

Where Does Metaphor End?
The Development of Perfectivizing *PO-* in Russian

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Recent theories of grammaticalization have taken different views on the role of metaphorization in the grammaticalization process. In contrast to much of recent work on the subject, Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca (1994) downplay the role of metaphor in grammaticalization.

Though the role of affixation in the establishment of verbal aspect as a grammatical category in Russian (and *mutatis mutandis* the other Slavic languages) hardly resembles the cases of grammaticalization analyzed by Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca (1994)—or any other general work on the subject, theories of grammaticalization ought to be able to account for such thoroughly lexico-grammatical categories, rare as they may be. And as aspect is a firmly entrenched component of Slavic grammatical systems, the path of its development ought on the other hand to be quite relevant for theories of grammaticalization. With this in mind, facts regarding the establishment of *po-* as one of the major Russian perfectivizing prefixes will be considered with regard to the role of metaphorization in grammaticalization.

Dickey and Hutcheson (to appear) have suggested that the widespread derivation of delimitatives in *po-* in Russian, which began in the sixteenth-seventeenth century, represents a grammaticalization process in the sense that *po-* was used to extend the aspect opposition to a whole class of predicates, activities, which generalized the Ru aspect opposition considerably. Note that this view runs counter to conventional theories of aspectual pairs, which deny that delimitatives in *po-* can be perfective “partners” of their simplex imperfective source verbs. However, as Holden (1990) points out, this exclusion is based on nothing more than the rather arbitrary requirement of the conventional theories that all perfective partner verbs *must* be telic. (Cf. also Lehmann 1988, who argues that delimitatives are “functional perfective partners” of their source verbs.)

How did *po-* end up as the delimitative prefix in Russian (as well as East Slavic, Polish and Bulgarian)? I suggest that metaphor has little to do with it, or rather that the *loss* of metaphor was in fact the catalyst. Nůmec (1954) argues that it was the “loss” of the original spatial meanings of the prefix that made possible its later aspectual meanings such as resultativity (*postroit* ‘build’), distributivity (*pozakryvat* ‘shut all of’) and delimitativity (*postojat* ‘stand for a while’). (NB: the status of *po-* as a distributive prefix in CSR is debatable; many such verbs are attested in the Academy Dictionary, but they are not used in actual speech near as much as in some other languages, e.g. Polish. The status of *po-* as a delimitative prefix has in my view been much more important for the development of aspect in Russian.)

But what did metaphor have to do with Russian delimitative *po-* in the first place? The answer involves both the prefix and the preposition. Sigalov (1975) points out that in contrast to the modern language, “delimitatives” in pre-sixteenth century Russian could stress the duration of a situation, akin to perduratives prefixed in *pro-* in the contemporary language, cf. (1):

- (1) Iona tri dni vъ' kitě **poživъ**. [Old Ru]
'Jonah lived for three days in the whale.'

In modern Russian, delimitatives cannot stress duration, and in general prefer either only approximate temporal adverbs (e.g., *s āas* 'about an hour') or none at all, as their main function is placing activities in sequences of events, for which Russian requires the perfective. I suggest that the meaning of Old Russian proto-delimitatives such as that contained in (1) was based on a temporal metaphorization of spatial meaning of the exemplified in (2), 'all the way up to', which I will call the "extension metaphor":

- (2) Pogorě torgъ i domove **po Rogaticju**. [Old Ru]
'The market and the houses [located] all the way to Rogatica burned.'

In other words, the meaning of proto-delimitatives in Old Russian was a metaphorical transfer of the existing spatial meaning of '[extending] all the way up to' to the temporal domain. Circumstantial evidence for this hypothesis is the fact that the meaning of 'all the way up to' of *po* is alive and well in Czech, as is the metaphorical extension of the preposition to time; and as observed by Petrušina (2000), Czech "delimitatives" can stress duration just like the Old Russian example in (1). This is shown in (3):

- (3) a. Tři **po zuby** ozbrojení lupiči [...] [Cz]
'Three robbers armed to the teeth [...]'
- b. [...] ale ona **po celý měsíc** nemyslila než na to [...] [Cz]
'[...] but for a whole month she only thought about [...]'
- c. Celý večer **posěděli**, až zvonili na půlnoční. [Cz]
'They sat the whole evening, until the bell rang for the midnight mass.'

The spatial meaning of *po* exemplified in (2) no longer exists in Russian. Further investigation is required whether the spatial meaning of the preposition disappeared before or after Russian delimitatives ceased being able to stress duration. What is important for my purpose here is the fact that the metaphor must have ceased to function once the preposition *po* lost its meaning of spatial 'all the way up to' in Russian. Russian delimitatives likely began to be associated with sequences of events before the extension metaphor ceased to exist, as the use of adverbs of duration is ultimately characteristic of narrative sequences of events. Once the metaphor ceased to function, I suggest that Russian delimitatives absorbed the inference of sequentiality. Thus, metaphor was only the first step in the considerable expansion of *po-* as a perfectivizing prefix in Russian (as evidenced by its productivity in the derivation of delimitatives).

In my view, the facts of the development of delimitative *po-* are easiest explained as involving the loss of a spatial metaphor, and thus offer support for Bybee's, Perkins' and Pagliuca's (1994) view that metaphor typically occurs early in the grammaticalization process.

This paper will examine these issues in more detail.

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