

RUSSIAN NOMINALIZATIONS: SOME CONSTRAINTS ON CONCEPTUAL INTEGRATION

In this paper I set out to explain certain restrictions on nominalization in Russian verbs with prefixes *vz-* and *vs-*. Although nominalizing processes are quite regular in Russian, one still has to learn that some verbs are not fully tamed by them.

Following G. Fauconnier and M. Turner's theory of blending (Fauconnier, Turner 1995, 1996), I show how the conceptual integration model is extended to the level of word formation.

Nominalization can be treated as an instance of conceptual integration in two ways. First, the process of event integration appears to be at work, blending a number of event components into a unitary event expressed by a single noun. The elements acquire different status within the event complex, with entities (participants), activating process (like motion), state change or action realization being the core structure of the event, and cause, manner, enablement, precursion being the supporting relations within the macro-event (Talmy 2000). Second, reification is about the ability of a linguistic unit to blend two ways of conceptualizing an event – both as a process and as an object. Thus, nominalization gets a broader access to the full conceptual structure of the event, bringing to the surface the elements and aspects implicitly evoked by the motivating verb.

In this way, constraints on nominalization can be viewed in “access denial” terms: for some reason or another the nominal way to conceptualize an event is limited or even blocked. I will focus on verbal prefixes *vz-/vs-* as one of these reasons and argue that the ability to reify depends crucially on the conceptual interplay between the prefix and the verb stem.

For an immediate idea of the phenomenon, I will look at three groups of verbs with the prefixes' meanings defined as "move upwards or outwards" (*vzletat'/vzletet'*, *vsxodit'*, *vzmahivat'/vzmahnut'*, *vzduvat'sja/vzdut'sja*), "achieve a certain state, result" (*vzbivat'*, *vzloxmachivat'*, *vzbaltyvat'*), "to happen, to do smth. unexpectedly, or/and with great intensity" (*vzygrat'*, *vzvolnovat'*, *vzdremnut'*, *vzmoknut'*, *vzbuntovat'*).

Generally, if the prefix supports the core structure of the event related to the verb stem, nominalization has no limits, ranging from action/process nominals and abstract notions to object nouns. Thus, in the first group, the prefix indicates the central element of the event structure MOTION (PATH) and mostly does not limit the nominal way of conceptualization (*vsxodit' – vsxod, vsxody*; *vzmaxivat' – vzmaxivanie, vzmax*; *vzmjotyvat' – vzmjotyvanie, vzmjot*; *vzletat' – vzletanie, vzljot*).

When the prefix changes the focus within the core structure, certain constraints come into play. For the second group, there is a shift of focus from the action (process) elements to ACCOMPLISHMENT or AIM, and the verbs mainly provide process nominalization (*vzkapyvat' – vskapyvanie, vzloxmachivat' – vzloxmachivanie*) or form words with specific concrete meanings (*vzvesit' – vzves', vzvarivat' – vzvar, vzlomat' – vzlom*).

Finally, with the prefix focusing on the supporting relations (like MANNER), nominalizing processes might be completely blocked, which is manifested in the last group of verbs (*vzdumat', vzbresti, vzbessit'*).

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