently rearranged the furniture****… [No 2, female, 19] Ah, OK, you moved the TV to a bad spot / I don't like horror movies. [No 1, female, 19] It's not a big deal, though. I will put the TV on my desk … Oh / I*

*watched this movie / I think / it's called Wrong Turn (Telephone conversations of Moscow students // from the collection of NKRY, 2007).*

<u>Example 9:</u>

*[№ 3, муж, 60] Ксюша /* ***ты математику сделала?*** *[№ 2, жен, 11] Ну бабушка / ну что ты вечно со своими уроками лезешь? [№ 3, муж, 60] Ты выражения выбирай / ты сделала математику / я тебя спрашиваю?! [№ 2, жен, 11] Нет / я с мамой сделаю (Домашний разговор // Из коллекции НКРЯ, 2006).*

<u>Translation:</u>

*[No 3, male, 60] Ksyusha /* ***Did you do math homework****? [No 2, female, 11] Grandma / why are you always sticking your nose in my homework? [No 3, male, 60] Be careful how you talk to me / did you do your math homework / I'm asking?! [No 2, female, 11]* ***No****, I will do it with mom (Home conversation // from the collection of NRKY, 2006).*

Looking at the other adverbials co-occurring with the perfective aspect in more detail showed that most of these adverbials are adverbials of manner such as *здорово (great), правильно (right, correct), неправильно (not right, not correct), нехорошо (bad)* and *нормально (Okay)*. They are used in evaluative statements that serve as a response about the action done by another speaker. Evaluation presupposes that the action has been completed with a result that can then be evaluated. See the following examples.

<u>Example 10:</u>

*[П, жен, 70] в возьми-то … э-э огурчики // кусочек огурчика // [нрзб] [У, муж, 70] … голодный // [Н, жен, 37] а? // [У, муж, 70]* ***здорово вы сделали*** *// а мы бы-ы… [Н, жен, 37] а-а-а // [П, жен, 70] не скумекали б // [Н, жен, 37] а вы тоже / тока… / денечка на три в Москву? (Диалоги // Из коллекции Саратовского университета, 1987).*

Translation:

*[P, female, 70] Take some pickles // Take some // [unclear] [U, male, 70] … hungry // [N, female, 37] What? // [U, male, 70]* ***you did a great job*** *// we wouldn't have been … [N, female, 37] a-a-a // [P, female, 70] able to come up with that // [N, female, 37] and you … // are you in Moscow for three days? (Dialogs // from the collection of Saratov university, 1987).*

Example 11:

*[А, жен] А я думала / что какая-нибудь родственница приехала… [Б, жен] Она удочерила себе девочку. [А, жен] Эх / вот это да!* ***Ну вообще правильно сделала****. [Б, жен] Эта девочка в общем из-под Москвы / под Москвой есть там какой-то… Ну… Я уж не знаю (Разговор об общих знакомых // Из материалов Саратовского университета, 1960-1980).*

Translation:

*[A, female] And I thought /that some relative came… [B, female] She adopted a girl. [A, female] Wow!* ***Way to go!*** *[B, female] This girl is from Moscow suburbs // there's a … near Moscow … I don't know (conversation about mutual friends // from the collection of Saratov university, 1960-1980).*

The verb '*сделать*' is rarely used with *what*-questions but when it is (5%), it stresses a negative result as in the examples 12-13.

Example 12:

*[Тая, жен, 53] Конечно / потрясающая девица. Это / конечно / ужас какой-то. Таких женщин. Но Анька / конечно /* ***чё она из себя сделала?*** *Такая жгучая прям чернота везде из неё прёт. Волосы чёрные. [Тамара, жен, 22] Стиль такой (Разговор дома на кухне // Из коллекции НКРЯ, 2007).*

Translation:

*[Taya, female, 53] Sure / she's an amazing girl. That's terrible. Those women. But An'ka /* ***what did she do to herself****? She looks smoking black. That pitch black hair. [Tamara, female 22] It's stylish (Kitchen conversation // from the collection of NKRY, 2007).*

Example 13:

*[В., жен] Наверно так и получится// Я прям сомневаюсь что у него голова когда-то проснется/ [Ю.К., жен, 19] Кто его знает/ у него уже в милиции отпечатки пальцев/ фотографии его/ дело уголовное/ серьезно/ [В., жен] В милиции?* ***Чё ж он сделал?*** *[Ю.К., жен, 19] Контрабанда в Финляндию/ это наверно водка/ сигареты/ [В., жен] Он сегодня рассказывал// Его родители этим занимаются? [Ю.К., жен, 19] Да/ профессия/ (Разговоры в компании у костра // Из коллекции Саратовского университета, 2002).*

Translation:

*[V., female] It's probably going to turn out that way // I honestly doubt that he will ever change / [Yu.K., female, 19]. Who knows / they already got his finger prints done / his pictures taken / opened a case / it's all serious / [V., female] At the police?* ***What did he do?*** *[Yu.K., female, 19] Smuggling to Finland/ it was probable vodka/ cigarettes/ [V., female] He was telling me today // are his parents involved in that? [Yu.K., female, 19] Yes, professionally/ (Conversations by a campfire // from the collections of Saratov university, 2002).*

On the other hand, the imperfective is used with *Wh*-questions more often to inquire what somebody did or was doing. As Forsyth (1970) points out statement of fact interpretation is common in *Wh*-questions.

Example 14:

*[Анна, жен, 23] Там вещи / не надо / Кать. [нрзб] [Сергей, муж, 50] Как / Анют? [Анна, жен, 23] Хорошо. [Ирина, жен, 44]* ***Что делали?*** *[Анна, жен, 23] На каток ходили. [Сергей, муж, 50] Куда ходили? [Анна, жен, 23] На каток ходили. (Домашние разговоры // Из материалов Ульяновского университета, 2007).*

Translation:

*[Anna, female, 23] There is stuff there / Don't / Katya. [unclear] [Sergei, male, 50] How was it / Anyuta? [Anna, female, 23] Good. [Irina, female, 44]* ***What did you do?*** *[Anna, female, 23] We went ice skating. [Sergei, male, 50] Where did you go? [Anna, female 23] We went to the rink. (Home conversations // from the materials of Ulyanovsk university, 2007).*

Example 15:

*[Юля, жен, 8] Всем// [Дядя, муж, 48] Чем например? [Юля, жен, 8] Я летом ездила всей семьей/ в замечательное путешествие/ в Шмаковку/ есть клубнику// [Дядя, муж, 48]* ***Что ты там делала?*** *[Юля, жен, 8] Ходила на речку / ела клубнику/ и на «Сковородку» // [танцплощадка] [Дядя, муж, 48] На сковородку? Там что черти? (Разговор дяди с племянниками на дне рождения // Дальневосточный федеральный университет, База данных «Речь дальневосточников», 2005).*

Translation:

*[Yulia, female, 8] Everything// [Uncle, male, 48] For example? [Yulia, female, 8] In the summer all my family had an amazing trip to Shmakovka for strawberries// [Uncle, male, 48]* ***What did you do there?*** *[Yulia, female, 8] I went to the river / ate strawberries / and went to the Skillet*

*[dance pavilion] [Unlce, male, 48] To the Skillet? What is there, you little demons? (Conversation with nephews at a birthday party // Far-Eastern Federal University, 2005).*

There is a common belief that negation is used with imperfectives more than perfectives. However, this correlation was not confirmed in the analysis. Negation with imperfective reflects the same features as positive. For example, if it was a durative feature in the positive, then the durative feature in the negated still conditions the imperfective.

<u>Example 16: Negated statement of fact</u>

*[Собеседница, жен] да / нормально / [Информант, жен] мне тоже так кажется нормально мне вообще нравится когда / водка / мартини / в одинаковых пропорциях и сок [Собеседник, муж] угу сверху на эту самую / после / водки шампанским / бэм! [Информант, жен] да /* ***так я никогда не делала*** *[Собеседник, муж] попробуй (Домашний разговор // Из материалов корпуса «Один речевой день», подготовленного группой А.С.Асиновского, 2007).*

<u>Translation:</u>

*[Interlocutor, female] Yes / not bad / [Informant, female]I also think it's not bad / I like it when vodka and martini and juice are in the same proportions [Interlocutor, male] You can also top vodka off with Champagne / Boom! [Informant, female]* ***I have never done it this way*** *[Interlocutor, male] You should try it (Home conversation // from the corpus collections, 2007).*

<u>Example 17: Negated result</u>

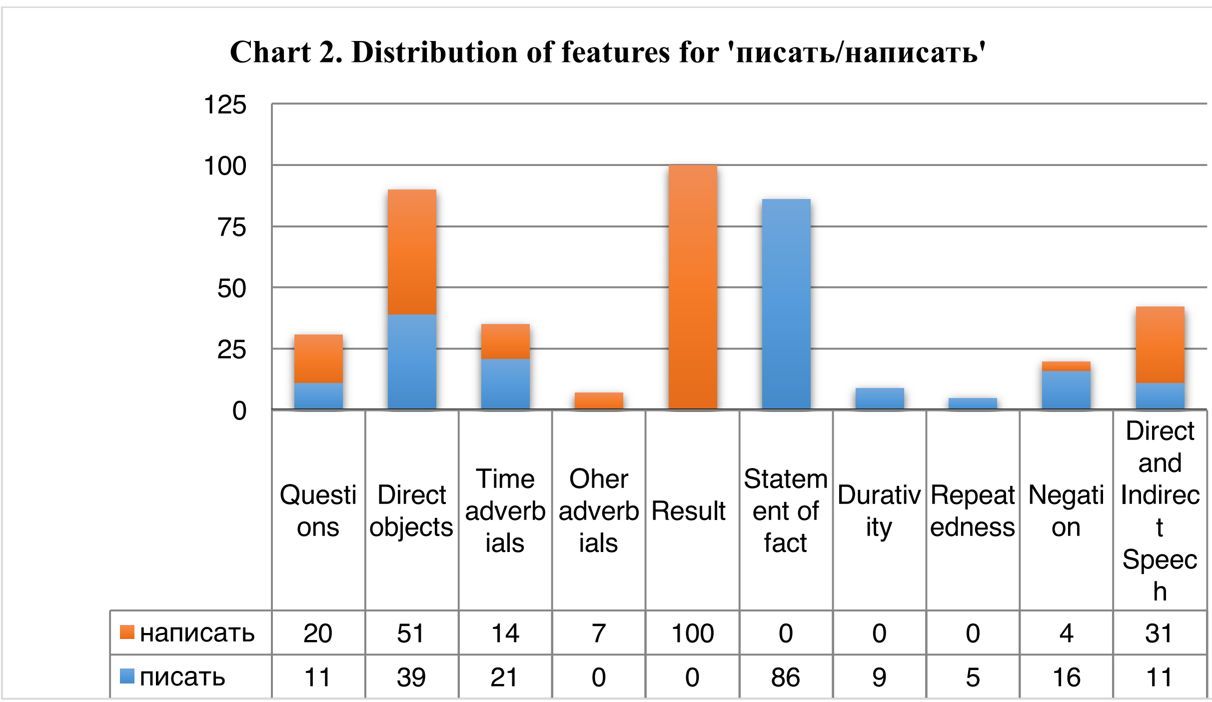
*[№ 2, жен, 19] Текст учить и двенадцатый? [№ 1, жен, 19] Да. [№ 2, жен, 19] Убей меня!* ***Я ничегошеньки еще не сделала.*** *[№ 1, жен, 19] У тебя еще завтра утро. [№ 2, жен, 19] Мне в поликлинику. [№ 1, жен, 19] Ну делай тяп-ляп / а я завтра утром в*

*«Олимпийский» еду (Телефонные разговоры московских студенток // Из коллекции НКРЯ, 2007).*

<u>Translation:</u>

*[No 2, female, 19] To memorize the text and do number twelve? [No 1, female, 19] Yes. [No 2, female 19] Kill me!* ***I haven't done squat.*** *[No 1, female, 19] You still have tomorrow morning. [No 2, female, 19] I have to go to the hospital then. [No 1, female, 19] Just do something / I'm going to the Olympic park tomorrow morning (Telephone conversations of Moscow students // from the collection of NKRY, 2007).*

***The verb "to write" (писать, написать)***




| | Questions | Direct objects | Time adverbials | Oher adverbials | Result | Statement of fact | Durativity | Repeatedness | Negation | Direct and Indirect Speech |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| написать | 20 | 51 | 14 | 7 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 31 |
| писать | 11 | 39 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 86 | 9 | 5 | 16 | 11 |

It is interesting to note that many direct objects used with the perfective are related to administrative paperwork: *рекомендательное письмо (recommendation letter), доверенность* *(power of attorney), заявление (application), рецензию (review), жалобу (complaint), отпуск (leave, vacation), служебную (memo), анкету (questionnaire)*, while academia-related words are used with the imperfectives such as *это самое анализ (this very analysis), свою кандидатскую диссертацию (dissertation), предварительную (preliminary paper), что-то по Гоголю (something on Gogol), тест (test), контрольную (quiz), диктант (dictation), реферат (paper), эссе (essay), сочинение (composition).* The reason for this could be pragmatic, as people talk about paperwork in terms of emphasizing its completion and expected or existing result as in *'I filed a complaint'*, while things talked about in academia are shared experiences expressed as statements of facts such as *'We had a test today'*. The examples from corpus are given below.

<u>Example 1:</u>

*[Б, жен, 35] Ну правильно сделала // [А, жен, 36] Я уже тогда когда я к И-ву пошла / я уж тут в слезах / когда он мне сказал / я говорю ну чо ж тогда Алексей Николаич / поставьте меня тогда в государственную очередь / что тут я буду до пенсии стоять / что там / хоть государственную зато получу // [Б, жен, 35] Вот именно // [А, жен, 36] Я ему* ***заявление написала*** */ я правда не знаю точно / поставил он меня или нет / [Б, жен, 35] Поставил // [А, жен, 36] или может по своей рассеянности он опять меня куда-нибудь там не в тот список / смех / или вообще никуда / из всех списков выбросил / [Б, жен, 35] Сунул в стол //(О мебели; о варке варенья; о делах в институте // Из коллекции Саратовского университета, 1988).*

<u>Translation:</u>

*[B, female, 35] You did the right thing // [A., female, 36] I was already when I went to talk to Ivanov // I was in tears / when he told me / I said well Aleksey Nikolaich / put me on the wait list*

*for the state check / and I will be on it till I retire / so that I will get the state paycheck // [B, female, 36] Exactly // [A., female, 36]* ***I wrote him an application letter*** */ but I'm not sure if he put me on the wait list or not / [B., female, 35] He did // [A., female, 36] He is so absent minded that he might have put me on the wrong list, it's ridiculous, or forgot to put me on the list at all, or crossed me out from the list [B., female, 35]Stuck in the drawer // (About furniture, jam-making, and things // from the collection of Saratov university, 1988).*

Example 2:

*[Ксения, жен, 14] Нормально. [Анастасия, жен, 18] Нормально? [Ксения, жен, 14] да.* ***Контрольную писали****. [Анастасия, жен, 18] По каким предметам? [Ксения, жен, 14] Биология / физика [Анастасия, жен, 18] Ну и чё / сложные были задания? (Разговор о школе // Из коллекции Ульяновского университета, 2009).*

Translation:

*[Kseniya, female, 14] Not bad. [Anastasiay, female, 18] Not bad? [Kseniya, female, 15] Yes.* ***We had a test.*** *[Anastasia, female, 18] For which classes? [Kseniya, female, 14] Biology / physics [Anastasiya, female, 18] Was it difficult? (Conversation about school // from the collection of Ulyanovsk university, 2009).*

There also seems to be some correlation between plurality and the imperfective*: письма (letters), стихи (verses, poems), карточки (cards), замечательные совершенно вещи (absolutely beautiful things)*. Another observation is that the titles of works of literature such as *"Собор парижской богоматери" (The hunchback of Notre Dame), "Как прекрасен этот мир" (How beautiful this world is), "Войну и мир" (War and Peace), книгу "Как уберечься от мучжин" (How to stay away from men)* are used with the perfective.

In the process of the close analysis of the data, there arose the need for introducing another feature with the verbs *'to write'* and *'to ask'*. As verbs of communication, they can be used for reporting direct and indirect speech. The verb '*to write'* when used in the spoken corpus is typically a reporting verb that implies social media or texting. It is used twice with the direct object 'CMC' (text), and other times it is used without any direct object but followed by direct or indirect speech. Direct and indirect speech were analyzed together as one feature because there was no clear difference pattern associating one or the other with a particular aspect.

Example 3:

*[№ 2, жен, 19] Понятно / что не особо приятно / но ничего ж не случится плохого / если ты придешь. Зато потом не будешь жалеть / что не пошла. [№ 1, жен, 19] Думаешь / клево быть незваным гостем? А может / пожалею / тем более / что он пригласил-то тока из-за того / что я ему* ***SMS написала*** *с поздравлением. Да и потом / подарок мой будет готов тока в понедельник вечером. Ну на это / конечно / он не особо обидится. Короче / я незваный гость / да еще и без подарка (Телефонные разговоры московских студенток // Из коллекции НКРЯ, 2007).*

Translation:

*[No 2, female, 19] I get it / that it is not particularly pleasant / but nothing bad is going to happen / if you come. Then you won't regret / that you didn't come. [No 1, female, 19] Do you think it's cool to be crash the party? I might regret / moreover, he invited me only because* ***I sent him a text*** *with best wishes. Also, my gift won't be ready until Monday night. He's not going to get offended. So I will be an invited guest without a gift. (Telephone conversations of Moscow students // from the collections of NRKY, 2007).*

Example 4:

*[И11, жен, 28] подожди / ты помнишь / я ведь в прошлый раз ведь / сыпала? да / Лёш? [М1, муж] я не знаю // [И11, жен, 28] нет / ты видел / что я всыпала // ты ещё сказал / что посыпь этой дрянью // ха -ха-ха / слушай // знаешь / похоже да // а…ах / кончилось / да // да я ж забываю всё // ну что / короче говоря спиртягу разводить [нрзб] и добавили газа // все бензонаты и хренаты всякие // короче всякой гадости // а я всё своё письмо опубликовала вс.. в своей заметке /* ***в Контакте*** *// ну вот / впечатления от Финляндии // ну и* ***написала что типа*** *там / приехали в Свеаборг / выпили там чего-то виски… тьпфу водку с колой / типа повеселились //* ***девчонка пишет*** */ Дора! пять про… пять процентов / ты пьёшь водку?! десять процентов сахара // хороший я себе создала имидж // правильный! [нрзб] // фетаки // ( Разговор дома за ужином // Из материалов корпуса «Один речевой день», подготовленного группой А.С.Асиновского, 2007).*

Translation:

*[E11, female, 28] Wait / do you remember / if I sprinkled it last time? Lyosha? [M1, male] I don't know. // [E11, female, 28] no / you saw me pour // you also said/ sprinkle with this shit // hah-ha / you know / I think I did // we ran out / yes // I forget everything // it was for diluting rubbing alcohol [unclear] and added gas // benzoate and shit // and I published the entire letter in my note /* ***in VK*** *// well, those are impressions of Finland // so* ***I wrote*** *that / we got to Sveaborg / had whisky… no, vodka with coke / had fun // and a girl writes me / Dora! Five … five percent / you drink vodka?! Ten percent sugar // I created a good image for myself // very appropriate [unclear] // Fetaki // (Conversation at home over dinner // from corpus materials, 2007).*

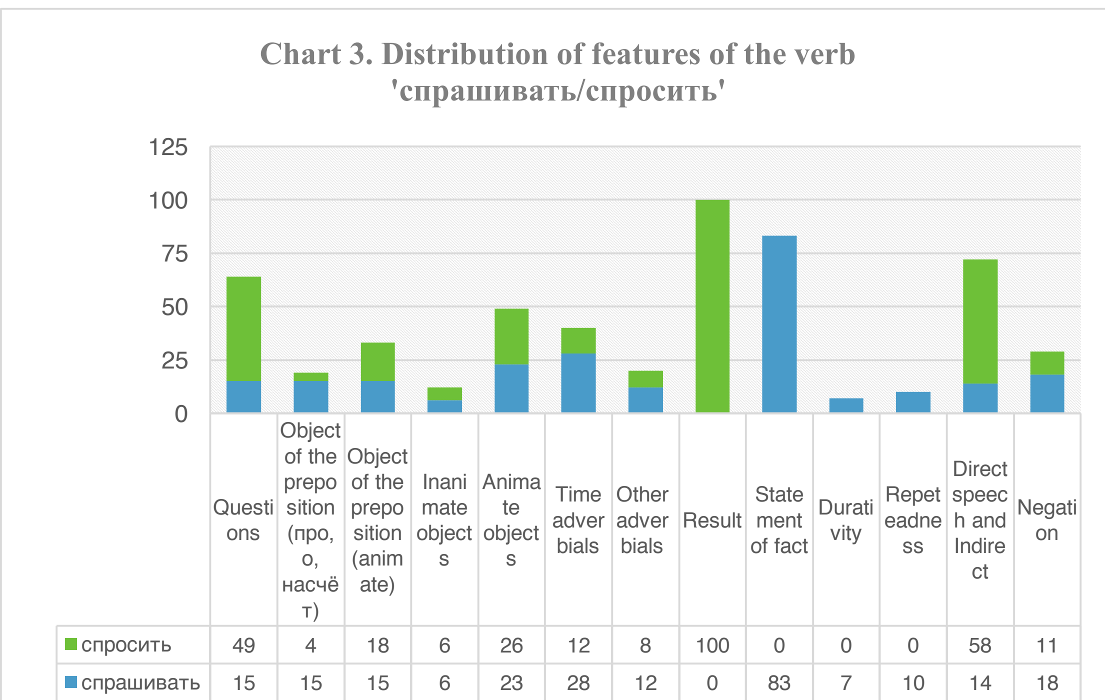
<u>Example 4:</u>

*[Даша, жен, 20] Потом так его послала там! Но Женя сказал / что бесполезно / никто не прочитает / это программа автоматически отправляет… [Алла, жен, 22] Ага! Мне еще одна* ***девчонка сёдня написала / типа*** *они вот так делают терь с моего номера! Ужасно… [Даша, жен, 20] Ты предупреди там всех! Вот гады! (В гостях у подруги. Разговор московских студенток // Из коллекции НКРЯ, 2007).*

<u>Translation:</u>

*[Dasha, female, 20] I told him to fuck off! But Zhenya said / that there's no point / nobody will be able to read it / this program sends things automatically … [Alla, female, 22] OK! I also had* ***a girl texted me*** */ that they do this now from my number! Crazy… [Dasha, female, 20] Make sure they all know! Those bastards! (visiting a girlfriend. Conversation of Moscow students // from the collection of NKRY, 2007).*

***The verb "to ask" (спрашивать, спросить)***




| | Questions | Object of the preposition (про, о, насчёт) | Object of the preposition (animate) | Inanimate objects | Animate objects | Time adverbials | Other adverbials | Result | Statement of fact | Durativity | Repeatedness | Direct speech and Indirect | Negation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| спросить | 49 | 4 | 18 | 6 | 26 | 12 | 8 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 58 | 11 |
| спрашивать | 15 | 15 | 15 | 6 | 23 | 28 | 12 | 0 | 83 | 7 | 10 | 14 | 18 |

The verb *‘спросить’* in the past tense compared to its imperfective partner is used a significantly more often with either direct or indirect speech and followed by a reporting verb such as *‘сказать’ (say), ‘говорить’ (speak), ‘ответить’ (reply),* 58% and 14%, respectively.

<u>Example 1:</u>

*[№ 3, жен] А чего? Я* ***спросила****. Я знаю / где он у них стоял. А Анюта у них одна оставалась / я* ***спросила*** */ "Анюта / погляди в этом / где Галька спит с Лешей". Полукомод там стоял / вот как дверь откроешь / и тут с правой стороны. А чего-то его не видать. А она* ***мне сказала*** */ "Он теперь с левой" (Домашний разговор // Из коллекции НКРЯ, 2005).*

<u>Translation:</u>

*[No 3, female] What?* ***I asked****. I knew / where it stood. Anyuta was alone at their place /* ***I asked*** */ “Anyuta / can you look / where Gal’ka and Lyosha sleep”. There was a semi-dresser / as you open the door/ it was to the right. But I haven’t seen it lately. And she* ***said****/ “It’s on the left side now. (Home conversation // from the collection of NRKY, 2005).*

<u>Example 2:</u>

*[Екатерина, жен, 18] Такая раз… Паспорт… Финн такой гордый / «Я же говорила / что ща попросят паспорт!» . Даже если б я одна пошла / мне б продали / а Финну не продают. [Марина, жен, 18] А я только один раз натолкнулась на эту фигню / мы / короче / в «Симбирке» центральной были / которая у ЦУМа… да… [Екатерина, жен, 18] Ммм… Да / да…* ***Нас спросили / я говорю*** *у нас только студенческий. Второй курс. Ну / показали. Она / «И что?» (Разговор подруг // Из материалов Ульяновского университета, 2007).*

Translation:

*[Yekaterina, female, 18] She was like … Passport please… Finn was like / "I told you that they will ask for the passport!" Even if I had gone by myself, they would've sold it to me / but they wouldn't sell it to the Finn. [Marina, female, 18] I had this happen to me once / we / were at the central Simbirsk / the one by TSUM … yeah … [Yekaterina, female, 18] Hm… Yeah / yeah … **They asked / I said** we only had the student ID. Sophomores. So we showed it. She was like "So what?" (conversation between two female friends // from the materials of Ulyuanovsk university, 2007).*

The feature of direct and indirect speech goes hand in hand with the result feature, as even in the examples above, *'спросить'* is followed by a response, which could be also interpreted as a result of asking. The imperfective past *'спрашивать'* is followed by an object of the preposition '*about' (про, о, насчёт)* at 15% and, while the perfective counterpart's objects of the same prepositions account for 4%. This tendency might be due to the function of the imperfective as a statement-of-fact because compared to a result expressed by a perfective (I asked and he said), statement of fact merely implies asking about something with no statement about whether a response was received.

Example 3:

*[Юля, жен] Всё равно у меня двойка. [Оля, жен] А / Юля. [Юля, жен] Да. [Оля, жен] У меня Валера вчера **спрашивал насчет твоего паспорта нового**. Сказал / что это надо делать срочно… [Кашель] [Сеня, муж] Давай. [Юля, жен] Блин (Разговоры за игрой в карты // Из коллекции НКРЯ, 2009).*

Translation:

*[Yulya, female] I got an F anayways. [Olya, female] A / Yulya. [Yulya, female] Yes. [Olya, female] Valera* ***asked me about*** *your new passport yesterday. He said / that it need to be done quick … [coughing] [Senya, male] Let's do this. [Yulya, female] Darn (Conversation over playing a game of cards// from the collection of NRKY, 2009).*

Time adverbials are used more with the imperfective here than the perfective. Surprisingly (in contrast to *делать/сделать*), the most frequent adverbial is *'уже' (already).* The use of *'уже' (already)* with the imperfective can be explained as a statement of fact but this doesn′t explain the discrepancy with (See example 4). There is also a frequency pattern that occurs with the adverbial *'просто' (just)* with the perfective (See example 5).

Example 4:

*[Катя] А куда поступает? Я не верю / что ты не знаешь. [Артем] Артём. Ты* ***уже*** *спрашивала. [Катя] Катя. Я не верю / что ты не знаешь. [Артем] Артём (Праздный разговор молодых людей, Московская область // практиканты, 2005).*

Translation:

*[Katya] What schools is he applying to? I don't believe / that you don't know. [Artyom] Artyom. You* ***already*** *asked. [Katya] Katya. I don't believe/ that you don't know. [Artyom] Artyom (conversation of young people, Moscow region // interns, 2005).*

Example 5:

*[Леша, муж, 29] Ну это тебя. [Аня, жен, 20] Сумочку мне всю перевернули. [Леша, муж, 29] А зачем тебе галстук завязывать / он у тебя завязан. [Леха, муж, 32] Я* ***просто***

*спросил. [включают свет] [Леша, муж, 29] Ура! [Аня, жен, 20] вот! Сразу все заработало (Разговоры в офисе // Из коллекции НКРЯ, 2006).*

<u>Translation:</u>

*[Lyosha, male, 29] It's for you. [Anya, female, 20] They rummaged everything in my purse. [Lyosha, male, 29] Why do you need to tie up your tie / it's already tied. [Lyoha, male, 32] I **just** asked. [turning on light] [Lyosha, male, 29] Hurrah! [Anya, female, 20] Here you go! Now it's all working (office conversations // from the collection of NRKY, 2006).*

The overwhelming majority of questions with the perfective is caused by the frequent use of direct and indirect speech (58%).

<u>Example 6:</u>

*[Аня, жен, 21] А еще он сказал / что надо Picasso переставить на место С2. Надо привлекать внимание к Picasso. [Леха, муж, 32] Откуда он знает / где у нас Picasso стоит? [Аня, жен, 21] Ну **он спросил** / «У вас Picasso стоит?» **Я говорю** / «Да». Он говорит / «Где стоит?» Я ему сказала / где стоит (Разговор в офисе продаж автомобилей // Из коллекции НКРЯ, 2006).*

<u>Translation:</u>

*[Anya, female, 21] And he also said / that the Picasso needed to be moved to the C2 place. The Picasso needs attention. [Lyoha, male, 32] How does he know where our Picasso is? [Anya, female, 21] Well, **he asked** / "Where is your Picasso?" **I said** / "Yes". He said / "Where is it?" I told him where it is (Conversation at a car dealership // from the collection of NKRY, 2006).*

It is worth noting that the features of repeatedness and durativity are not common at all for any of the three verbs under analysis. It might be caused by the fact that those features are reserved for verbs with the inherent meanings of repeatedness and durativity, such as *работать (to work), заниматься (to engage oneself in an activity), спать (to sleep)* for repeated/habitual actions and *ждать (to wait), лежать (to lie), сидеть (to sit)* for durative actions. The feature of direct and indirect speech was introduced because of the verbs *'to ask'* and *'write'* appeared (not surprisingly) with reporting of speech both direct and indirect.

The qualitative analysis of these three aspectual pairs: *делать/сделать (to do), писать/написать (to write) and спрашивать/спросить (to ask)* confirmed some general unifying trends such as the use of the perfective aspect to mean 'result' as opposed to 'statement of fact' for the imperfective. However, the prevalence of these features might have been purely coincidental due to the nature of the selected verbs. Thus, instead of focusing on looking for the overarching commonalities and 'stalking the wild invariant' in Timberlake's terms (1982), this research has attempted to show that it is more instructive for pedagogical reasons to look at every verb individually and find patterns that are specific for a particular verb, for example, the use of direct and indirect speech with the perfective past *'спросить' (to ask)* or the co-occurrence of the perfective past *'сделать' (to do)* with evaluative adverbials such as *'здорово' (great)* and *'правильно' (right)*. All of these patterns could then inform the input of textbooks.

# CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This work set out to look at the verbal aspect in Russian in the past tense for pedagogical purposes to benefit the first and second year students taking Russian as a second language. The choice of verbal aspect in the past tense motivated by the observed difficulties associated with the acquisition of aspect by learners of Russian.

The theoretical framework of pedagogical grammar proposed by Keck and Kim (2014) served as an organizational structure for this work. This framework combines three areas of inquiry: descriptions of grammar presented in Chapter II, grammar acquisition by native speakers and L2 learners, and grammar instruction discussed in Chapters III and IV. First, to put the category of aspect in a theoretical context, I discussed a variety of theoretical approaches: Brecht's reinterpretations of Vendler's classification, Timberlake's idea of nested levels, and Janda's *et al* research on the existence of aspectual triplets, etc. Theoretical descriptions of aspect were necessary in order to define more precisely both the category of verbal aspect as well as the issues associated with its acquisition.  Second, the pedagogical nature of this work necessitated looking at the existing acquisition theories of aspect such as the Lexical Aspect Hypothesis (Anderson 1991), the Distribution Bias Hypothesis (Anderson & Shirai 1994), the Alpha and Beta hypothesis (Gagarina 2008) (similar to the Prototype Hypothesis), and Default Past Tense Hypothesis (Salabbery 2008). All these hypotheses in a sense are unified by the idea of distributed prototypes that are formed either by native speakers or L2 learners based on their received input. Prototypes in speakers' mental lexicons have strong associations between the form and its inherent meaning; for example, the morphological perfective aspect is associated with inherently telic verbs. Third, I discussed how aspect is typically presented to the students in textbooks, the issues associated with it, and what can be done to improve instruction.

It was suggested in this study that the learners' struggle with aspect might be caused by the inconsistencies present in the textbooks, namely explicit explanations of aspect and the lack of structured contextual input provided to the students. This hypothesis was formed on the basis of usage-based approach to language acquisition (Tomasello 2005) and emergentism theory (Ellis *et al* 2013), both of which rely on the idea that language emerges from use and experience with it, thus making frequency of language units (token frequency) and patterns of use (type frequency) crucial factors. Token frequency, according to Bybee (2008), is how often a specific language unit occurs in text or speech, while type frequency "refers to how many distinct items are represented by the pattern". For example, a syntactic pattern *He gave me the change* in English is less common than *He gave the change to me*, which is more prototypical and this second pattern is found with more verbs compared to the first one. Token frequency is important but can be easily acquired by L2 learners through mere encountering, repetition and memorization, while type frequency requires much more exposure and experience with language.

To account for token frequency, I used the Russian frequency dictionary to perform a quantitative analysis that showed the correlation between morphological forms and inherent lexical meanings with a sample of the first hundred most frequent verbs from a native speaker corpus. This frequency information was further used to search for patterns of use (type frequency). Both the quantitative and qualitative corpus analysis was performed on three Russian aspectual pairs in the past tense: *делать/сделать (do)*, *писать/написать* (*write)*, and *спрашивать/спросить* '*ask'*, which helped reveal some lexico-grammatical patterns (i.e. type frequency) discussed in detail in Chapter IV. This results of this analysis echoed the idea expressed by Rice and Newman (2004) that "inflectional categories are distributed in construction specific ways" (Newman & Rice 2006), thus emphasizing the form-meaning-use mappings of patterns.

The frequency and corpus data analysis in itself provided much information about the use of aspect in context that can be used for pedagogical purposes. However, it was important for this study to go back and test the hypothesis that textbooks do not provide the kind of structured input necessary to help learners with the acquisition of aspect. Two mainstream Russian textbooks *Golosa* and *Nachalo* were analyzed both in terms of aspect explanations and spoken input in the form of dialogs. The textbook data was then compared to the frequency dictionary and corpus data, and some differences were observed. First, the textbooks tend to focus on the functions of repeatedness and durativity of the imperfective past, while corpus data shows that the statement-of-fact feature is more prevalent for imperfective past verbs. Second, the frequency dictionary data revealed a relatively low frequency of occurrence of aspectual pairs compared to the frequency of such verb pairs in the textbooks.

Based on the data analysis from the frequency dictionary, the spoken corpus, and the textbook input, I would like to make the following pedagogical suggestions for the instruction of aspect following Mindt's idea of the three stages for didactic grammar: selection, progression, and presentation (as cited by Romer 2005). First, the selection of structured input based on token and type frequency is crucial, and as this work demonstrates can be done with the use of frequency dictionary and qualitative corpus analysis. The second important stage is the order of instruction (progression from more frequent to less frequent forms). A possible progression might look like this:

1. Introducing telic perfectives and atelic imperfectives in the past tense;
2. Introducing verbs that occur both in perfective and imperfective with a similar frequency *(ask, do, write)* in 'construction-specific contexts';
3. Introducing verbs that occur in both perfective and imperfective but with varying frequency: alpha and beta verbs (to give, to take).

Third, grammatical explanations can also be presented in order of the frequency of features, for example, statement of fact, being a very frequent feature, should be given priority in explicit explanations of aspect.

It is also important to note here that further studies are needed to see whether corpus and frequency data, in fact, have an impact on acquisition. Meanwhile, these findings can be used as an additional resource in the classroom and for further research. This research due to its limitations of time and space covered very little ground but can be continued in the future in the following ways: looking at more than just the first hundred most frequent verbs to make further generalizations and support the claims made in this work; analyzing more than a hundred examples of each verb to find more patterns of use; and analyzing the other aspectual pairs found in the first hundred most frequent verbs that occur with varying frequency.

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